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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EXPLORING THE CURRENT EFL TEACHING PRACTICES VIS-À-VIS STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLES: GRADE 8 IN FOCUS

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By

ENGLIZ KETEMA

MAY 2011

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Department of English

Exploring the Current EFL Teaching Practices Vis-à-vis Students' Learning Styles: Grade 8 in Focus

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List of Acronym

EFL- English as a Foreign Language

Abstract

The study was conducted to explore the current EFL teaching practices vis-à-vis students' learning styles. Many factors influence students' achievement at all level. Learning styles of the students are as well one of the many factors that need to be considered when teaching EFL students. This is because the required outcome may not be achieved when a student has a learning style that differs from the instructional practices of the teachers. Thus, the study aimed at investigating whether or not the EFL teaching practices address students' learning styles.

This study was carried out at Adama town, particularly in Adama Number 4 and Burka Boku Elementary Schools. One hundred (100) grade eight students and seven grade eight English language teachers from selected schools participated in this study. To arrive at the results, descriptive research method was employed. A questionnaire, observation and interview were used as tools of data collection. The data collected were analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean. A qualitative analysis was used for the data collected through interview.

From the analyzed data it was found out that students' major learning preferences were visual and global learning styles. Their minor learning preferences were auditory and tactile (kinesthetic) learning preferences, while they showed negative learning preferences towards analytical learning style. With regard to the current EFL teaching practices, the instructional practices favored auditory and analytical learners, and least consideration was given to global and visual learners. Besides, the teaching practices neglected the tactile (kinesthetic) learners.

Based on these findings, it was concluded that there was mismatch between the students' learning styles and the current EFL teaching practices. This implies that the problems could be aroused from lack of giving attention to students' learning styles, lack of accommodating different learning styles in the classroom teaching and inability to use methods and teaching aids that cater for students' different learning styles.

Eventually, it was recommended that teacher trainers should adjust short training programs that could help teachers be aware of students' learning styles so that they can give greater attention and they can identify their students' most significant and least significant learning styles to direct the learning towards the preferred learning styles.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem

Teaching English as a foreign language in Ethiopia schools is aimed at developing students' communicative competence. To achieve this objective the role of the English teacher is essential. Mainly, teachers are expected to recognize students' leaning styles (learning preferences) to maximize students learning. Jonassen (1993) says that recognizing students' learning styles will make educators more sensitive to their role in learning.

This is because learners do not learn in the same way what teachers deliver in the classroom (Wallace, 1991). According to Oxford (1995), conflict will occur when a student has a learning style that differs from the instructional styles of the teachers. She also says, the classroom becomes a place of inequity, where some students receive what they need and others do not.

Regarding learning styles, some of local researchers found out that the idea of the Learners has been neglected in Ethiopia. As reported by Mekdes (2006), English lesson plans neglected most of the students' learning preferences. According to her finding, lesson plans are not planned in a way that best suits the different learners in classroom. Mainly, they favor only some group of learners and ignore others. With regard to the effect of disparities between learning styles and teaching styles, one research has been conducted by Nasise Challi (2004). This researcher tried to find out that the effect of disparities between learning and teaching style contribute to students' negative attitude toward the subject, their inattentiveness and results in poor performance.

However, though solutions are forwarded based on the research findings, the problem of poor proficiency of the learner still exist. Thus, this

depicts that the area still requires further investigation. So, it would be useful to conduct research that aims at investigating the current EFL teaching practices in relation to grade eight students' learning styles. Therefore, this research is concerned with the following basic questions:

1. What are the students' major learning preferences?
2. Do teaching practices consider students' learning styles during instruction?
3. Do teachers use language teaching methods that cater for students' learning styles?
4. Do the instructional materials put into account the different learning styles of students?

1.2 Significance of the Study

The finding of this investigation is believed to help different bodies involved in the teaching and learning of the English language. First the result is hoped to help English classroom teachers in organizing instructional materials and in selecting appropriate teaching methods which would cater for student's learning preferences. Second, the finding gives some insights to syllabus designers so that they can include different tasks that may consider the needs of different learners. Third, it provides some suggestions to teacher trainers that help them to make teachers aware of students' learning styles. Finally, the result of this investigation may help as a spring board for future research in the area.

1.3 Delimitation of the study

The research was delimited to the current EFL teaching practices in relation to grade eight students' learning styles of two Adama town elementary schools. The reason why the writer focused on this grade level was it is the grade in which learners prepare themselves for high school education where they use English as a medium of instruction.

Besides, as far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, research hasn't yet been conducted on learning styles at this grade level. Thus, the researcher believed the necessity of assessing whether or not the EFL teaching practices consider students' learning styles.

1.4 Limitation of the study

Although more classroom observations were believed to be crucial to see whether or not EFL teaching practices address students in the classroom, only two observations for each seven sections (14 observations) were made because of the time constraints.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section deals with what has been said in the literature by different scholars, particularly about the topic understudy. It mainly deals with three topics. Its first part deals with the definition of learning styles and their dimension. The second part discusses about teaching: the definition of teaching, methodology and learning styles, how to teach students that have different learning styles, the role of both teachers and students, and the instructional materials and procedures. Eventually, it deals with the review of related works and the focus of the study.

2.1 Definition of Learning Style

Researchers in the area of second language teaching and learning have been trying to define the term learning style. Oxford and Ehrman, cited in Tudor (1996:113), have given two useful definitions:

> *Learning style consists of distinct behaviors which serve as indicator of how a person learns from and interacts with his (or her) environment.*
>
> *Essentially, learning style can be defined as a consistent pattern of behavior but with a certain range of individual variability ... style then are over all pattern that give general direction to learning behavior.*

For Keefe, in Brown (1994:105), "learning style might be thought of as cognitive, affective, and psychological traits that are relatively stable indicators of how learners perceive, interact, and respond to the learning environment".

Willing, in Tudor (1996:113), also says:

> *Learning style is ... a notion of inherent, pervasive sets of characteristics which group people into types or place on individual at a particular point along a descriptive scale....Learning style is more concrete than cognitive style, in*

that it looks directly at the totality of psychological functioning as this affects learning.

As it can be understood, these scholars forward the definition of learning style by incorporating some basic concepts like cognitive affective and psychological traits. However, they haven't included the concept of sensory modality of learning preferences in their definition. Whereas, one comprehensive definition is given by Tudor (1996:113):

"Learning style is ...a very powerful concept which incorporates a wide range of psychological, cognitive, sensory preference variables and seeks to encapsulate the way in which these are translated into concrete learning behavior and preferences".

Therefore, from these definitions, it can be concluded that learning style is cognitive, affective, psychological, and physiological preferences that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and respond to the learning environment.

2.2 Dimensions of Learning Styles

Language scholars such as Oxford (1995) and Brown (1994) and others reviewed the different types of learning styles related to the teaching learning process in general. Learning style helps in second language learning and this study will focus on the learning styles used by students in their second language learning.

Language researchers have classified learning style in different types. Oxford (1995) notes that individual learners have a composite of at least 20 styles dimension. Among these she listed the learning styles that are assumed to be used in language learning. These are:

- Global and analytic
- Field dependent and field independent.
- Feeling and thinking
- Impulsive and reflective

- Intuitive-random and concrete-sequential
- Closure-oriented and Open
- Extroverted and introverted
- Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic.

Though there are number of learning styles as pointed out by different researchers, most of them differ only in naming. That is to say most learning styles have different kinds of names, but they have similar characteristics. That is why Oxford (1990) and Sunderland (1994), as cited in Mekdes (2006), divided learning styles only into two broad divisions as global and analytic in terms of cognitive preference. Thus, the researcher selected the global and analytic learning styles as major learning styles other than learning styles such as intuitive random vs concrete sequential and closure oriented vs open which are included under the group of global and analytic (ibid). The learning styles of visual, auditory, and tactile (Kinesthetic) are selected because they are learning preference in terms of sensory mode (Oxford, 1995, Tudor, 1996 and Jonssen, 1993). The researcher has found the above classifications are inclusive and considered in this study.

2.2.1 Global Learners

The global or relational learner begins with the whole picture. The language student with a global sometimes termed as right brain dominant learning style seeks the big picture right away and establishes meaning only in relation to the whole. These kinds of learners sometimes have trouble discerning the important details from a confusing language background (Oxford, 1995). According to Oxford, Hollaway and Murillo (1992) cited in oxford (1995), these learners prefer holistic strategies such as guessing, predicting searching for the main idea and engaging in extensive communication in English. Many other learning styles types as named by second and foreign language scholars are related to the global

learning style. Global learners share similar characters with field-dependent, feeling oriented, extrovert, and interpersonal learners (ibid). Abreham (1985), as cited in Mekdes (2006), examined global (field-dependent) students in relation to grammar teaching methods. He discovered that these students are non-rule oriented and inductive. Thus, these students performed best where rules are not emphasized.

According to Oxford (1995), feeling-oriented learners also share common features with global learners. Feeling oriented students are broadly sensitive to social and emotional factors. Their decision- making is likely to be globally influenced by the feeling of others and they are concerned with emotional climate, personal, and interpersonal values. Feeling oriented students are more likely to share introvert style, thus, they would love group working.

2.2.2 Analytic Learners

The analytic learners begin with the separate parts and pieces and then they put them together to make a whole. Students with analytic (left brain dominant) or (field-independent) like details better than the over all picture and can separate the details from the background (Nelson, 1995 in Oxford 1995). Ellis (1989) implied that the analytic language students might naturally prefer to engage in formal language learning aimed at achieving accuracy. Analytic (left hemisphere) learners are highly verbal linear, analytic, logical, and temporal (sequencing) (Marie and Claire Law, 2010).

These learners like to work on activities such as ordering, prioritizing, classifying, comparing, identifying and analyzing. They also want the teacher to give explicit and clear analysis of the language. According to Oxford (1995) most male students were found to have analytic learning style.

Thinking is the learning style that is similar to analytic style. These students, according to Oxford (1995) are not concerned with social and emotional subtleties, except possibility as data for analytically understanding a particular problem or issue and analysis.

In a large scale study on second or foreign language students' learning styles, analytic learners reported that they like to study grammar, study English books and they like the teacher to let them find their mistakes (Jonassen, 1993).

2.2.3 Visual Learners

This is another dimension of learning style- one that is very essential in a formal classroom setting. Visual style is the preference that learner show toward visual input and they prefer to learn by seeing (Brown, 1994 and Pritchard, 2009). According to Brown (1994), Jonassen (1993), Todur (1996) and Pritchard (2009), visual learners tend to prefer reading and studying charts, drawings, and other graphic information. Besides, Reid (1987), as cited in Brown (1994), visual learners learn better when they read instruction and when they make drawing during their own study.

Generally, visual oriented students like to read and obtain a great ideal of visual simulation. For them, lectures, conversation, and, oral dictations without any visual backup are very confusing and can be anxiety producing (ibid).

2.2.4 Auditory learners

Auditory learners learn through listening. They are comfortable with oral directions and interactions unsupported by visual means. Verbal instruction and uniting language with music are useful for auditory learners to retain information. Auditory learners enjoy lecture and conversation. They react well to class activities such as role play or discussion, but may experience difficulties with written work.

Auditory learners talk through problems and develop strategies by listening repeating and planning aloud (ibid).

2.2.5 Tactile Learners

Students of tactile language learning preference sometimes called hepatic, kinesthetic or hands-on. These students like lots of movement and enjoy working with tangible objects, collages and other media. Sitting at a desk for very long is uncomfortable for tactile students; they need frequent break and, above all physical action in games and dramatic activities. Linking language with art is valuable for tactile students (ibid).

Using manipulative and three-dimensional materials, resource that are touchable, movable and readable during instruction is advisable to tactile student's learning (Jonassen, 1993:273).

In general, tactile learners prefer to learn by doing. They are good at recalling events and associate feelings or physical experiences with memory. They enjoy physical activity, field trips, manipulating objects and other practical, first-hand experience (Pritchard, 2009).

2.3. Definition of Teaching Practices

Scholars in the area of teaching methodology have been trying to define the term teaching practices. UNESCO (2000) has given the following definition:

"Teaching can be defined as a set of process and procedures used by the teacher for the purpose of making learning happen ...and bringing about positive changes in learners".

For James (1997:1), "Teaching is defined as the interaction of a student and a teacher over a subject".

Pinstent (1965:51) also says "Teaching practice is best regarded as a complex process of co-operation and inter-communication between teacher and learner, not as one-way traffic information from teacher to learner".

Kochhar (1985:21) defines "Teaching is more than standing before a class and applying specific techniques. It is not merely presenting text book information... it is concerned with the development of the whole child; intellectually, emotionally and socially".

As it is understood from these definitions, teaching is beyond delivering lesson. It is concerned with the over all development of the children. This can be achieved by individualizing the lessons or tasks to address students that have different learning styles.

Besides, one modern definition is given by Bain (2004:1):

"Teaching practice is an academic process by which students are motivated to learn in ways that make a sustained, substantial, and positive influence on how they think out and feel."

From the whole definition, it is believed that teaching needs to understand the subject and the need of the students. While traditionally, teaching has involved lecturing on the part of the teacher, but new instructional strategies put the teacher more into the role of course designer, discussion facilitator and coach the students more into the role of active learner and discovering the subject of the course. This is to say that teachers are expected to select and organize a variety of learning experiences to meet students that have different learning preferences. This is the crucial issue that is considered in this study.

2.4 Language Teaching Methodology and Learning Styles

The recognition of the importance of learners' subjective needs implies a number of changes in the traditional approach to decision making on the methodological level. The first of course, is the willingness to rethink the planning and implementation of methodology in response to learners subjective needs. The second is to undertake an analysis of teaching methodology in terms of the learning style assumptions which underlie different approaches, materials or techniques, and also to explore the role played in teaching by the in-built agenda on beliefs of the teacher herself (Tudor, 1993).

Richards and Rodgers (2001) analyze teaching methods under the three headings of 'approach', 'design' and 'procedure'.

The first level, approach, deals with the theoretical considerations or premises which underlie the next two levels. This involves a theory of language and a theory of language learning.

The second level, design, deals with the decisions that are required in order to construct a coherent instructional system capable of realizing the theoretical perspectives present at the approach level (ibid).

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), as cited in Tudor (1993), the third level of analysis encompasses the actual moment to moment techniques, practices, and behaviors that operate in teaching a language according to a given approach. It is a level at which we describe how a method realizes its approach and designing classroom behavior.

This level relates to the practical means by which teaching points are presented, practice is organized and feed back is provided.

The method variable, play a very important role in determining what goes on the classroom. It would, however, be naïve to assume that this is the only factor in operation. As Parbhu (1987) points out in Tudor (1993),

> *What teacher does in the classroom is not solely or even primarily, determined by the teaching method he or she intends to follow. There is a complex of other forces at play, in varied form and degrees. What happens in the classroom is thus an interaction of the teaching method which is officially being used and the individual interpretation of this method. It is though processing system that a given method is in the first instance; understood and interpreted by the teacher; and only then it is implemented in the classroom. The teacher processing system thus acts as a filter between the theoretical relationship and what he actually does in the classrooms.*

For Tudor (1993) there are three sets of factors are likely to influence the nature of teacher's processing system. These are:

- The degree of match or mismatch between the teachers own beliefs about language and language learning and the method he is dealing with.
- The teacher's affective reactions to the method, which may be either negative or positive.
- The interaction between the teacher's own psychosocial and cognitive traits and those which are implicitly favored by the method.

Thus, what actually happens in a language classroom is the result of a complex interaction between the teaching method used, the teacher's interpretation of this method, and the interaction of the learners. Learners' subjective needs, therefore, call for a critical evaluation of the assumptions which underlie methodological choices. It also requires the teachers to look openly and honestly at his own subjective needs as a teacher and as a participant in the teaching learning process (ibid).

In general as Spolsky (1989), cited in Tudor (1993), learners vary (both individually and according to such characteristics as age, level, and cultural origin) their preference for learning style (visual, auditory Kinesthetic, and tactile) and mode (group or individual); as the result,

learning is best when the learning opportunity matches the learners' preferences.

Teachers might therefore be urged to do every thing in their power to gear their methodological choices to their student's learning style preferences (Tudor, 1993:123).

Thus, two models of matching exist, based either on similarity or complimentarity. The former involves the selection of methodology to fit with the learning preferences of the target learners. The latter is compensatory, and is designed to provide a form of teaching which complements learners' spontaneous preferences, the idea behind this form of matching being that it enriches the learner's understanding of language study (ibid).

2.5 Learning Styles and Models of Language Instruction

Some models of instruction are developed by scholars aimed at using them across grade levels to improve the academic performance of all students. The general goal of the models are to improve the effectiveness of instruction through the identification and matching of individual learning styles with appropriate learning opportunities (Dunn and Dunn,1993).

Three of the most popular models of instruction are the Dunn and Dunn model, Gregoric Mediation Abilities Model and McCarthy's system model. These three approaches have been developed independent of each other and each with little recognition of the others' works (ibid).

Dunn and Dunn Learning styles model's primary focus is identification of key learning styles of each student and matching instruction and learning activities with each student's style. For them, learning styles elements are identified across five categories: environmental, emotional

and psychological (cognitive processing) (Dunn and Dunn, 1993 and Jonassen, 1996).

The Mediation Abilities Model of instruction grew out of Anthony Georgic's interest and study of individual life. Georgic theorized that individuals approach life tasks primarily using two abilities continuums as mediator for interacting and learning. These are how you perceive tasks and activities, and how you order tasks and activities. Within different people, each of these two mediation abilities manifest themselves along a continuum. Perception abilities may vary on a continuum from concrete perceptions to abstract perceptions. Ordering abilities will vary along a continuum from random ordering to sequential ordering (ibid).

Mediation abilities instruction also places emphasis on the individual understands of his or her styles (Butler, 1985 cited in Dunn and Dunn, 1993).

In application, the mediation abilities model of instruction provides the foundation for identifying both teacher and students learning styles. Once a teacher fully understands her or his student's style, instructional procedure is selected to accommodate or reinforce this natural style (Dunn and Dunn 1993).

The McCarthy's system model approach to the application of learning styles emphasizes the development and use of a structured curriculum that is designed around the understanding of learning styles (ibid).

McCarthy's curriculum system is built on Kolb's theory that individuals learn new information and/ or approach new situation in one of two ways through feelings or through thinking. These two main dimensions of learning are further divided into four major learning styles: imaginative learners, analytic learners, common sense learners and dynamic

learners. McCarthy translated Kolb's theory into practice. This model of instruction system promotes instruction that provides all students an opportunity to learn using all four styles, one at a time (ibid).

In summary each of the three main approaches to learning styles instruction has several aspects in common. Each recognizes the need to address individual difference in learner. Each suggests that more learning takes place as the result of individualized and small group learning activities than through large group instruction. Each advocates that to be effective, instruction must be organized to accommodate a variety of learners and learning styles (ibid).

2.6 Teaching Students of Different Learning Styles

As Haynes (2009) says it is especially crucial to take our students' learning style into account when we are teaching English language learners. It is always important for teachers to teach to their students' learning styles, but this becomes essential when teaching English language learners. English language learners may be highly literate in their own language but experience difficulties when acquiring English because they are accustomed to learning through different styles (ibid).

2.6.1 Teaching Global Learners

According to Dunn and Dunn (1993) and Haynes (2009), global learners are spontaneous and intuitive. They do not like to be bored. Information needs to be presented in an interesting manner using attractive materials, cooperative learning strategies and holistic reading methods work well with these learners. Global learners should be taught through:

- Choral reading;
- Recorded book;
- Story writing and summary writing:
- Computer programs;
- Games;

- Group activities;

Thus, organizing students into discovery learning groups is a technique recommended for global learners. For global learners, telling step-by-step what we want them to know does not work, however, it is very crucial to use reference materials and ask them to summarize the major aspects of the topic (ibid).

2.6.2 Teaching Analytic Learners

Analytic learners plan and organize their work. They focus on details and are logical. They are phonetic reader and prefer to work individually on activity sheets. According to Haynes (2009), the instructional methods suit to them when:

- information is presented in sequential steps;
- lessons are structured and teacher-directed;
- goals are clear;
- requirements are spelled out

> *In general, to meet the analytic learners' preference, teachers are advised to provide a written outline of the sequence of the topic to be covered. Other instructional features that teachers may use effectively with analytic learners include: use of chart and maps to illustrate the relationship between the topic to be learned, provide detailed written directions for all activities and projects and use of direct instructional procedures with formal lectures and notes on the black board* (Dunn and Dunn,1993:17).

2.6.3 Teaching Visual Learners

"Visual learner will be able to recall what they see and will prefer written instructions. These students are sight readers who enjoy reading silently better yet, presents information to them with a video" (Haynes, 2009:1). According to this scholar, teachers should teach visual through observation and demonstration. Thus, he should aid the instruction with the following:

- Computer graphics;
- Maps, graphs, Charts;
- Cartoons;
- Posters;
- Diagrams
- Graphic organizers;
- Text with a lot of pictures.

It is essential that the language teaching-learning process should provide the language learning opportunities that cater for students learning preferences (Dunn and Dunn, 1993).

2.6.4 Teaching Auditory Learners

Students with this style will be able to recall what they hear and will prefer oral instructions. They learn by listening and speaking. These students enjoy talking and interviewing. They are phonetic readers who enjoy oral reading, choral reading and listening to recorded books. According to Haynes (2009), they learn best when instructional methods incorporate the following:

- interviewing, debating;
- participating on a plan;
- giving oral reports;
- participating in oral discussions of written materials.

2.6.5 Teaching Tactile/Kinesthetic Learners

Tactile/ Kinesthetic learners learn best by touching or manipulating objects. They need to involve their whole body in learning. Total physical response is good English as a second language method for them (ibid). They remember materials best if they act it out. These students learn best when instructional method allows them:

- playing games that involve their whole body;
- movement activities;

- making models;
- following instructions to make something;
- setting up experiments (ibid).

2.7 Teachers' and Students' Role in Language Instruction

2.7.1 Teachers' role

According to Dunn and Dunn (1993) the primary role of the classroom teacher is that of the leader and facilitator of instruction. As a teacher to effectively use of the learning styles model, one must have the knowledge and skill to understand and use the different learning style elements (i.e. perceptual preference design preference motivation preferences, etc.). Further more, a language teacher must have an ability to organize classroom to support a variety of learning styles, supervise the use of measurement procedures to identify each of students learning styles. He must also be able to identify develop and maintain a variety of learning resource designed to match a variety of learning styles, and facilitating large group, small group, and individual instructional and learning activities (ibid).

Regular and routine progress monitoring is also a major task of the teacher. A variety of continuous progress mentoring system can be used to obtain performance information (ibid).

2.7.2 Students' Role

A major role of each pupil develops an understudying of his/ her/ learning preferences and then using this understanding for selecting available learning activities. It is student's responsibility to monitor his/her progress and to obtain closure in meeting instructional objectives (Dunn and Dunn, 1993; Richards and Rodgers, 2001, Pritchard,(2009). As it is revealed by Dunn and Dunn (1993), the students primary task is matching his/her learning preferences with the available learning option with the end result in the mid and

accomplishing the learning objectives in the course. The student's opportunity to take ownership for decision about how to be involved in instruction builds motivation and responsibility consequently, the student is motivated to follow thoroughly the learning activities until the content is successfully learned. Their involvement in deciding how she or he will learn a task is critical key to the success of the instructional objectives.

Students should also act as their own progress monitors and are in charge of controlling their own behavior.

They must know their assignments in regular class and agree to follow through with the required work to demonstrate success. As a part of this process, each student is expected to be aware of his/her own strengths and weakness, using strengths to compensate for weakness (ibid).

2.8 The Instructional Materials and teaching Procedures

As a teacher, considering the students' learning styles means that you will spend a lot of time in selecting, developing, maintaining, organizing and cataloging a variety of instructional resources and materials as well as a variety of lesson plans. Some students will need instructional resources and materials that are designed for global learners while others will benefit most from materials and resources designed for analytic learners. Along the perceptual dimension, some students will need materials designed for tactual or Kinesthetic learners while respond to materials designed for visual or auditory learners. As some one builds a center of instructional resources and materials, it is important to keep two criteria in mind. First, try to prescriptively accommodate the different learning styles that may emerge from the assessment of your students' learning styles. Second, the instructional materials should be designed to facilitate successful mastery of the sequence of instructional objectives for your grade or course (Dunn and Dunn 1993).

2.9 Review of related works

Mulalic et.al (2009) did a study to identify students' learning styles in Malaysia and fund out that students' preferred learning style was kinesthetic. His finding also revealed that students expressed minor preferences for visual, auditory and group learning, while on the other hand students expressed negative preference toward individual and tactile learning style.

Locally, Samuel (2001) also conducted a research on similar issue and found out that the majority of social science and natural science students of Addis Ababa University showed strong preference toward visual, kinesthetic and individual learning styles. According to him, auditory learning style was considered only as minor preference. The finding also revealed that students of both stream showed negative learning preferences toward group learning.

Similarly, Nasise (2004) did a research to identify the significance learning styles of preparatory schools' students and teachers in Addis Ababa and her finding showed that analytic learning style was the most significant and global learning style was the least significant among both students and teachers. Based on her finding, she came up with the conclusion that the effect of disparities between learning and teaching style contribute to students' negative attitude toward the subject, their inattentiveness and results in poor performance.

Besides, Mekdes (2006) conducted a research to identify if high school English lesson plans address students of different learning styles and the result depicted that the lesson plans favored analytic learners and global learners by neglecting visual, auditory and kinesthetic learning styles. Eventually, she came up with the conclusion that teachers do not have adequate awareness on how to prepare lesson plans that address students of different learning styles.

This indicates that most researchers conducted their studies to determine students' major learning preferences, minor learning preferences, and their negative learning preferences. Only Mekdes, (2006) did a study beyond the identification of students learning styles and attempted to check whether English lesson plans address students learning styles.

Though these scholars have been done researches in the area of students' learning styles, the context of syllabus, students' cultural background, and the practices of classroom instruction in relation to students' learning styles were not covered so far. Therefore, this study intends to explore if the current EFL teaching practices address students' learning styles by employing descriptive research method to obtain the result that adds the valuable insight to the teaching of English.

CHAPTER THREE: METHOD OF THE STUDY

3.1 Method

As already mentioned earlier, the main aim of the study was to explore the current EFL teaching practices vis-à-vis students' learning styles. To this end, descriptive research method was mainly found to be relevant and appropriate for this study.

3.2 Sampling

3.2.1 School

Two government elementary schools were selected for the research setting because it was believed that the schools have been implementing the model class system in which every teaching aid available at each section to facilitate students' learning.

The schools selected were: Adama Number 4 and Burka Boku elementary schools. These schools were selected because of the familiarity of the researcher to them. It was believed that the researcher could easily access these schools because of acquaintance with them. Therefore, for the selection of the sample schools, convenient sampling technique was used.

3.2.1.1 Sections

Seven grade eight sections in the sample schools were selected for the study: four from Adama Number 4 and three from Burka Boku. These sections were selected for classroom observation in consultation with the English language teachers.

3.2.1.2 Students

From each observed class, about 15 from each class (100 students) were selected for the questionnaire using systematic random sampling.

3.2.1.3 Teachers

There were seven grade eight English language teachers in the sample schools: four from Adama Number 4 and three from Burka Boku. All the seven available teachers were used as a source of data.

3.3 Data Collection procedure

The researcher first observed teachers' classroom teaching practices before administering the questionnaire and conducting interview. This was because the researcher expected that distributing questionnaire before observation would make teachers more conscious of their classroom practices, and would result in artificial behavior during observation. After the observation,15 minute orientation was given about the intention of questionnaires and were distributed to both students and teachers. Finally, the interview was administered to English teachers to obtain supplementary information.

3.4 Instruments

To obtain the relevant data, three different tools, namely, questionnaire, observation and interview were used.

3.4.1 Questionnaire

Self inventory questionnaire and questionnaire on teaching practices were administrated to students. The former helps the researcher to know students' major, minor, and negative learning preferences and the latter helps to know if teaching practices and students' learning styles match. A questionnaire for teachers was administered to elicit information about the classroom instruction. Furthermore, in both cases, closed types of questionnaires were used. Students' questionnaire was translated into Amharic so that students can understand the questions better.

3.4.2 Observation

A checklist was prepared and used for observation during this research.

3.4.3 Interviews

A structured interview was prepared and administered to elicit information from six English teachers.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected using the questionnaires and observation were tabulated and analyzed using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean. Data that were obtained through interview were described qualitatively.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis of data obtained from sample EFL students and EFL teachers through questionnaire, classroom observation and interview. The results are presented based on the responses of the participants from the two selected schools to see if the EFL teaching practices address students' learning styles. The students' learning styles are classified into major, minor and negative learning preferences based on Raid's (1987) classification as cited in Mulalic et. al (2009). Mulalic et.al, (2009) has also put mean score for each learning preference: 13.5 and above major, 11.5-13.49 minor, and 11.49 or less is negative learning preferences.

Thus, the researcher has followed such classification to determine students' learning styles. Based on this framework the researcher also tried to see if EFL teaching practices match the students that have different learning styles.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Results of students' self inventory questionnaire (Part I)

The questionnaire was administered to students and the result have been demonstrated in the following tables to show each student's learning style and how students responded to each statement.

Table 1: Students that have visual learning preference

No	Items	SA= 5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA =1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
1	I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard.	49	32	4	11	4	4.11
6	When I read instruction, I remember them better.	39	24	10	16	11	3.64
11	I like information to be presented with visual aids	52	35	7	-	6	4.27
16	When learning new skills, I will rather watch someone demonstrate the skill than listening.	51	32	10	3	4	4.23
21	I like to learn by pictures, films and videos.	38	39	11	7	5	3.95
							Ms=20.02

SA=strongly agree, A=Agree, U=undecided, DA=disagree, SDA=strongly disagree

Ms=mean score

Gmv=4.04

Gmv= Grand mean value

The result of table 1 demonstrates that visual learning style was preferred by the majority of the students: 87% of the participants agreed that they understand better from the information that is presented with visual aids. Similarly, 83% of the students confirmed that they learn better when they watch something demonstrated than listening to it. Likewise, 81% agreed that they understand better from what the teacher writes on the blackboard.Moreover, 77% of the respondents preferred learning from lessons that are presented with pictures, films and videos. Besides, 63% of students approved that they comprehend better from the instruction they read. Consequently, this depicts that students can learn better from the lesson that are accompanied by visual aids. According to

this result and the means score (20.02), students expressed major learning preference for visual learning style.

Table 2: Students that have auditory learning preference

No	Items	SA= 5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
2	I find it useful to read out loud when reading the text book.	10	15	16	26	33	2.43
7	I would rather listen to lecture than read the textbook.	12	19	20	10	39	2.55
12	I remember things I have heard in the class better than the things I have read.	14	15	23	28	20	2.75
17	I learn better in class when teacher gives lecture.	11	20	14	29	26	2.63
22	I learn better in class when I listen to someone	4	23	19	22	32	2.45
							Ms=12.81

Gmv=2.5

From table 2, we can see that only some students were in favor of auditory learning style as compared to the other mode of learning. Only 31% of the students agreed that they would like to listen to lecture than read the textbook. Similarly, 31% of the respondents agreed that they learn better in class when teachers give lecture. In addition, 29% of the respondents preferred to learn from things they have heard in the class than the things they have read. Besides, 27% of the students preferred to learn by listening to some one. Furthermore, 25% of the students also agreed with the statement "I find it useful to read out loud when reading text book. From this expression, it can be understood that below 50 per cent of the students' favored auditory learning style, whereas the majority of the students preferred the other language learning styles. Based on this information and mean score (12.81), students showed minor learning preference towards auditory learning style.

Table 3: Students that have tactile (kinesthetic) learning style

No	Items	SA = 5	A =4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
3	I prefer to learn by doing exercises and drills in the class.	6	9	36	29	20	2.52
8	When I do things in class, I learn better.	14	6	33	10	37	2.5
13	I learn better, when I make drawings as I study.	10	18	2	40	30	2.38
18	I prefer participating in role playing.	5	18	8	34	35	2.53
23	I learn more when I can make a model of something.	10	2	23	29	36	1.92
							Ms=11.85

Gmv=2.37

As can be observed from table 3 below the average level of the students were in favor of tactile (kinesthetic) learning style. Regarding item number 13, only 28% of the students confirmed that they learn better when they make drawing of something as they study. Besides, 23% of the respondents also preferred to learn through participating in role playing. Few students 20%, 15% and 12% preferred to learn through doing exercises, drills and making models in the classroom respectively. This expression implies that the majority of the students, (above 50%) disagreed with all statements that elicit information about tactile (kinesthetic) learning style.

According to the mean score (11.85) and the aforementioned information, the students showed minor learning preference towards the tactile or kinesthetic learning style.

Table 4: Students that have global learning style

No	Items	SA= 5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
4	I get my work done when I work with others.	20	37	18	16	9	3.43
9	I learn more when I study with a group.	46	25	10	13	6	3.92
14	In class, I learn best when I do activities in group.	37	33	12	13	1	3.8
19	I like to learn English by talking to my friend.	71	21	3	4	1	4.53
24	I enjoy working on assignment with two or three classmates.	40	35	15	7	3	4.02
							Ms= 19.7

Gmv=3.94

Table 4 indicates that most students agreed with the statements that elicit information about the global learning style. As it is seen, 92% of the students confirmed that they learn best when they talk to their friends. Similarly, 75% of the participants approved that they enjoy working on assignments with two or three classmates. Besides, 71% and 70% students responded that they prefer studying lesson and doing activities in group respectively. Likewise, 57% of the respondents approved that they prefer working with the others when they learn English language. In general, from this expression, the majority of the students preferred the global learning style. Thus, based on the survey of the students and the mean score (19.7), students showed major learning preferences towards the global learning style.

Table 5: Students of analytical learning style

No	Items	SA= 5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
5	I like to learn grammar	13	15	15	19	38	2.46
10	When I work alone, I learn better.	10	11	9	31	39	2.22
15	I learn better from activities that require grouping and sequencing.	7	7	6	35	45	1.96
20	I prefer working on project by myself.	9	11	8	34	38	2.23 =
25	I am good at working and solving puzzles.	6	9	16	30	39	2.57
							Ms=11.44

Gmv=2.28

From table 5, we can see that students were not in favor of analytical learning style as compared to the other learning styles. This is confirmed by the majority of the students (above 57%) strongly disagreed with the statement that elicit information about analytical learners. Only few students (14%) preferred to learn from activities that require ordering and grouping. In addition, 15% of the students were good at working on solving puzzles. Moreover, 20% of the respondents confirmed that they prefer working on projects by themselves. Besides, 21% of the students responded that they learn better when they work alone. Likewise, 28% of the students confirmed that they like to learn detail structure of grammar. This expression tells us only few students were in favor of analytical learning style; where as most of them are not. In conclusion, based on the aforementioned information and the mean score (11.44), students expressed negative learning preferences towards the analytical learning style.

4.1.2 Results of students' questionnaire that assesses the extent to which teaching practices address students' learning styles (Part II)

The results of students' questionnaire related to the instructional process have been demonstrated in the following tables to indicate how students responded to each questions.

Table 6: Teaching practices and visual learners

No	Items	A=5	O=4	S=3	R=2	N=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
1	How often does your English teacher deliver lessons by using visual aids?	19	13	27	12	29	2.81
6	How often does your teacher use different colors that hold your attention during instruction?	5	11	20	23	41	2.16
11	Our teacher presents the activities that allow us to take notes from charts and tables.	12	5	30	12	28	2.22
							Gmv=2.39

A= Always, O = Often, S= Sometimes, R= Rarely, and N=Never

As can be observed from table 6, 32% of the respondents reported that teachers deliver lessons using visual aids, while about 68% of the respondents showed that the EFL teachers do not accompany the lesson with visual aids. Only 17% of the participants responded that teachers present activates that allow the students to take note from charts and tables, whereas the majority of the students (83%) responded in the other way. Similarly, 16% of the respondents responded that teachers use different colors to hold students attention, on the other hand, most

students (84%) confirmed that teachers do not use different colors to hold students attention. The grand mean value (2.39) reveals that the instructional process and instructional materials did not consider visual learners.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the teaching learning process neglected visual learners though they showed major learning style preferences towards visual learning style (see table 1).

Table 7: Teaching Practices and auditory learners

No	Items	A=5	O=4	S=3	R=2	N=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
2	Our English teacher lectures when he presents different language items.	43	34	12	7	4	4.05
7	Our English teacher uses audio tape or radio to teach us some language skills.	20	31	15	18	16	3.21
15	Our teacher delivers lessons that require listening and then writing	30	25	20	18	7	3.53
							Gmv=3.59

The result of table 7 shows that teachers present the language skills through lecturing. This is confirmed by the majority of the respondents. To begin with item number 2, 77% of students showed that teachers lecture the language skills. Besides, 51% of the students confirmed that teachers use audio tape or radio to foster students' learning. Similarly, 55% of the students approved that teachers deliver lessons that require listening and then writing. As this result depicts, the teaching practices consider the preferences of auditory learners. In conclusion, one can say that the instructional practices highly favored students that have auditory learning style; however, the students expressed minor learning style preferences towards this learning style. This is confirmed by the

grade mean value (3.59), it reveals that the instructional practices highly favored auditory learners.

Table 8: Instructional practices and tactile/kinesthetic learners

No	Items	A=5	Oft=4	St=3	R=2	N=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
3	The teacher presents the lessons that involve role playing	28	21	28	18	5	3.49
8	How often do the instructional methods allow you to learn through doing drama?	5	7	19	30	39	2.9
14	We learn language items by playing games that involve our whole body.	5	5	20	15	55	1.9
							Gmv=2.43

As can be seen from table 8, 70% of the students responded that they do not learn language items by playing games that involve their whole body. Regarding item number 8, 69% of the respondents also agreed that teachers merely allow students to learn through performing drama. Only 49% of the students confirmed that teachers deliver lessons that require role playing. As the grand mean value (2.43) reveals the issue of tactile (kinesthetic) learners was not considered. As it is indicated in table 3, students showed minor learning preference towards tactile (kinesthetic) learning style. When we see the grand mean value of the instructional practices, and students' preferences, there is a match between tactile learners and the current instructional practices to some extent.

Table 9: Instructional practices and global learners

No	Items	A=5	O=4	S=3	R=2	N=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
4	Our teacher gets us to do activities in group during instruction.	25	20	39	12	4	3.5
9	The teacher uses group discussion method during instruction.	26	16	28	28	4	3.3
12	The instructional process involve us to write a summary for a story or short text	21	15	16	11	37	2.7
							Gmv=3.1

The results of table 9 reveals that the teaching practices least consider global learners. This is confirmed by the majority of the respondents. For instance, 64% of the students agreed that the instructional process does not involve them to write a summary for a story or short text. Likewise, 60% of the respondents were not in favor of the statement that the teacher uses group discussion method during instruction. About 55% of the participants approved those teachers do not get them to do activities in group during instruction. On the other hand, as it is indicated in table 4, students showed major learning style preference towards global learning style. In contrast when the current teaching practice is seen, it did not consider the preference of global learners. This indicates that the global learners have been least considered by the teaching practices.

Based on this result, the language teaching method that caters for global learners were not implemented in EFL classrooms. In conclusion, as the data obtained and grand mean value reveal, the global learners were not considered by the instructional practices as it is expected since the

students showed major learning preferences towards global learning style (see table 4).

Table 10: Teaching practices and analytical learners

No	Items	A=5	O=4	S=3	R=2	N=1	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
5	How often does your English teacher involve you in individual work?	28	30	20	14	8	3.56
10	How often does your English teacher deliver the instruction that requires grouping or sequencing?	34	28	10	16	10	3.54
13	We learn detail structure of grammar items.	45	30	15	5	5	4.05
							Gmv=3.72

The result of table 10 indicates, the majority of the students agreed with all items that elicit responses regarding analytical learning style. Meaning, 75% of the students confirmed that they learn detail grammar structure during instruction. About 64% of the respondents also agreed that the English teachers deliver the lessons that require grouping and ordering. Besides, 85% of the students approved that their teachers most of the time involve them in individual work. As can be seen from the grand mean value (3.72), teaching practices highly favored students that have analytical learning style preference, but from the result of table 5, the students expressed negative learning style preference towards analytical learning style.

This implies that there is a mismatch between students' learning preference and the current teaching practices.

4.1.3 Results of teachers' questionnaire that assesses the degree to which teaching practices consider students' learning styles

The results of teachers questionnaire related to teaching practices have been presented in the following table in order to show how teachers responded to each question.

Table 11: Visual learners and teaching practices

No	Items	A=5		O=4		S=3		R=2		N=1		total		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	I demonstrate the skills to students during classroom instruction.	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.2	-	-	-	-	7	100	4.28
6	The instructional process allows the students to write things down or take notes from charts and tables.	2	28.6	2	28.6	3	42.9	-	-	-	-	7	100	3.85
11	How often do you instruct your students by using visual aids?	-	-	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.2	-	-	7	100	3.28
														Gmv=3.8

F= Frequency

As can be seen from table 11, 85.7% of the teachers responded that they allow the students to write notes from charts and tables. Besides, 57.1% of the participants confirmed that they demonstrate skills to students during the classroom instruction. About 85.7% of the teachers approved that they use visual aids to facilitate their students learning. According to this result, visual learners have been considered by the instructional practices. However, the result of the questionnaire that was administrated to students revealed that the instructional practices ignore students that have visual learning style. In general the results of table

11, contradicts with the result of students' responses demonstrated in table 6.

Table 12: Teaching practices and auditory learners

No	Items	A=5		O=4		S=3		R=2		R=1		total		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
2	I deliver the skills through lecturing.	3	42.9	3	42.9	1	14.2	-	-	-	-	7	100	4.28
7	I present lesson that give opportunity for the students to listen and then write.	-	-	4	57.1	1	14.2	1	14.2	1	14.2	7	100	3.1
12	I use audio materials to teach English language skills.	-	-	1	14.2	2	28.6	1	14.2	3	42.9	7	100	3.42
														Gmv=3.6

As the result of table 12 shows, the majority of the respondents (85.7%) confirmed that they use lecturing method to deliver English language skills. About 57.1% of the teachers also agreed that they present lessons that give opportunity for students to listen and then write. However, most teachers (57.1%) responded that they do not use audio materials to teach English language skills. This reveals that only some (42.9%) of the teachers have been using the audio materials to foster students learning. From this expression, the methods that the teachers used favored students that have auditory learning styles. In general, as the data and grand mean value (3.6) reveal, the teaching practices highly benefited auditory learners even though the students showed minor learning preferences towards it (See table-2). This implies that the auditory learners are over considered by the instructional method.

Table 13: Teaching practices and tactile learners

No	Items	A=5		O=4		S=3		R=2		R=1		total		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
3	How often do you involve your students in role playing?	-	-	1	14.2	3	42.9	3	42.9	-	-	7	100	2.7
8	My instructional process allows the students to learn through acting events.	-	-	5	71.4	2	28.6	1	42.9	2	28.6	7	100	2.0
15	I present lessons to be learned through playing games that involve students' whole body.	-	-	1	14.2	2	28.6	4	57.1	-	-	7	100	2.5
														Gmv=2.4

The result of table 13 shows, only 1(14.2%) respondent reported that he involve the students in role playing, while 85.7% of the teachers sometimes and rarely deliver lessons though role playing. Regarding item number 8, the majority of the teachers (71.4%) confirmed that they do not allow their students to learn by acting events. About 85.7% of the teachers also approved that teachers merely present lessons to be learned through playing games that involve students' whole body. Besides, as the grand mean value (2.4) shows, the issue of tactile (kinesthetic) learners considered below the average level. Likewise, the analysis of data obtained from students' questionnaire (table -8) also shows a similar result. This implies that students that have tactile or kinesthetic learning style are neglected by instructional practices as it is compared to the other mode of learning.

Table 14: Teaching practices and global learners

No	Items	A =5		O=4		S=3		R=2		R=1		total		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
4	I give activities that require group discussion.	1	14.2	1	14.2	3	42.9	2	28.6	-	-	7	100	3.1
9	I let my students tell or write short summary of a story or a short text.	-	-	-	-	5	71.4	1	14.2	1	14.2	7	100	2.57
13	My students learn English skills through discussion.	1	14.2	2	28.6	2	28.6	1	14.2	1	14.2	7	100	3.1
														Gmv=2.9

From table 14, we can see that most of the respondents confirmed that global learners are least considered as the obtained data and the grand mean value reveal. For instances, 71.4% of the teachers do not give activities that require group discussion. About 71.4%, 14.2% and 14.2% of the teachers merely let their students tell or write short summary of a story or short text. Besides, 57.1% of the respondents approved that they do not teach English language through discussion. This reveals that the teaching practices, particularly the teaching method gave least consideration for global learners.

In conclusion, it can be said that even though the students expressed major leaning style preference towards global learning style (Table 4), the instructional process and English language method that the teachers used did not cater for these learners. This is also confirmed by the results of students' questionnaire (See table 9).

Table 15: Analytical learners and instructional practices

No	Items	A=5		O=4		S=3		R=2		R=1		total		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
5	How often do you allow your students to learn through individual work?	3	42.9	-	-	4	57.1	-	-	-	-	7	100	3.85
10	I emphasize on detail structure when I teach grammar.	3	42.9	1	14.2	2	28.6	-	-	-	-	7	100	3.57
14	I deliver lessons that require sequencing and analyzing.	1	14.2	3	42.9	2	28.6	1	14.2	-	-	7	100	3.57
														Gmv=3.7

These items are aimed at assessing if the instructional practices consider students that have analytical learning style. As can be seen from table 15, the majority of the respondents (57.1%) approved that they emphasize on the detail structure of grammar when they teach. About 57.1% of the teachers also agreed that they deliver lessons that require ordering and grouping. All respondents 7(100%), confirmed that they allow their students to learn through individual work. The grand mean value (3.7) of these items also approved the aforementioned results. In contrast, though the instructional practices highly favored the analytical learners, students showed negative learning style preference towards it. This implies that the way teachers delivered lessons did not mach with the way students prefer to learn.

Table 16: The mach and mismatch between teaching practices and students' learning styles

No	Learning Styles	Gmv of Learning Preferences	Gmv of teaching Practices
1	Visual	4.0	3.0
2	Auditory	2.5	3.6
3	Tactile/Kinesthetic	2.4	2.4
4	Global	3.9	3.0
5	Analytical	2.3	3.7

Gmv = Grand mean value

Gmv of teaching practices is the average result of students' part II questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire.

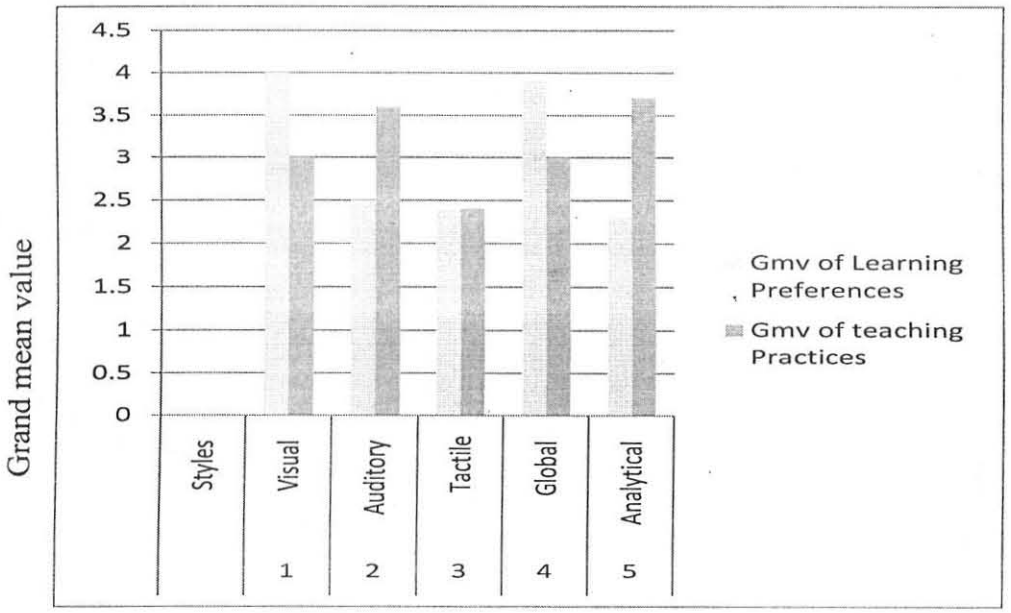

Fig 1: The graph that shows the mach and mismatch between teaching practices and students' learning styles

4.1.4 Analysis of classroom observation checklist

Each seven EFL classroom were observed twice within seven days interval to check if the teaching practices involve students of different learning styles in the instructional process. This tool was used in the EFL classrooms to check the consistency of data obtained by the questionnaires. The data obtained from the first round and second round observations are analyzed and discussed independently.

Table17: The level of involvement of visual learners in the instructional process

No	Items	First round observation				Second round observation			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Does the teacher demonstrate the skills to the learners?	2	28.6	5	71.4	1	14.2	6	71.4
6	Does the teacher use a chart that allows students to take note	1	14.2	6	85.7	-	-	7	100
11	Does the teacher use visual aids during instruction?	1	14.2	6	85.7	2	28.6	5	71.4

These items aimed at investigating what has been actually done in the classroom, and to check if teaching practices consider visual learners. From the first observation, regarding items 6 and 11, 6(85.7%) of the teachers did not use charts that allow students to take not and they did not use visual aids to help students learning. Likewise, 5(71.4%) reveals that teachers did not demonstrate the skills to their students.

The data obtained during the second classroom observation, confirmed the result of the first observation. The results obtained from the observation checklist also confirmed the result obtained from students' and teachers' questionnaire that are analyzed under tables 6 and 11.

This implies that the teaching practices, particularly the method and teaching aids that could favor visual learners were not used in the EFL classrooms.

Table 18: The extent to which auditory learners considered by the teaching practices

No	Items	First round observation				Second round observation			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
2	Does he/she lecture his/her students?	7	100	-	-	6	85.7	1	14.2
7	The teacher delivers lesson that requires to listen and then to write	4	57.1	3	42.9	4	57.1	3	42.9
12	Is there audio material that aid students' learning?	2	28.6	5	71.4	1	14.6	6	85.7

These checklist items are directly related to the issue of auditory learners. In this table, the data of the first observation reveals that 7(100%) teachers used lecturing method to deliver English language skills. Besides, 4(71.1%) shows that most teachers delivered lessons that require to listen and then write. In contract, only few teachers 2(28.6%), used audio that aid students' learning.

The data obtained from the second observation, nearly reveals the same result with that of the first observation. About 6(85%) implemented lecturing method when delivering lessons. Similarly, 4(57.1%) indicates that above the average of the teachers presented the lessons that require to listen and then write. Only1 (14.2%) teacher used radio to aid students' learning. This means, from the two observation results, the instructional materials were not used adequately.

From these results it can be said that there is a mismatch between instructional practices and students learning preferences. This is to say that students expressed minor learning preferences towards auditory

learning style (see table 2), whereas teachers considered this learning style as if the students showed major learning preferences for auditory learning style.

From overall result of table 18, it can be concluded that there is contradiction between the students' learning styles and what has been actually done in the classroom to some extent.

Table 19: The level of involvement of tactile students in different activities

No	Items	First round observation				Second round observation			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
3	Does the teacher involve the students in role playing	2	28.6	5	71.4	1	14.2	6	86.7
8	Does the instructional process allow the learners to learn through acting events?	3	42.9	4	57.1	1	14.2	6	85.7
15	Does the teacher allow his students to learn through playing games?	1	14.2	6	85.7	-	-	7	100

These checklist items intend to see if the teaching practices consider the tactile (kinesthetic) learners. As can be seen from the first observation in table 19, 6(85.7%), 5(71.4%) and 4(57.1) teachers did not allow the students to learn through playing games, acting events and participating in role playing respectively. The data obtained during the second observation also confirmed the result of the first visit. This is also approved by the results obtained from the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaire (See table 8 and 13). From this, it is implied that the attention was not given to tactile (kinesthetic) learners by the EFL classroom teaching practices.

Table 20: The level of considering global learners in the teaching practices

No	Items	First round observation				Second round observation			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
4	Does the teacher give activities that require group discussion	5	71.4	2	28.6	4	57.1	3	42.9
9	Is there a lesson that allows students to write a kind of short summary?	-	-	7	100	1	14.2	6	85.7
13	Does the teacher use discussion method during instruction?	4	57.1	3	42.9	3	42.9	4	57.1

The purpose of these checklist items is to observe whether or not global learners are considered by the teaching practices. As we can see from the data obtained during the first observation, 5(71.4%) teachers used discussion method during EFL instruction. All 7(100%) teachers did not allow students to write or tell short summary for story or short text. When we see the overall percentage of the three items (42.8%), it reveals that teachers did not consider the issue of global learners in the teaching practices.

The result of the second observation depicts similar result. Only one (14.2%) teacher allowed the students to write or tell short summary for a short text. Besides, 3(42.9 %|) of the teachers used discussion method during instruction, while 4(57.1%) did not do this. Whereas, 4(57.1%) reveals teachers tried to give the activities that require group discussion. Based on the overall result of the second observation, the teaching practices neglect global learners to some extent.

From the result of the two classroom observation, it can be concluded that the global learners were least considered by the instructional practices.

Table 21: The level of involvement of analytical learners in the classroom instruction

No	Items	First round observation				Second round observation			
		Yes		No		Yes		No	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
5	Are there activities that involve each student?	7	100	-	-	7	100	-	-
10	Does the teacher focus on grammar teaching during instruction?	5	71.4	2	28.6	6	85.7	1	14.2
14	Do the students involve activities that require measuring, categorizing and sequencing?	3	42.9	4	57.1	4	57.1	3	42.9

This checklist items strongly related to the issue of analytical learners. To begin which the first observation, 7(100%) indicates that there were activities that involve each student. Besides, 5(71.4) reveals that the teacher focused on grammar teaching during EFL classroom instruction whereas 4(57.1%) shows that students were not involved in activities that require grouping and ordering. From the overall percentage, (57.1%) of the first observation, it is possible to say that analytical students were benefited by the teaching practices.

With regard to the data obtained during the second observation, the majority of the feedback reveals that the teaching practices highly favored the analytical learners. For instance, 7(100%) confirms that each student was involved in activities that require individual work. Besides, 6(85.6%) shows that teachers focused on the teaching of structure of grammar. 4(57.1%) approves that students were involved in activities that need ordering and grouping. This also confirmed by the result of the questionnaires that were administered to students and teachers (See table 10 and 15). Thus, from the result of the two observations the instructional practices highly favored the analytical learners, while the

majority of the students showed negative learning style preference to it (see table -5).

4.1.5 Discussion of teachers' interview

Seven English teachers were selected for the interview. Four from Adama Number 4, and three from Burka Boku. Among the interviewees, one of the EFL teachers from Adama Number 4 was not voluntary to be interviewed. This tool was administered to the remaining English language teachers to obtain the information which might be left by the remaining tools. The analysis has been done by merging the responses of the interviewees together under each question.

To begin with the first question, the six interviewees were asked if they knew what learning styles are and two of them said 'yes' and tried to mention the learning styles like visual learning style, auditory learning style, kinesthetic learning, global learning style, and analytical learning style. Whereas, three interviewees could not give full answer. They mentioned only the sensory modes of learning styles such as visual learning style, auditory learning style, and kinesthetic learning

The remaining one teacher said "I could not remember for the time being".

Secondly, EFL teachers were asked whether they had tried to find out their students' learning style and one of them said "yes I tried to find out to some extent. For example, some students learn by listening, one can learn by observing, and the other learns by doing things. For instance, I know one of my students who always learns by making model of things".

However, the remaining five EFL teachers said that they did not try to find out though they know that students learn in different ways.

Regarding the question that elicits information about the method they use frequently and the method they use rarely, four of the interviewees responded that they frequently use lecturing method and they rarely use discussion method. The remaining two said that they frequently use discussion and rarely use lecturing method. But, no one responded that he/she uses demonstration, problem solving method and the other.

Their responses show that the majority of the English language teachers use lecturing method frequently and the other methods rarely.

Furthermore, the interviewees were asked the way they try to match the instructional method with the students' learning styles and six of them responded that they try to use varieties of methods in EFL classroom to match students leaning style. But, this response contradicts with what has been actually seen in the classrooms.

Besides, they were asked if they used teaching aids that foster students' learning and all of them said 'yes' and tried to mention some of them like flash card, charts, model of things, and Radio.

From this answer it can be said that they know the function of instructional aids, however, most of them did not use when the classroom observation was conducted.

Likewise, the interviewees were asked to express their thought whether EFL students learn equally from the teaching aids that teachers use and they replayed that students do not learn in the same way since the learners have different learning preferences. Besides, the interviewees were asked the way they can make use of teaching aids that can address students' different learning style and two teachers responded that they can use varieties of teaching aids that suit students of different learning styles, while the remaining four said that they can use only charts, flash cards and radio.

there are some students who get bored. Similarly, the interviewees were asked about the reason of the students' boredom and five teachers tried to forward the reason such as language problem, educational background and the attitude they have towards the English Language. But, one teacher said that the instructional method and instructional material may not cater for their learning style.

Eventually, the six interviewees were asked the way they try to accommodate the different type of learners in their classrooms and the six interviews responded that they try to use different types of language teaching methods and a variety of teaching aids in order to fit in with the learning preferences of the target learners.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study was conducted to see whether or not the English teaching practices address students' learning styles. Questionnaire and classroom observation were used as major tools, where as interview was used as a supplementary tool to collect data from sources.

Students' questionnaire has two parts: part one helps to identify students' major, minor, and negative learning preferences. The second part of it helps to assess if the current teaching practices address students' learning styles. From the analysis of self inventory questionnaire, it was found out that students' major learning preferences were visual and global learning styles. They expressed minor learning preferences towards auditory and tactile (kinesthetic) learning preferences, while they showed negative learning preferences towards analytical learning style. According to the analysis of questionnaires that were administered to students and teachers, it was found out that the current English teaching practices highly favored auditory and analytical learners. However, global and visual learners were least considered and tactile (kinesthetic) learners were neglected by the current EFL teaching practices in the target schools. The results found were also confirmed when the classroom observation was conducted. Besides, based on the analysis of the interview, the problem like lack of awareness about the students' learning styles, the absence of identifying students according to their learning styles, and inability to use methods and teaching aids that cater for students' learning styles were identified.

5.2 Conclusions

The results of the research suggest that it is important to determine and make aware about different approach to learning. The answer to the research questions indicated the mismatch between the students' learning styles and the current EFL teaching practices. This implies that the problems could be aroused from the following points:

Lack of giving attention to students' learning styles

Many factors influence students' achievement at all level. Learning styles of the students are as well one of the many factors that need to be considered when teaching EFL students. Haynes (2009), says that it is crucial to take our students' learning styles into account when we are teaching English language learners.

Lack of accommodating different learning styles in the classroom teaching

In order to accommodate different learning styles in the classroom, as Mulalic et.al (2009) say, teachers need to take into consideration for example, visual learners may prefer reading, observing more data for their interpretation or more visual aids. Tactile (kinesthetic) prefer hands-on experiences. Auditory students prefer more listening to lecture and seminar. Global learners prefer to learn when there is interaction. Analytical learners prefer to learn alone by themselves in doing individual works.

Inability to use methods and teaching aids that cater for students' different learning styles

Individual learner has preferred ways of working, thinking and learning. If an individual's preferred approach to learning tasks is ignored, there is a distinct possibility that their learning will not progress as efficiently and effectively as it might.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings obtained and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

- Teachers should give greater attention to students' learning styles and they should identify their students' most significant and least significant learning styles so as to direct the learning towards the preferred learning styles.

- Teachers should be able to identify, develop and maintain a variety of learning resource to match a variety of learning styles and facilitating different learning activities to accommodate different learning styles.
- Teachers are advised to do every thing in their power to gear their methodological and teaching aids choices to their students' learning preferences.
- Teacher trainers should adjust short training programs that could help teachers be aware of students' learning styles.

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Appendix-A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students,

I am conducting a research on the current English teaching practices in relation to your learning preferences. This questionnaire is designed to find out the way you prefer to learn English. Thus, please respond to the questions as honestly as you can.

Try not to change your responses after you choose them.

Thank you in Advance!

Personal information

Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Grade _____

Part I. Self inventory Questionnaire

Instruction. The following questions are desigened to determine your learning preferences.Please, rate each item that best describes your learning style using a tick "✓ " mark according to the following scales.

Key: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=undecided,
2= Disagree 1=Strongly Disagree

No	Items	Rating scales				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard.					
2	I find it useful to read out loud when reading the text book.					
3	I prefer to learn by doing exercises and drills in the class.					
4	I get my work done when I work with others.					
5	I like to learn grammar					
6	When I read instruction, I remember them better.					
7	I would rather listen to lecture than read the textbook.					
8	When I do things in class, I learn better.					
9	I learn more when I study with a group.					
10	When I work alone, I learn better.					
11	I like information to be presented with visual aids					
12	I remember things I have heard in the class better than the things I have read.					
13	I learn better, when I make drawings as I study.					
14	In class, I learn best when I do activities in group.					
15	I learn better from activities that require measuring and sequencing.					
16	When learning new skills, I will rather watch someone demonstrate the skill than listening.					
17	I learn better in class when teacher gives lecture.					
18	I prefer participating in role playing.					
19	I like to learn English by talking to my friend.					
20	I prefer working on project by myself.					
21	I like to learn by pictures, films and videos.					
22	I learn better in class when I listen to someone					
23	I learn more when I can make a model of something.					
24	I enjoy working on assignment with two or three classmates.					
25	I am good at working and solving puzzles.					

(Adapted from Reid, 1987 in Mulalic, 2009)

Part II. Questions related to Classroom instruction.

Instruction. The following questions are designed to assess the extent to which teaching practices address your learning styles. Please, rate each item using a tick "✓ "mark according to the following scales.

Key: 5= Always, 4= often, 3= Sometimes, 2= Rarely, 1= Never

No	Items	Rating scales				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	How often does your English teacher deliver lessons by using visual aids?					
2	Our English teacher lectures when he presents different language items.					
3	The teacher presents the lessons that involve role playing					
4	Our teacher gets us to do activities in group during instruction.					
5	How often does your English teacher involve you in individual work?					
6	How often does your teacher use different colors that hold your attention during instruction?					
7	Our English teacher uses audio tape or radio to teach us some language skills.					
8	How often do the instructional methods allow you to learn through doing drama?					
9	The teacher uses group discussion method during instruction.					
10	How often does your English teacher deliver the instruction that requires grouping or sequencing?					
11	Our teacher presents the activities that allow us to take notes from charts and tables.					
12	The instructional process involve us to write a summary for a story or short text					
13	We learn detail structure of grammar items.					
14	We learn language items by playing games that involve our whole body.					
15	Our teacher delivers lessons that require listening and then writing					

(The system is adapted from Raid, 1987 in Mulalic, 2009)

Appendix-B: የተማሪዎች መጠይቅ

ውድ ተማሪዎች በእናንተ የመማር ምርጫ /learning style/፣እና በመማር ማስተማር ዘዴ መጣጣም ላይ ጥናት እያካሄድኩኝ ነው። ይህ መጠይቅ የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት በምንዓይነት የመማር ማስተማር ዘዴ ቢቀርብ እንደምትመርጡ ለማወቅ የሚረዳ ነው። ለመጠይቆቹ እውነተኛ መረጃ በመስጠት ለጥናቱ ስኬታማነት የበኩላችሁን አስተዋፅኦ እንድታደርጉ እየጠየኩ አንድ ጊዜ የሠጣችሁትን መረጃ እንዳቀይሩ እጠይቃለሁ።

ስለትብብራችሁ አመሰግናለሁ!

I. መረጃ

ፆታ፡ ወንድ ☐ ሴት ☐

ክፍል፡ _____

II. ተማሪዎችን በመማር ምርጫቸው የሚለዩ መጠይቆች

ትዕዛዝ፡ የሚከተሉት መጠይቆች በመማር መርጫችሁ ለመመደብ የሚረዱ ናቸው። እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በጥንቃቄ አንብቡና የመማር ምርጫችሁን በ "✓" ምልክት መልሳችሁን አመልክቱ።

መፍቻ፡

5= በጣም እስማማለሁ 4= እስማማለሁ 3=መወሰን አልችልም 2= አልስማማም

1= በጣም አልስምማም

ተ.ቁ	መጠይቅ	5	4	3	2	1
1	ጥቁር ሰሌዳ ላይ የተፃፉትን በማንበብ የበለጠ እማራለሁ።					
2	ምንባብ ሲነበብ ድምፅን ከፍ አድርጎ ከሚያነቡት የበለጠ እማራለሁ።					
3	ነገሮችን በተግባር በመስራትና በማስመሰል የተሻለ እማራለሁ።					
4	በቡድን እየሰሩ መማርን እወዳለሁ።					
5	የእንግዘኛ ሰዋሰው (Grammar) መማር ያስደስተኛል።					
6	ትዕዛዞች ከማዳመጥ ይልቅ በማንበብ የበለጠ እረዳለሁ።					
7	መፅሐፍ ከማንበብ የበለጠ ገለፃን ማዳመጥ ትምህርቱን ግልፅ ያደርግልኛል።					
8	ነገሮችን እየሰራሁ ስማር የተሻለ እገነዘባለሁ።					
9	በጋራ በመሆን መጥናት የበለጠ ይመቸኛል።					
10	ለብቻዬ እየሰራሁ መማር እመርጣለሁ።					
11	የማየት ስሜትን ከሚጋብዙ መረጃ መሳሪያዎች መማር እወዳለሁ።					
12	ክፍል ውስጥ ካነበብኳቸው የበለጠ የሰሚኋቸውን በደንብ አስታውሳለሁ።					
13	እየሳሉ /እየፃፉ/ ማጥናት የበለጠ ትምህርቱን ግልፅ ያደርግልኛል።					
14	በክፍል ውስጥ መልመጃዎችን በጋራ መስራት ደስ ይለኛል።					
15	አንድ ነገር በመለካት እና በየፊርጁ በመመደብ መማርን እመርጣለሁ።					
16	አንድ የቋንቋ ክሂል ከማዳመጥ ይልቅ በእይታ መልክ ከሚቀርቡ የበለጠ እማራለሁ።					
17	መምህሬ በገለፃ መልክ ትምህርቱን ሲያቀርቡ በጣም ይገባኛል።					
18	ሚና በመጫወት (role-playing) መማር ትምህርቱን ግልፅ ያደርግልኛል።					
19	እንግሊዝኛን ከጓደኞቼ ጋር በመነጋገር መማር ያስደስተኛል።					
20	አንድ ፕሮጀክት ለብቻዬ መስራት ደስ ይለኛል።					
21	ከፊልም፣ ከስዕል እና ከቪዲዮ መማር ትምህርቱን ግልፅ ያደርግልኛል።					
22	በማዳመጥ መማር እወዳለሁ።					
23	የአንድን ነገር ሞዴል በመስራት መማር ያስደስተኛል።					
24	ከሁለት ወይም ከሶስት የክፍል ጓደኞቼ ጋር የተሠጠንን የቤት ሥራ (Assignment) በመስራት መማር ያስደስተኛል።					
25	እንቆቅልሽ መሰል መልመጃዎችን በጥሩ ሁኔታ እሰራለሁ።					

II. ስለመማር ማስተማር የሚጠይቁ መጠይቆች

ትዕዛዝ፡ የሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች ስለመማር ማስተማር የሚጠይቁ ናቸው። ስለዚህ እያንዳንዱን ጥያቄ በማንበብ መልሳችሁን በ"✓" ምልክት አመልክቱ

5= ሁልጊዜ 4= ዘወትር 3= አልፎ አልፎ 2= በጥቂቱ 1= በፍፁም

ተ.ቁ	መጠይቅ	5	4	3	2	1
1	የእንግሊዝኛ መምህራችን በማየት መማርን የሚያጎለብት መረጃ መሣሪያ በመጠቀም ያስተምረናል።					
2	መምህራችን የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ክሂሎችን በገለፃ ያስተምረናል።					
3	መምህራችን ሚና መጫወት (Role playing) በመጠቀም ያስተምሩናል።					
4	በጋራ የሚሰሩ ነገሮችን በመስራት እንማራለን።					
5	መምህራችሁ ምን ያህል በግል የሚሰሩ ስራ በማሰራት ያስተምሯችኋል?					
6	መምህራችሁ ምን ያህል የተለያዩ ቀለሞችን በመጠቀም ያስተምሯችኋል?					
7	መምህራችን ቴፕ ወይም ሬዲዮ ክፍል በማምጣት ያስተምሩናል።					
8	የመማር ማስተማ ዘዴ ምን ያህል በድራማ መልክ እንድትማሩ ያደርጋችኋል?					
9	መምህራችን በውይይት የማስተማር ዘዴን በመጠቀም ያስተምሩናል					
10	መምህራችሁ በመማር ማስተማር ጊዜ ምን ያህል ነገሮችን በየፊርጃቸው እንድትመድቡና ቅደም ተከተል እንድታሲዙ ያደርጋችኋል?					
11	መምህራችን ማስታወሻን ከቻርትና ከሠንጠረዥ እንድንፅፍ ያደርጉናል።					
12	የመማር ማስተማሩ ሂደት የአጭር ታሪክን ወይም የፅሑፍን ማጠቃለያ እንድንፅፍ(በቃለል እንድንናገር) ያደርጉናል።					
13	የእንግሊዝኛና ሰዋሰው (Grammar) በጥልቀት እንማራለን።					
14	የአካል ክፍሎቻችንን የሚያሳትፉ ጨዋታዎችን በመጫወት እንማራለን።					
15	መምህራችን አዳምጠ መባፍን የሚጠይቅ ሥራን በማቅረብ ያስተምሩናል።					

Appendix-C: Teachers' Questionnaire

I am conducting a research on the current English teaching practices in relation to students' learning styles. The questionnaire is designed to check if teachers' instruction and students' learning styles match. Thus, please respond to the questionnaire as honestly as you can.

Thank you in advance!

I. Personal Information

Sex☐ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Qualification _____

I. Questions related to classroom instruction

Instruction. The following questions are designed to assess the extent to which teaching practices address students' learning styles. Please, rate each item using a tick "✓ " mark according to the following scales.

Key: 5= Always, 4= often, 3= Sometimes, 2= Rarely, 1= Never

No	Items	Rating scales				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	I demonstrate the skills to students during classroom instruction.					
2.	I deliver the skills through lecturing.					
3	How often do you involve your students in role playing?					
4	I give activities that require group discussion.					
5	How often do you allow your students to learn through individual work?					
6	The instructional process allows the students to write things down or take notes from charts and tables.					
7	I present lesson that give opportunity for the students to listen and then write.					
8	My instructional process allows the students to learn through acting events.					
9	I let my students tell or write short summary of a story or a short text.					
10	I emphasize on detail structure when I teach grammar.					
11	How often do you instruct your students by using visual aids?					
12	I use audio materials to teach English language skills.					
13	My students learn English skills through discussion.					
14	I deliver lessons that require sequencing and analyzing.					
15	I present lessons to be learned through playing games that involve students' whole body.					

Appendix-D: EFL Classroom Observation Checklist

Name of School _____

Grade _____

Teacher's information:

Sex: ☐Male ☐Female

Qualification _____

Date of Observation ___

No	Items to be checked	Options		
		Yes	No	Remark
1	Does the teacher demonstrate the skills to the learners?			
2	Does he/she lecture his/her students?			
3	Does the teacher involve the students in role playing			
4	Does the teacher give activities that require group discussion			
5	Are there activities that involve each student?			
6	Does the teacher use a chart that allows students to take note			
7	The teacher delivers lesson that requires to listen and then to write			
8	Does the instructional process allow the learners to learn through acting events?			
9	Is there a lesson that allows students to write a kind of short summary?			
10	Does the teacher focus on grammar teaching during instruction?			
11	Does the teacher use visual aids during instruction?			
12	Is there audio material that aid students' learning?			
13	Does the teacher use discussion method during instruction?			
14	Do the students involve activities that require measuring, categorizing and sequencing?			
15	Does the teacher allow his students to learn through playing games?			

Appendix-E: Interview questions for English Teachers

Name of School _____

Teacher's information

Sex☐ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Qualification _____

Date of Interview _____

1. Do you know what learning styles are?
2. Have you tried to find out your students' learning styles?
3. Which language teaching method do you frequently use and which one do you rarely use?
4. How do you try to match your instructional method with the students' learning styles?
5. Do you use teaching aids to foster students' learning?
6. Do you think that your students learn equally from the teaching aids?
7. If not, how can you make use of teaching aids that can address students' different learning styles?
8. Are there students who get bored when you teach?
9. What do you think is the reason for their boredom?
10. How do you try to accommodate the different types of learners in your classroom?

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university, and that all the source of materials used for the thesis has been duly acknowledged.

Name: Engiz ketema kereba

Signature: [redacted]

Date: 26/05/2011