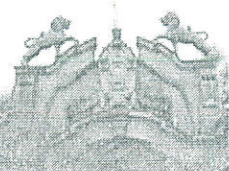
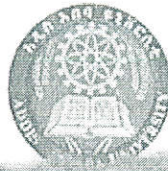


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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**THE MAJOR CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING ACTIVE  
LEARNING IN EFL CLASSES OF WOLAITA SODO  
UNIVERSITY**

**BY:**  
**HAGOS HAFTU**



MAY, 2012

ADDIS ABABA

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Hagos Haftu, entitled: The Major Challenges of Implementing Active Learning in EFL Classes of Wolaita Sodo University and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of Arts (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.



**Signed by the examining Committee**

Examiner:	<u>Gessesse Tadesse</u>	Signature	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date	<u>27/06/12</u>
Examiner:	<u>Abraham Bantegay</u>	Signature	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date	<u>27/06/12</u>
Advisor	<u>TAYE REGASSA</u>	Signature	<u>[Signature]</u>	Date	<u>22/06/12</u>

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Chair of Department or Graduate Program Coordinator



learning to bring the expected behavioral change and this is possibly, why the new education and training policy of Ethiopia calls for its implementation.

From the above discussion, it can be noted that a new paradigm shift of learning and acquiring knowledge is introduced in our education system. This implies that centering learning on teacher has been replaced by centering learning on learners.

Nowadays, various attempts have been made by the Ministry of Education to introduce active learning at higher institutions. One of these attempts is the Higher Diploma Program which is intended to improve the quality of education in Ethiopia through certifying teachers at the levels as licensed Teacher Educators (MOE, 2004). In the teachers' handbook of this program, active learning as a method of teaching to make learners participate in their learning is treated as one aspect. Instructors in Wolaita Sodo University were also taking Higher Diploma Program (HDP).

Nevertheless, the practice of active learning method at EFL classes of some higher institutions in Ethiopia is found to be discouraging. In this regard, Mengistu (2007) and Tesfaw (2007) have found the practice of active learning methods in English classes of teachers' training colleges below the expected level. In addition Yalew (2004) states that teachers are still playing dominant roles to guide and control the learning process. In the same way, my teaching experience at Wolaita Sodo University confirms the low practice of active learning in EFL classes. When individuals are assigned as graduate assistants in the university, at the beginning they are expected to observe classes of senior staffs specially those who took HDP program for an experience, but instructors were not implementing active learning. This low implementation of active learning methods in EFL classes may be the result of various factors. Therefore, it is very essential to assess the problems that both students and instructors face while implementing active learning. Besides the above mentioned assumptions, the studies which have been conducted on colleges of teachers' education focuses on the extent of the implementation of active learning.

Therefore, this study will add its share by focusing on the challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes of Wolaita Sodo University.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The major objective of this study was to investigate the major challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes of Wolaita Sodo University. Moreover, the study will have the following specific objectives.

- To explore the knowledge and perception of instructors and students on active learning.
- To identify the challenges that instructors face in implementing active learning in EFL classes.
- To assess the challenges that students face while learning EFL courses using active learning techniques.

Based on the above objectives, the following research questions were formulated to be answered in the course of the study.

- 1) What challenges do instructors encounter in attempting to implement active learning in EFL classes?
- 2) What problems do students face while learning EFL courses using active learning techniques?
- 3) Do instructors and students have adequate knowledge and favorable attitude towards active learning?

### **1.4 Significances of the Study**

The study was intended to investigate the major challenges of implementing active learning methods in EFL classes of Wolaita Sodo University. Thus, the researcher hopes that the result of the study may have the following significances.

- It may help instructors and students to have awareness on the challenges and work together to solve or minimize the challenges for better implementation of active learning.

- It may also help policy and decision makers to design viable strategy which can promote the positive perception of active learning.
- The study may serve as a supporting document for further study in the area.

### **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

This study was delimited to investigating the challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes of Wolaita Sodo University. The area is selected because of the researcher's familiarity with the place, students and instructors. The subjects of the study were also limited to students of English department (3<sup>rd</sup> Year only) and instructors who were teaching the students. Their total number was 46 and 5 respectively.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

Some of the challenges that encountered during the study were lack of cooperation among the subjects of the study. Moreover, the researcher had initially planned to audio record the interviewees. However, this plan was abandoned later as the instructors and the students were found to be reluctant to be recorded. Despite such challenges that confronted, the researcher has tried his best to conduct the research properly and effectively.

### **1.7 Definition of Key Terms**

- Active learning- refers to the active involvement of the learner on different tasks within and out of the class room such as group work, role play, discussion etc.
- Implementation- an activity put in to practice in a classroom by the teacher.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. Review of Related Literature

This chapter focuses on reviewing various literatures and research findings, which are assumed to have relevance to the study

#### 2.1- Philosophy of Instructional Approaches

The term instructional approach is interchangeably used with terms like instructional methods and instructional techniques. ICDR (1999:61) defined approach, method and techniques in the following way. An approach is a set of assumptions dealing with the nature of teaching learning. Method is an overall plan for the systematic presentation of knowledge based up on a selected approach. Whereas, technique refers to specific activities manifested in the classroom that are consistent with the method and therefore in harmony with the approach.

These three terms are thus related in hierarchical manner, with approach being the most general and technique the most specific. The fundamental point is the activities that the teacher do in the classroom grounded in approach, methodology or technique that reflect understanding of how they can be best taught.

When we come to instructional notions in the contemporary literatures, we find two general notions as the basic of knowledge in general or learning of the individual in particular. These are the positivist and constructivist epistemologists, which have been explained below (Lue. 1998).

A positivist epistemology assumes that knowledge exists separately from the learner. According to this out look, which believes that knowledge is outside there, the room for interpretation on the part of the individual or the learner is very little because knowledge is seen as being primary fixed or stable.

In this notion, the learners' task is to absorb or memorize facts or pieces of information usually taken from academic disciplines for repeating them. There is less emphasis on linking facts and moving a coherent and meaningful whole. Many educators have criticized the assumption of positivists, "the memorizing of facts and thoughts would be sufficient for successful learning". Because, if the teachers task is to repeat or give prescribed pieces of information from the syllabus or text book as sufficiently as possible this usually means using pedagogy of rote learning or chalk and talk instead of active that involves two-way-communication.

On the other hand, a constructivist epistemology assumes that knowledge is produced, constructed and made meaningful, through interaction between the individual or the learner and the world around him/her. This interaction leads to interpretation, understanding not just memorization. For the constructivists, knowledge is defined as temporary developmental, socially and culturally mediated, and thus non-objectives. Walklin (1989) stated that the world is not seen as being made up of fixed facts; rather it is viewed as unstable depending upon the interpretation of the observer or the learner. It is seen as being unified coherent and interrelated rather than being made up of separate bits and pieces of information. The learner's task is to interact with the world around him/her to understand, think, and make linkage, interpret, draw conclusions and communicate about what he/she is learning not just to absorb or accurately repeat information. In the same way, the teacher's task is to use class room methods that encourage the pupils to be active by analyzing and interpreting knowledge with active learning, higher order thinking skill, and problem solving and communication based method in their teaching.

To sum up, it is based on the above philosophical ideas that teaching methods are developed. Therefore, a conceptual analysis of the various philosophical ideas underlying the use of instructional approaches is very vital to curriculum designers, textbook writers and classroom instructors because directly or

indirectly these perspectives influence the theories or concepts of instructional material developers and the methods used by class room instructors/ teachers.

## **2.2. Instructional Methods**

There can be no teaching learning process with out the systematic selection and application of methods and techniques in the overall strategy of implementing curriculum. The major purpose of instruction is to lead the student nearer to independence and the ability to learn for himself/herself. To this effect teachers use different methods to achieve the desired effect. Thus, when a method is chosen for the wrong purpose, or started without adequate organization and preparation, it may waste time and lead to failure.

According to Smith (1986) while deciding what teaching method to use, a teacher will need to consider students background and knowledge, environment and learning goals. Therefore, since they are all tools for educating learners, they require appropriate selection and application.

Different scholars use different types of classification when referring to instructional methods. According to ICDR (1999:68) the following are among the common classification of teaching –learning approaches.

- Teacher – centered versus Student – centered
- Direct instruction versus indirect instruction
- Conventional versus non-conventional methods
- Traditional versus non –traditional method

Borich (1992) supplemented that the classification of methods as direct (teacher-centered, traditional, formal, expositing, didactic etc) or indirect (student-centered, democratic, active, informal etc) would be made on the basis of the following categories:

- 1) Source of the knowledge i.e. who is the center of 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?

### **2.2.1 Teacher – Centered Method**

Teacher centered method also known as traditional method is a method which considers learning as only matter of mastering and memorizing the skills and knowledge identified by experts in advance and transmitted by teachers (Harris, 1997 cited in Nardos, 2006). In such setting, the teacher is considered as some one who possesses knowledge and whose main task is to transmit it to students. On the other hand the role of the students is to acquire knowledge transmitted by teachers and to become consciously aware of the rules underling it (Clark, 1987).

In a traditional classroom, the teacher designs the course materials to be taught and makes all decisions concerning how the course is to be organized and taught. The teacher is also responsible to make decisions regarding the sequencing, structuring and the pace of the course. The learning process depends on the talking of the teacher where the students become passive listeners. Being dominated by teachers lecture, the teacher centered approach creates many problems to learners. For instance, Silberman (1996) confirmed that during lecturing students' attention decreases with each passing minute. As lecturing appeals to only to auditory learners, it tends to promote lower level of learning of factual information; they learn what is told by the teacher usually with out curiosity, without questioning and with less interest for inquiry. In this old model of instruction the teacher is the center of classroom activity. The teacher has been thought to hold most of the knowledge necessary for students to be successful. In this model, the teacher used the lecture method "Chalk" and "talk" or other methods of teaching in which he/she is active and the students remain passive. Here, the teacher either writes notes on the board, which the students passively copy in their exercise books or the students memorize the information from their test books. When the teacher asks questions, the students are usually expected to recall or repeat information from the lecture or form the text books.

### 2.2.2 Student – Centered (Active Learning) Method

Active learning approach according to Silberman (1996) is a collection of instructional strategies that make students do most of the work, use their own brain, study ideas, solve problems and apply what they have learnt. In addition it promotes interaction and working collaboratively which in turn promote language learning. Language learning is most effective when the learner is the initiator of the learning process. Everybody thinks of active learning in terms of students being intellectually active. By intellectually active we mean that teachers do not simply expect students to memorize and repeat facts. However, teachers should expect students to use information critically and analytically. Supporting this Nardos (2006:87) states that, in active learning the learners have a marked degree of freedom and control over organization of learning activities.

From the above arguments forwarded by different scholars, it is clear that, active learning is an essential element in education as it takes the students beyond passive listener and makes them to take some directions and initiatives during language learning.

As opposed to teacher centered method, the student centered method gives chances to students to interact, discuss, debate and ask questions, explore their knowledge through active participation. The underlying assumption here is that learning becomes meaningful when learners use it and relate it with their lives. According to Temechegn (2001), learning in a student centered method setting is not purely individualistic rather students learn through cooperation, active involvement and participation.

Many argue that learning in any form has to be active because evidences show that students learn better when they are actively involved in the learning process. In active learning, we center our planning, our teaching and our assessment on the needs and abilities of our students (Aaronson, 1996). The

main idea behind the practice is that learning is most meaningful when topics are relevant to the students' lives, needs and interests and when students themselves are actively engaged in the teaching and learning process.

In active learning method, students are not simply considered as imitators of their teachers rather they are creative thinkers. Concerning this, Silberman quoted in MOE (2004: 86) contrasts active learning with memorizing by saying.

*Real learning is not memorizing. Most of what we memorize is lost easily. Learning cannot be swallowed. 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.*

Thus in active learning method, students are not expected just to memorize information, but they are allowed to work with and use the information alone or with peers. Students are included in the decision making of the teaching learning process by deciding what and how they will learn and encourage them to take responsibility of their own learning. In active learning method, the learner has the responsibility for his/her learning, the content has relevance and meaning for the learner, the involvement and participation of the learner in learning is mandatory and the teacher acts as a facilitator than as a controller. In other words, in active learning, the teacher does not consider himself as the sole source of knowledge. His role is rather to facilitate the process of learning. In active learning, the students are not passive recipients of knowledge rather they are active learners. They not only receive information from lectures and books, they also discuss, compare, analyze, criticize, draw conclusions and communicate with each other.



### 2.3. The Importance of Active Learning

Chet et al. (1993) notice the role of active leaning in solving the loss of attention and in responding to different learning styles of learners. According to them, the importance of active learning depends on two basic assumptions.

- 1) Learning is by nature an active endeavor, and
- 2) Different people learn in different ways.

On the basis of these assumptions, they extended their argument that first students learn best when applying subject matter, in other words learning by doing; and second, that teachers who use exclusively any one instructional approach often fail to help significant number of students. As a result, both teachers and students end up with dissatisfaction.

Moreover, as Silberman (1996: 4-5) state, active learning clearly addresses the different learning styles of the students which many educators have realized. Principles of learning styles reveal that some are students of information. They prefer to write down what a teacher tells them and they are quiet in the classroom and seldom distracted by noise. But the auditory learners do not bother to look at what a teacher does or to take notes. They rely on their ability to hear and remember. Where as kinesthetic learners learn mainly by direct involvement in activities of the course. Only few students are exclusively one style of learner rather, they share more than one. Thus, different active learning methods create the best match for students with different learning styles.

In line with the above ideas, ICDR (1999:65-66) lists some basic points on why active learning is considered to be so important. These are:-

- Teaching is effective only when students are learning
- Learning is effective only when it is meaningful to students

- Learning is meaningful only when students can use it, connect it to their lives or actively participate in it.
- Memorizing facts and bits of knowledge alone is not effective learning.
- It is to damage young learners, when one tries to teach them only by giving facts. Because it is preventing meaningful learning.
- Learning facts alone doesn't prepare students to understand their environment or function effectively in it: it does not prepare them to understand and participate in a complex world.
- Learning must prepare students to solve problems and to use information from their environment and other sources and to make a better life for themselves, their families and their communities (Dewey, 1949).
- Students must be encouraged not only to learn facts but also to investigate, to understand the world round them, to analyze, draw conclusion and communicate; in other words, to think deeply.
- We must encourage students to use higher-order thinking skills (analyzing, comparing, drawing conclusions) and move away from the exclusive use of lower order thinking skills, which is memorizing (Borich, 1992).
- When we give students facts and knowledge to memorize, we must encourage them to use it actively and critically and connect it to the world they know.

This hand book, further elaborates why active learning methods and activities are useful to promote effective learning in the following ways.

- We all remember much more when we are active and when we participate.
- Activities help to make meaningful connections.
- Learning how to learn or thinking is more important than memorizing facts.
- Active learning leads to long last knowledge.

- Active learning encourages participation, analysis and critique, which are higher order thinking skills.
- Active learning prepares students for participation in a democratic society.

## **2.4 Active Learning in the Ethiopian Education Context**

The curriculum reform initiated in 1994 in Ethiopia after adoption of the New Education and Training policy has led to extensive changes in education. One of the changes is the paradigm shift in the model of teaching which involves the shift from rote learning to active learning and the shift from a linear to an integrated curriculum (Leu, 1998:1).

This change has brought a major paradigm shift in our thinking about education and the meaning of knowledge and learning. In relation to instructional method, the ideas like active learning approach, student centered method, problem solving, discovery learning, and the use of higher order thinking skills etc have introduced through this reform.

To state more precisely, the major changes in the curriculum reform include the shift from the traditional passive learning to the new model of participatory, active learning. In other words, the shift is from learning through memorizing and repeating information to learning through discovery, analyzing and problem solving. Similarly, in the teacher education system, there have been continual changes in the curriculum since the new educational reform in the country. Particularly, at present, the teacher education program is guided by the TESO document (MOE, 2003). This document states that passive learning has to be replaced with active, learner focused education.

Also, the new education and training policy of Ethiopia requires the development of the physical and mental potential and problem solving capacity of individuals. It is expected to cultivate the cognitive, creative, productive and

appreciative positional of citizens by appropriate relating education to environmental and social needs (TGE, 1994).

Thus, its intention is to prepare teachers who can promote active learning and the development of problem solving skills through a learner centered approach, using a curriculum where content and methods are integrated.

## **2.5 Principles of Active Learning**

In order to improve higher learning, there are fourteen general research based principles of active learning. These principles are:

- 1) Active learning is more effective than passive learning. Active learning occurs when students invest energy in activities to make learning meaningful. Students might explain concepts to others or paraphrase the concept for different evidences. These can be assessed for accuracy and appropriateness.
- 2) Learning requires focused attention and awareness of the important of what is to be learned. One of the most difficult tasks for learners particularly in a new subject is to sort out what to pay attention to. They cannot tell what the essentials are. You can help students by giving them guidance, such as the objectives or key points. Ask students to identify what they think are the key points at the end of a class.
- 3) Learning is more effective and efficient when learners have explicit, reasonable, positive goals and when their goal fits well with the teacher's goal. Learners achieve best when they are clear what is expected of them. Ask students to identify their own learning goals and compare with yours. Assess and share goals through the semester.
- 4) To be remembered, new information must be meaningful connected to prior knowledge and it must be remembered to be learned. If students can make meaningful connection between what they already know and what is new, they will remember better and be able to use new information.

- 5) Unlearning what is already known is often more difficult than learning new information. Misconceptions are a real barrier to new learning; check what students 'know' by asking diagnostic questions. This will help find a starting point for your teaching.
- 6) Information organized in personally meaningful way is more likely to be retained, learned and used. Students learn in different ways. Introduce them the different methods of recording and learning information diagrams and pictures as well as prose. Help them relate their knowledge to 'real life' situations.
- 7) Learners need feed back on their learning, early and often, to learn well; to become independent, they need to learn how to give themselves feed back. Regular feed back helps students make progress; positive feedback is a good motivator and creates a positive interaction between teacher and student.
- 8) The way in which learners are assessed and evaluated powerfully affects the ways they study and learn. Ensure that students are aware of how they will be assessed. Make sure that assessments are designed to assess the kinds of knowledge skills and attitudes you want to promote. Then 'learning for the exam/test' will be of benefit.
- 9) Mastering a Skill or body of knowledge takes time and effort- Students need to be aware that mastery of a subject takes time and effort. It cannot be achieved simply by attending class. They need to be good time managers and use and control their time effectively.
- 10) Learning to transfer, to apply previous knowledge and skills to new contexts, requires practice. If you think this is valuable, then you need to make this explicit and not expect students to be able to recognize where the transfer of knowledge (skills) and attitudes immediately. Challenge students to develop their own examples.
- 11) High expectations encourage high achievement – students achieve more when working with teachers with high expectations. Find out what expectations students have of themselves; make your expectations of them explicit. Develop their self confidence. Be a good role model.

- 12) To be most effective, teachers need to balance levels of intellectual challenge and instructional support. Provide 'scaffolding', specifically for first years, to help your students build knowledge with confidence. Different students will require different amounts of scaffolding. Use more able students to help others.
- 13) Motivation to learn is alterable; it can be affected by the task, the environment, the teacher and the learner. Make sure students understand the relevance and value of what you are teaching. Encourage them and give them confidence.
- 14) Interaction between teachers and learners is one of the most powerful factors in promoting learning; interaction between learners is another. If students believe that teachers care about them they are more likely to want to work hard and be successful. Learning names and acknowledging individuals is a good start. Working together on tasks that can be completed more effectively in a group encourages positive interaction and mutual support.

**Source: Angelo, 1993 cited in MOE 2004:85**

## **2.6 Major Active Learning Methods**

To be effective, teachers must use different active learning method because current thinking and practice in education highly focuses the need to actively involve in different active learning techniques. To this end, there are a wide range of methods and techniques for active learning. The major methods are explained below.

- 1) **Problem solving** – The problem solving approach is not a single strategy rather it is a general strategy in which many different techniques are found. Problem solving is a process of producing or closing a perceived problem gap. When a solution is proposed, its effect on reducing the gap can be evaluated and adjustments made accordingly, which is known as means and analysis. In the process of problem solving activity, the most important thing is the students should generate more ideas about the

stated problem for major stages of the process (Newell and Simon, 1972, in ICDR, 1999).

According to Clark and Star (1986), the problem solving approach has the following stages.

- The learner becomes aware of the problem
- The learner defines and delimits the problem
- The learner gathers evidence that may help to solve the problem
- The learner forms a hypothesis as the solution to the problem
- The learner tests the hypothesis and
- The learner solves the problem or restarts, if not solved.

To sum up, problem solving involves formulating new answer, going beyond the simple application of previously learned rules to create a solution. Thus, a learner educated through problem solving method will be able to fit in to the ever- changing world.

- 2) **Role Play** – Role play is when the students or group of students are given a role to play out in the class. This could be a situation they have to act out, or a person they have to dramatize. The instructor provides either real or imaginary contexts along with a range of relevant characters/ roles, and then to improve dramatic interactions among their characters during class periods.
- 3) **Brainstorming** – This is when the students generate as many ideas as possible about a topic. It can be a great way to start a class on any given topic and it may be done in number of different ways such as in group (recording their ideas on chart, paper), in pairs or as a whole class with the teacher (or students) writing the ideas on the board or chart paper. It is a great way of finding out what the students already know on a subject.
- 4) **Field Trip** – This may include variety of methods like field visit, attachment and internship. This method involves moving learners out of

the classroom. It aims at promoting the experience of the learners and assisting them to acquire knowledge and skills directly from the real world. It requires selecting appropriate and relevant topic, clear plans and guidelines, arrangement and cooperation of host organization and sometimes materials input. Its advantage is since it relates learning to real situation, there is more opportunity to gain wide range of knowledge and skills, it also gives a chance to learners to apply and test in practice what has been learned in theory (Melese kidane, 1999).

- 5) **Discovery Learning** – Psychologists like Bruner (1966), who were well known advocates of discovery learning, argues that education should emphasize the structure of a particular discipline an important causes rather than fact. Instead of just memorizing certain facts, to discover them for ourselves, will be interested because the information will stay with every individual long lasting and most importantly. The discovery method of teaching is a frequent description of mode of instruction that is contrasted with other forms of instruction like teacher centered. Discovery learning is the opposite of reception or being told or being passive. In short, according to Bruner, students should be taught key principles and concepts; while teachers must organize their teaching materials around central concepts and principles, connected in a meaningful manner. This implies that students should be allowed to discover principles inductively which leads to a particular way of teaching concepts.
- 6) **Panel Discussion** - Panel discussion is one of the participatory methods of instruction. In panel discussion or debate, there are generally two sides, each with opposing views (Walkline, 1989:95). Usually, a question or preposition is put forward and each side takes its turn to speak for or against the assumption. The participants (learners) are mainly concerned with destroying one another's arguments or putting forward opposing interpretations of evidence under review during the debate. As method of instruction, it helps to welcome different and opposing views on a topic.

It encourages learners to express their views and other learner's point of view.

- 7) **Group Work-** Group work is a 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, students who work individually and come together in groups to compare and discuss the results of their group. It could be organized inside the classroom, in the school compound or outside of the school compound. This method can be done in a number of ways from simple group activities that can take few minutes to more complex activities, which take the whole period and possible, continue over a week or more. Moreover, group work suits almost all types of subject areas across the curriculum and fits in to all kinds of learners in order that they acquire and develop desired knowledge, skills and attitudes (Melese Kidane, 1999).
- 8) **Discussion** One of the important learner centered activities is discussion in the classroom. Discussion can be organized by groups or for the whole class. There are three kinds of discussions: prescribed, guided and open. Prescribed discussion is characterized by predetermination of ideas concerning the content and outcome of the discussion by of the teacher.. In the guided discussion, the teacher gives key points or raise question to the group discussion, no intervention during discussion except to point the discussion procedure. In the open discussion, the teacher even sets or negotiates the title for the discussion, he/she states his/her view point with respect to the point raised and encourages the students to evaluate their discussions (ICDR, 1999:92-93).
- 9) **Peer Teaching** – Peer teaching is a participatory, active and democratic strategy integrated in to the students own experiences that result in deep learning. Peer teaching involves occasional use of students in the class who have experiences because of their good background in particular area. The merit of peer teaching is that each group or member benefits from each other's activities, sharing the experience. Peer teaching can

solve the problem of large class size and it may release instructor's time for personal research or for producing resource based learning materials (Bennet et al., 1996:38).

- 10) **Project work** – Project work can bring into the classroom aspect and dimensions of life that the textbooks or other instructional materials do not. A project can emanate from the classrooms or at home depending on the role that the teacher plays in the origin of a projects. In project method, tasks or topic are selected, worked, organized and presented to the class. Thus, projects do the function of bringing in to the classroom aspects and dimensions of experiences that are not ordinarily available to the classroom. (Dewey, 1949)

## **2.7 Major Obstacles in the Practice of Active Learning**

Despite the evidence to the benefits of active learning, many instructors are not seen implementing active learning in their classes. Different scholars have also noted that the effective implementation of active learning can be influenced by a multiple factors. The most common ones are discussed below.

### **2.7.1- Teachers and Students Resistance to Change**

People are the key to any implementation but at the same time they are not always ready to accept change. Teachers may view changes as just signaling more work: something else to add on the already overloaded schedule for which little or no time is allotted. According to Lue (2000: 13), teachers feel to have succeeded in the school system as it has existed and would like to continue safe. Plass (1998:317) indicated that resistance to change is the greatest challenge to the implementation of active learning. It comes from the external pressures of those in power, from the internal psychological drives of teachers and from students' and teachers' perceptions about who does what in the class room. Brindley (1984) cited in Plass (1998) states that by the time teachers and students meet for the first time, they may bring with them different expectations concerning not only the learning process in general but also

concerning what will be learned in particular course and how it will be learned which in turn affect their activities in classroom.

The other reason for resistance is teachers and students past experience. If students come with an experience of being passive in class, they may resist to the application of student- centered method. Besides teachers themselves having been taught that way, stick to teacher centered which may believe it as safe and comfortable.

Generally, in order to be effective with change, there must be a consensus. Plass (1998:317) states that change can be threatening: it brings feelings of inadequacy, it upsets cozy routines, it is hard to predict outcomes and involve an apparent loss of status or power. Therefore, in order to make any change in the classroom, teachers and students should aware the mechanisms by which real change is brought and more believe in the need for and possibility of change.

### **2.7.2 – Teachers' Attitude towards Active Learning**

The attitude of teachers in implementing active learning in their classes is a determinant variable and their attitude towards active learning largely depends on the epistemology they adhere. In other word, teachers who strongly support the positivist epistemology as described in 2.1, assume that the teacher is the only source of knowledge and knows best. Teaching takes a predominate role over learning and pupils are assumed to be “empty vessels” to be filled by the teacher (Plass, 1998:311). This discloses that teachers who are infavor of positivist epistemology could have negative attitude towards active learning.

On the other hand, there are also teachers who view knowledge as it is produced through the interaction between the learner and the world around him/her which is a constructivist epistemology. The interaction leads to interpretation and understanding, not just memorization (Lue, 2000:4).

To sum up, various research findings confirm that there is a strong tie between teacher's attitude towards active learning method and their effort in implementing it.

### **2.7.3 Learners' Attitude Towards Active Learning**

In active learning classroom, students are encouraged to develop autonomous learning and problem solving skills. Capel et al. (1995:230) state that active learning provides learners with great personal satisfaction, more interaction with peers, promotion and shared activity and team work, greater opportunities to work with a range of pupils, and for all members of the class to contribute and respond.

Getting students to work together cooperatively in groups can be a challenge. There are personal clashes, there are also individuals who see group work as an opportunity to let others carry the load, and those who take control and dominate at the expense of others participation.

In short students' positive attitude towards cooperative learning which pave way for good implementation of active learning has great advantage. Moreover, if students have appropriate perceptions towards active learning; they could develop their confidence in practicing it.

### **2.7.4 Teacher Training**

Producing well-trained and competent teachers involves both equipping the prospective teachers with the necessary knowledge in their area of specialization and development of skills that enable them to effectively transfer their theoretical knowledge in to practice.

However, when we see the traditional training of teachers in Ethiopia, the theoretical and practical aspects of training have not been well integrated. MOE (2003) asserted that the practice of teacher education focused on the theoretical aspects of subject knowledge. Thus, if classroom learning is to be

effective, teacher educators must be well trained and should be ready to take the responsibility of teaching.

### **2.7.5 Class room Size**

According to Lue (2000: 17), teachers who have many students in over crowded classroom often say that it is certainly not suitable to provide activities and group works. Many practical activities, problem solving, or other learner centered activities in over crowded classroom with many students are impractical and complicated. Silberman (1996:9) also added that the physical environment in a class room can make or break active learning. If furniture is movable, it could be possible to use different layouts for active learning techniques.

### **2.7.6 Shortage of Time**

If teachers use active learning strategies in their class, it is obvious that the amount of available lecture time devoted to content coverage reduces to some extent. According to McCartney (1994:159), time in learning is classified in to two; allocated and engaged time. The allocated refers to the time during which students have the opportunity to learn, on the other hand, engaged time is the part of allocated time when students are actually exhibiting on task.

According to ICDR (1999), active learning method does not necessarily take a great deal of time. It just needs the teacher to approach learning in different ways: step back, set problem, create a learning environment, help students to set problem and help students to find an answer.

### **2.7.7 The Organization of Curricular Materials**

The organization of curriculum materials (syllabus, textbooks, teacher's guide and other materials) has great impact on the implementation of active learning. Lue (2000) stressed that material developers should design and organize curricular materials that invite active involvement of learners and teachers

must participate in curriculum material development and improvement to contribute a practical, experience based prospective of learning environment.

However, according to ICDR (1999:50), most of the textbook and manuals do not incorporate active learning. This to mean that they only use one way interaction where the learners only react what has been written but no way respond to the materials. Therefore, the implementation of active learning is highly dependent on the development of active learning materials.

### **2.7.8 Shortage of Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials play a vital role by giving opportunity to the learner to learn by themselves and enhance learners' participation through active engagement activities. According to Brown (1994) the roles of instructional materials are to: ensure longer retention of the information gained, motivate the students to pay attention to the lesson, give opportunity to learn through engagement and immediate action use of all senses and muscles, and to help students to integrate prior experience with the preset varying from abstract to concrete.

However, in most instructions, the lack of language laboratory, sufficient audio-visual aids, and shortage of learning modules account for the low implementation of active learning in language class.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESERCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the major challenges of active learning implementation in EFL classes of Wolaita Sodo University. To conduct the research, a descriptive survey method was used on the ground it would help to show the general picture of challenges of implementing active learning methods. Descriptive survey method helps to have general understanding of the challenges by studying the current status, nature of prevailing conditions, practices and trends through relevant and précised information.

#### **3.2 Research Setting**

This study was conducted in Wolaita Sodo University which is found in the southern part of Ethiopia and 370 km far from Addis Ababa. The University was purposively selected by the researcher because of his familiarity with the students and staff members which facilitates easy access to the necessary information for the study. Third year students from English department were the target population because the researcher believed they can give better information on challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes as they have more than five semester stay in the university.

#### **3.3 Subjects of the Study and Sampling Producers**

The sources of data for the study were instructors and students of English Department in Wolaita Sodo University. According to the information the researcher obtained from the department, there were 52 third year students and five instructors offering different courses for them.

Out of the 52 students, 6 were used for pilot study by selecting them randomly. Therefore, the actual subjects of the study were selected using available sampling.

### **3.4 Instruments of Data Collection**

#### **3.4.1 Observation Checklist**

Lewy (1977) noted that observation is useful to indicate how the lesson is divided into variety of activities such as individual work, group / pair work, whole class activity and others. The observation checklist was designed to examine the students and instructors activities during the lesson and to identify challenges that affect the implementation of active learning in EFL classes. The items were adapted from Taye Geressu (2008). The checklist has three parts. The first part is designed to examine the classroom conditions; the second part is for the activities that instructors perform while using active learning techniques and the last part is about students' roles and activities while learning EFL courses using active learning.

Two instructors were randomly selected for the observation and were observed three times each with a co observer; an instructor selected from the department randomly. The average agreement calculated for each of the lesson observed was 86.9% and 82.6%. According to Good and Brophy(1990) cited in Taye (2008) observers should achieve general agreement from 60-90% to get reliable data.

#### **3.4.2 Questionnaire**

Two kinds of questionnaires were prepared to be filled by instructors and students. Both the questionnaires contained three parts. The first part was intended to gather background information of the students and the instructors. The second part of the questionnaires consisted of items that were intended to investigate the challenges of implementing active learning methods. The last part which was adapted from Taye (2008) was prepared to assess the knowledge and perception of instructors and students on active learning.

#### **3.4.3 Interview**

The interview guide was prepared for both EFL instructors and students who were selected for the interview. The interview for both instructors and students

consisted of eight questions which were semi structured. Two interviewees were selected randomly from the total of 46 students. Further, the instructors who were observed were at the same time interviewed.

### **3.5 Methods of Data Analysis**

In order to investigate the challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes, the data gathered through questionnaire, interview and observation were analyzed in the following ways.

First, responses of the data gathered through close ended questions were tallied, tabulated and presented in frequency counts. Then percentages were calculated and used to analyze to responses based on the frequency counts. The mean values were calculated for the questions which were prepared in Likert scale format. The questions were prepared to explore the knowledge and perception of the students and instructors.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedures**

The data needed for the study were collected through questionnaire, interview and observation according to the following procedures. The questionnaires were distributed to the students with the presence of the researcher in the classroom. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and gave necessary explanation when raised by the students. The EFL instructors' questionnaire was distributed when the instructors were available in the department.

After collecting the questionnaire, the researcher conducted an observation with his co observer in classes of two randomly selected instructors. The co observer was selected randomly from the researcher's colleagues and he has M.A in TEFL. Then each instructor was observed three times at different times. Two randomly selected students and the observed instructors were interviewed after the observation.

### **3.7 Pilot Study**

The objective of the pilot study was to test and improve instruments and to have awareness about possible problems that might encounter while administering the actual instruments.

Participants of the study were selected from third year students and instructors having similar qualification and work experience as the main subjects. For this purpose 6 students out of the total 52 and four instructors out of the total 17 were randomly selected for the pilot study.

Based on the information obtained from the pilot study, the instruments were revised. Two items from the students' questionnaire that were detected as confusing to participants to respond were paraphrased.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Data**

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

This section attempts to present and analyze the collected data in response to the questions which were raised in the first chapter. Thus, the data are presented in tables and analyzed using percentage, mean value and descriptive statements.

##### **4.1.1 Background Information of the Respondents**

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 the study has been gathered from students and instructors of Wolaita Sodo University. A total of 51 respondents were included in the study. Forty six of them were students and five of them were instructors. All the instructors were male and qualified with masters degree. The experience of the instructors ranges from one year to six years. When we see their work load per week, four of them have twelve credit hours and the remaining has only six.

Regarding the students, out of the total 46, 16 of them were females and the rest 30 were males. They have 18 credit hours load per week. The students reported that they have already taken methodology course which is aimed at equipping them with the different methods of teaching including active learning.

##### **4.1.2 Data Obtained Through Students' Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was developed to students to investigate the challenges they face and to assess their knowledge and perception of active learning. Their responses were analyzed and presented below.

**Table 1: The Instructional Methods Teachers Use in Classes**

No	Items	F	%
1	When you were at high school, which instructional method did your teachers widely use while teaching English?		
	A) Teacher – Centered	35	76
	B) Student – Centered	8	17
	C) both	3	7
2	Which instructional method do your instructors use while teaching EFL courses in your classroom at your current level?		
	A) Teacher – Centered	10	22
	B) Student – Centered	11	24
	C) Both	25	54

As it is shown in the above table, students were asked to tell the instructional method that teachers use during their high school level, majority of the respondents (76%) asserted that teacher centered was the dominant method. And another 17% of the respondents replied that student - centered was widely used by the teachers. The rest 7% answered that both teacher -centered and student - centered were applied in their class during their high school education. Students were also asked to identify the instructional method that instructors implement in their current level and 54% of the respondents replied that both teacher-centered and student- centered were widely used in their classes while learning EFL courses. This implies that active learning techniques were used by majority of the instructors and students were learning EFL courses in meaningful way.

**Table 2: Students' Response on Whether Instructors Face challenges in using actives learning**

No	Items	F	%
1	Do you observe instructors facing problems in using active learning during teaching EFL courses?		
	A) yes	35	76.
	B) No	11	24
	C) Uncertain	-	-
2	If your answer to item '3' is 'yes', which of the following do they face? (you can select more than one)		
	A) Lack of commitment	9	20
	B) Lack of awareness	15	33
	C) Lack of skills of selecting appropriate active learning technique	23	50
	D) Lack of mastery of the subject matter	4	9
	E) If any other please, specify _____		

Item 1 in the above table was about whether students observe instructors facing challenges in using active learning during teaching EFL courses. Majority (76%) of the respondents confirmed that their instructors were facing challenges while implementing active learning. The rest 24% of the students replied that instructors were not facing problems while using active learning. For those who observed their instructors facing problems in implementing active learning, they were asked possible challenges that might hinder them. 50% of them reported that lack of skills of selecting appropriate active learning technique was the most visible challenge. The other 33% and 20% of the respondents suggested that lack of awareness and lack of commitment were the problems facing instructors in EFL classed respectively. This shows that there are instructors who lack awareness on active learning. Besides if instructors use an active learning technique without considering the type of activity, it may have an impact on its implementation.

**Table 3: Challenges Related to materials, classroom condition and students and instructors interest**

No	Items	Response					
		Yes		No		Uncertain	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Is there unavailability of instructional materials to practice active learning?	31	68	10	22	5	10
2	Are there adequate activities and exercises in the materials to practice them using active learning technique?	15	33	29	63	2	4
3	Does the number of students (large class size) hinder the implementation of active learning? If yes, how?	31	67	15	33	-	-
4	Are the arrangements of chairs and tables in your classroom suitable to work in different group activities? If no, why	36	76	8	20	2	4
5	Do your instructors lack interest on using active learning in your class?	18	40	28	60	-	-
6	Do you have the interest to engage yourself in different techniques of active learning? If no, why	32	69	14	31	-	-

One of the possible factors in the course of active learning implementation may be unavailability of instructional materials. In this regard, as it is indicated in the above table, 68% of the respondents showed that there is unavailability of instructional materials. In the same way, a number of respondents (22%) assured that there are sufficient instructional materials to practice active learning in their classes. This shows that students were facing shortage of instructional materials which could highly effect the implementation of active learning. Besides, the adequacy of activities and exercises in the course materials is among the affective factors in practicing active learning. In line with this, as can be seen in item 2 of the above table, 63% of the respondents reported that there are no adequate exercises and activities in the course materials to practice them using active learning techniques. 33% of the respondents replied that there are adequate activities and exercises in the course materials. The remaining 4% of the students were not certain about the

adequacy of exercises and activities. It can be deduced from the major respondents that the materials lack activities and exercises that can invite active involvement of learners in active learning.

One assumption that is considered as affecting factor in the course of active learning practice is related with class size. Students were asked whether large class size hinder the implementation of active learning. 67% of the respondents replied that large class size impedes the implementation of active learning. The other 33% of the subjects reported that it is not an affecting factor in the course of practicing active learning. Those who agreed that large class size hinders the implementation of active learning were also asked to give reasons on how it affects. They gave the following reasons.

- It creates difficulty for the instructors to give activities for all the students in the class.
- It takes much time to give chance to the students in the class in order to reflect their views on the given activities.
- It creates a problem in classroom management.

It was also observed that instructors were facing problems in giving activities which need presentation as the number of students was large.

The next item (item 4) is concerned with one of the major factor that may promote or impede the practice of active learning techniques. As can be seen from the table, 76% of the respondents replied that the arrangement of chairs and tables is suitable to work in different group activities. This was also confirmed by the actual classroom observation. Students were able to move the chairs easily when asked to form groups for discussion. On the other side, 20% of the respondents replied that they are not suitable. Those students were asked to give their reasons and are listed below.

- Though the chairs are movable, there is usually unnecessary noise while moving them to form groups.
- It takes time to move the chairs for different purposes. This will have an impact on the teaching and learning process.

This shows that if chairs are easily movable, instructors can give different activities to be done in various forms of groups and layouts.

The next item (item 6) is about students' interest on active learning. It is obvious that if students have appropriate perceptions towards active learning, they could develop their confidence in practicing it. To this effect students were asked whether they were interested when engaged in active learning techniques. Majority (69%) of them asserted that they have the interest to do EFL activities using student-centered techniques. This was also observed during the classroom observation. Majority of the students were interested in doing activities in different group activities. Therefore, this may pave way for good implementation of active learning in EFL classes.

The last item is open ended requesting students to forward other factors that hinder the implementation of active learning in their classroom. The listed ones are summarized as follows.

- There is always domination. Some active students wanted to do every activity by themselves without sharing with their group members.
- Instructors don not motivate us to work different activities
- There are some students who are reluctant
- There is difference in students' background

Generally, it can be concluded that there were many factors impeding students from learning EFL courses using active learning and these may influence the practice of it in English classes.

**Table 4: Knowledge and Perception of Students on Active Learning**

No	Items	5=S. Agree		4= Agree		3=un decided		2=Dis Agree		1=S.D. Agree		$\Sigma_{v.f}$	$X = \frac{\Sigma_{v.f}}{N}$
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	A good instructor is some one who prepares notes for study from the text.	2	4	8	18	-	-	19	41	17	37	97	2.1
2	Learning occurs when student are silent and listen to their instructors.	4	9	5	11	3	6	14	30	20	44	97	2.1
3	Students should take self responsibility for their own learning.	10	22	15	33	1	2	9	20	11	23	142	3.1
4	Learner-centered method makes the teacher free but busy for the students.	8	17	14	30	4	9	9	20	11	24	137	2.9
5	Learning is meaningful when students discover knowledge rather than receiving it from the teacher.	14	30	20	43	1	3	5	10	6	14	177	3.8
6	Students learn more when each and every activity is done by the teacher.	4	8	7	16	-	-	18	40	17	36	101	2.2
7	Students learn more when what they learn is related to their environment.	19	42	14	30	3	6	7	16	3	6	177	3.8
8	Teachers should not give assignments on issues which are new to students.	14	30	16	36	5	10	5	10	6	4	165	3.6
9	Students should participate in deciding what should be learned and what methods should be used in class.	19	42	10	22	2	5	9	19	6	12	165	3.6
10	The role of teachers should be limited to facilitating rather than controlling.	17	38	10	22	5	10	7	15	7	15	171	3.7

Before implementing any method in to practice, the concerned bodies should have adequate knowledge and appropriate perception about the method. Otherwise, it might not be properly implemented. To assess students' perception and knowledge about active learning, statements were given and asked students to show their agreement or disagreement. The analysis is given below.

In the above table item 1 states "A good instructor is some one who prepares notes for the study from text". 18% of the students showed their agreement. About 41% of them showed their disagreement and 37% of the respondents strongly disagree with the idea. The mean value of the response is 2 and this implies students disagree with the idea. This indicates that students believe instructors should use various techniques that can make them active participants in their learning. The role of students is more than absorbing what is said by the teacher. For the next item which states "learning occurs when students are silent and listen to their instructors", 30% of the respondents showed their disagreement and 44% of them strongly disagree with the idea. This indicates that students should not be passive in the teaching and learning process. They need to actively engage themselves in the process for better learning. Item 3 states "students should take self responsibility for their own learning." The statement is supported by the majority of the respondents. 22% of them showed their strong agreement and 33% of the students agree with the idea. The rest 43% of the respondents disagree with the idea and the remaining 2% were neutral. From the above data it can be deduced that teaching is not the only the responsibility of instructors. Students should also take part in their own learning.

In item 5, the respondents were asked whether they believe learning is meaningful when students discover knowledge rather than receiving it from the teacher. In responding to the item, 73% of the respondents supported the idea and about 24% of them opposed the idea. This indicates that majority of the students believe that learning should focus on activities that are relevant and

useful to the life of the learners than just learning by memorizing facts that may have no connection with the learners' life. The next item states "students learn more when each and every activity is done by the instructor." The issue was opposed by the majority of the respondents (76%). The remaining 24% supported the idea. This shows that majority of the students are aware that they should take part in doing activities. Activities should be done by the learners' themselves in order to promote active learning. In item 7, the students were asked whether they believe students learn more when what they learn is related to their environment. 72% of the respondents supported the idea and 20% opposed it. Relating what is learnt to their environment may help students to engage themselves in problem solving. This in turn will support them to familiarize themselves with the real life.

Item 10 which say, "The role of teachers in teaching learning process should be limited to facilitating rather than controlling." was supported by 72% of the respondents. From the above results, it can be concluded that most students seem to have positive attitude and were aware of active learning.

#### **4.1.3 Analysis of Instructors' Questionnaire**

The major objective of the research is to investigate the major challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes. Therefore, a questionnaire was developed in order to investigate the problems that instructors face in putting active learning in to practice. For the sake of analysis, the challenges were categorized in to teachers' training and time related challenges, students and instructors related changes and challenges related to classroom situation and materials.

**Table 5: Analysis of Challenges related to teachers' training and time**

No	Items	Responses	
		F	%
1	Which kind of instruction method do you use widely in your EFL classes? A) Teacher –Centered B) Student –Centered C) Both	1 1 3	20 20 60
2	Have you attended Higher Diploma Programme? A) Yes B) No	4 1	80 20
3	If your answer to item '2' is 'yes', has the training helped you in implementing active learning? A) Yes B) No	3 1	75 25
4	Have you ever participated in seminars/work shops on active learning A) Yes B) No	4 1	80 20
5	If your answer to item '4' is 'yes', how useful did you find the training? A) Very useful B) Useful to some extent C) Not useful at all	1 3	25 75
6	How much time does active learning take compared to teacher centered A) Same B) Less C) More D) Uncertain	1 4	20 80
7	If your answer to item '6' is 'more', does it create a problem in covering the contents of the course? A) Yes B) No C) Uncertain	2 2	50 50

As can be seen from the above table, instructors were asked to tell the kind of instructional method they use widely in EFL classes. Majority (60%) of them responded that they use both teacher-centered and student –centered method. One of the instructor use active learning in his class widely. This implies that instructors were giving responsibility for their students in the teaching and learning process and this may help in developing students self confidence in their own learning. Teachers' training on active learning is one of the affecting factors in implementing active learning. If classroom learning is to be effective, teachers should be well trained and equipped with the necessary skill of practicing active learning. To this effect, instructors were asked whether they

have attended the HDP which is designed by Ministry of Education to certify instructors and equip them with the necessary skills of implementing active learning. 80% of them replied that they were trained. According to the reports of the respondents who had got the training, 75% indicated that the training helped them in implementing active learning. The result clearly shows that instructors had got necessary training that could help them in implementing active learning and skills that enable them to effectively transfer their knowledge.

On top of this instructors were asked to check whether they have ever participated in seminars /workshops on active learning. As it is indicated in the table 80% of the respondents had got the opportunity. However, as can be observed from the data, one of the instructors had not got the chance to participate on workshops and seminars. In addition to this instructors who participated were also asked to evaluate the contribution of the workshops and seminars they had participated in. Accordingly, 3(75%) responded that the workshops and seminars were found to have importance to some extent, where as the remaining 25% said it was very useful.

Another non human factor that may affect the implementation of active leaning is time. To this effect, instructors were asked to compare students-centered and teacher-centered in terms of the time they took. 80% of the instructors asserted that active learning takes more time than teacher-centered. According to the reports of the respondents who said active learning takes more time, 50% of them reported that since active learning takes more time than teacher centered, it created a problem in covering the contents of the course. However, as can be observed from the data. 50% of the teachers responded that it doesn't create a problem. The result clearly shows that instructors were facing shortage of time in properly covering the contents of courses.

**Table: 6 Analysis of Challenges Related to Students**

No	Items	Responses					
		Yes		No		Uncertain	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Does the diversity of students' interest affect the implementation of active learning?	4	80	1	20	-	-
2	Do students show disciplinary problems when they are engaged in active learning?	2	40	3	60	-	-
3	Does the number of students hinder the implementation of active learning techniques in you EFL classes?	4	80	1	20	-	-
4	Are you interested in implementing active learning techniques in your classes?	4	80	1	20	-	-
5	Do students resist (complain) when you try to implement active learning in your class?	3	60	2	40	-	-

Table 6 presents the challenges that instructors face which are related to students and instructors themselves. Item 1 is about the diversity of students' interest in class. 80% of the instructors confirmed that it affects the implementation of active learning. This indicates that diversified student interest affects the implementation of active learning. There might be disagreement among students in doing activities in group. Some students may also be reluctant to do activities by themselves. The second factor proposed as hindering factor was disciplinary problem. Accordingly, 2(40%) of the respondents agreed that it was a challenge and the remaining 60% showed that students' disciplinary problem is not a hindering factor. Majority of the responders confirmed that students did not show disciplinary problems when engaged in active learning techniques. Therefore, this was not a challenge for them.

With regard to large class size, 4(80 %) of the respondents reported that it was a hindering factor. However, 1(20%) of the respondents replied that large class size was not a challenge in implementing active learning. This implies that large class size was a problem facing instructors. This problem may hinder instructors' effective follow up of the students' participation and teacher

student communication and feed back in the classroom. The other factor was related to the resistance from students. According to the data in table 6, 60% of the respondents revealed that there is a very strong resistance from the students. Moreover, the remaining 2(40%) respondents stated as there is no resistance. This data disclose that there is students' resistance when instructors tried to implement active learning.

**Table 7: Analysis of Challenges Related to Classroom Situation and Materials**

No	Items	response					
		Yes		No		Uncertain	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Are there adequate activities and exercises in the course materials to practice?	1	20	3	60	1	20
2	Are there adequate resources that are helpful in facilitating active learning?	2	40	3	60	-	-
3	Are the chairs usually arranged is a way that active learning can be practiced?	2	40	3	60	-	-
4	Is the classroom situation suitable to allow the instructors and students practice active learning?	3	60	2	40	-	-

The organization of curricular materials is one of the major factors that can affect the implementation of active learning. Materials should be organized in a way that can invite an active participation of learners using different ways. As it is depicted under table 7, 3(60%) of the instructors reported that there are no adequate activities and exercises in the course materials to practice. This indicates that there were no adequate activities and exercises in the course materials to practice those using different techniques of active learning. If there are no such activities, instructors will be forced to use teacher- centered widely in their class. The availability of appropriate resources for the proper application of active learning is a crucial thing. To this point, 3(60%) of the instructors confirmed that there is lack of resources that are helpful in facilitating active learning and 20% of the respondents showed that there is no shortage of resources. from the above data it can be concluded that there are no sufficient resources for practicing active learning. This may create a gap in giving an opportunity to the learners to learn by themselves. The third factor proposed as hindering factor was the arrangement of chairs. Accordingly 60% of

the respondents showed that the chairs are not usually arranged in away that active learning can be practiced. The remaining 40% confirmed that the chairs were suitable for active learning. But the response of the majority contradicts with that of students' response and the observation. It was observed that chairs were easily movable and students were able to do different activities using active learning techniques.

The last point taught to be a factor was the classroom situation sometimes classrooms are constructed without considering some factors. For example, windows might be short that students can simply see outside, consequently their attention is distracted. Sunlight also directly penetrates to classroom and creates reflection on black board. Regarding this, majority (60%) of the respondents asserted that the classroom situation is not suitable for active learning. The rest 40% replied that the classroom situation is not a problem for the implementation of active learning. This problem was also seen during the classroom observation. Students were shouting outside the class. The doors and windows were not functioning. Therefore, this might have an impact on the implementation of active learning.

The last part of instructors' questionnaire is an open ended question. Instructors were asked to forward some other factors that they have faced in implementing active learning techniques. The listed factors are:

- Lack of clear understanding about the method by students
- Students' background: They develop dependent syndrome
- Negative attitude of the students towards the method
- Low language proficiency of students
- Absence of necessary facilities for instructors
- Shortage of access to laboratory and other practical works

Generally, it can be concluded that like that of students, instructors were also facing different challenges that impede them from implementing active learning properly in their class.

**Table 8: Frequency Distribution of Data Collected on Knowledge and Perception of Instructors on Active Learning.**

No	Items	5=strongly Agree		4= Agree		3=un-decided		2=Dis Agree		1=strongly disagree		$\Sigma_{v.f}$	$X = \frac{\Sigma_{v.f}}{N}$
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1	The instructor holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students.							1	20	4	80	6	1.2
2	Students learn better when there is interaction among them.	5	100									25	5
3	Teaching facts alone are enough to prepare students to understand their environment and develop their understanding.									5	100	5	1
4	Active learning prepares students to solve problems by them selves.	4	80	1	20							24	4.8
5	Active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and enhances their confidence.	3	60	2	40							23	4.6
6	Active learning requires a lot of time.	5	100									25	5
7	Active learning adds work loads on instructors.			3	60			2	40			16	3.2
8	The implementation of active learning requires well trained teachers.	2	40	2	40			1	20			19	3.8
9	Active learning requires a special seating arrangement.	3	60	1	20	1	20					22	4.5
10	Active learning requires a good heterogeneous composition of ability groups.	2	40	2	40	1	20					21	4.2

It is true that the lack of adequate knowledge on active learning can highly affect the implementation of active learning in EFL classes. To investigate the knowledge and perception of instructors on active learning method, 10 questions were raised as shown in table 8. To this effect, the first question tries to remind them whether the instructor holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students. Accordingly majority (80%) of the respondents confirmed that they strongly disagree with the idea. the rest 20% disagree with the statement. This implies students believe that teachers are not the only sources of knowledge for them. Students have also responsibilities for their own learning. The second item says. "Students learn better when there is interaction among them." All the instructors reflected their strong agreement implying that there should be interaction for better learning. Item 3 which focus on whether teaching facts alone are enough to prepare students to understand their environment and develop their understanding was strongly opposed by all the instructors. From this it can be deduced that instructors believe that students should be engaged in problem solving, student-participating and inquiry-oriented teaching and learning strategy to prepare students to understand their environment.

Item 5 is about whether active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and enhances their confidence. This was supported by all the instructors. Item 7 says, "Active learning requires a lot of time." Regarding this item, 60% of the respondents showed their agreement and 40% of them disagree with the idea. This shows that teaching students in a meaningful way takes much time as students are expected to participate, ask questions, reflect their views and opinions freely. Producing well-trained and competent teachers involves both equipping the students with the necessary knowledge in their area of specialization and development of skills. To this effect, instructors were asked whether active learning requires well trained teachers. The idea was supported by all the instructors. It can be deduced that teachers need to be

well trained and competent in order to be able to implement active learning effectively.

The last item is about the composition of ability groups. 40% of the respondents strongly agreed that active learning requires a good heterogeneous composition of ability groups. And another 40% agreed with the idea. The remaining one was neutral.

The general analysis of all the items indicates that most instructors seem to have adequate knowledge and positive attitude towards active learning. This was also supported by the observation conducted during the actual classroom teaching. They were observed giving responsibilities for their students in the teaching and learning process.

#### **4.1.4 Presentation and Analysis of Data Obtained Through Observation**

As it is mentioned in the methodology part, two instructors were selected for the observation and were observed with a co observer three times each. One of the instructors was teaching creative writing while the other was teaching socio linguistics. The presentation and analysis the data is presented below.

**Table 9: Classroom Conditions**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	The desks and chairs are easily movable.	6	100	-	-
2	There is adequate space for movement between desks and chairs.	3	50	3	50
3	The classroom is well cleaned and attractive.	2	32	4	68
4	The class size is suitable for active learning.	1	16	5	84

The above table depicted that the desks and chairs are easily movable. This may help to give different activities using different group forms. With respect to

adequacy of spaces between desks and chairs, 50% of the observation indicated that the space were relaxing, were as 50% was found with no free space. In the same table, it is shown that 68% of the observation showed that the classroom was not well cleaned and attractive. In the other days of observation, it was found clean. The last item in the above table is about the suitability of class size for active learning. 84% of the observation indicated that the class size was not suitable to implement different active learning techniques. Therefore, it can be said that instructors were facing problems related to class size, class room condition and arrangements of chairs.

**Table 10: Instructors' Activities**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	The instructor arranges the students for different classroom activities.	4	68	2	32
2	The instructor gives direction about the procedures and activities.	5	84	1	16
3	The instructor clarifies the learning objective.	2	32	4	68
4	The instructor uses different teaching methods to implement active learning.	2	32	4	68
5	The instructor encourages the students to participate actively.	1	16	5	84
6	The instructor is more active than the students.	3	50	3	50
7	The instructor moves around the group.	4	68	2	32
8	The instructor gives feedback to the students work.	3	50	3	50

Active learning techniques transform the teacher's role from knowledge transmitter to facilitator and students take most of the responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, in active learning, instructors spend their time in facilitating and creating conducive environment for the students. As can be seen in the above table, 68% of the observation indicated that instructors were arranging their student's for different classroom activities and 32% was found that instructors do not arrange their students for activities. The other activity that should be done by instructors during classroom teaching is clarifying learning objectives. However, 68% of the observation showed that instructors do not explain the learning objectives.

The other role of instructors in teaching learning process is motivating students in order to participate actively. With regard to this, 84% of the observation showed that instructors were not encouraging their students. However, 16% of the observation indicated that instructors were motivating students.

**Table 11: Students' Activities**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	Students simply listen to the instructor's talk.	1	16	5	84
2	Students express their needs, feelings freely.	2	32	4	68
3	Students discuss issues in groups.	5	84	1	16
4	Students participate in problem solving activities.	-	-	6	100
5	Students take part in peer teaching.	2	32	4	68
6	Students do class works and exercises.	5	84	1	16
7	Students are interested while participating in active learning.	4	68	2	32
8	There is group domination.	4	68	2	32
9	Students are willing to get together.	4	68	2	32

The observation result of table 11 shows that students were not simply listening to the instructor's talk rather they were actively participating. Among six observed sessions, 84% of them were observed participating actively. It is believed that instructors should use various techniques of active learning. One of these techniques is problem solving. But none of the observed sessions were using this technique. Rather students were frequently told to form groups and to be in pair for discussion purpose.

Getting students to work together cooperatively in groups needs the devotion of the students. In other words, students should have the interest to work with other people. 68% of the observation indicated that students were interested while participating in active learning. The other issue that should be raised here is domination. While working together, there are individuals who see group work as an opportunity to let others carry the load, and there are also learners who want to control and dominate at the expense of others participation. To this effect, 68% of the observation showed that there were group domination. The rest 32% indicated that learners were sharing their idea without dominating one another.

**Table 12: Utilization of Instruction Materials**

No	Items	Yes		No	
		No	%	No	%
1	There are enough instructional materials like handouts for practicing active learning	1	16	5	84
2	The teacher uses other materials (like charts) to explain concepts	-	-	6	100

It is believed that teaching and learning can be meaningful when aided by concrete and audiovisual teaching learning aids. Contrary to this, table 12 shows that none of the instructors were observed while using other materials. It was also observed that there was shortage of handouts in the class and students were observed moving from chairs to chairs to get hand outs.

#### **4.1.5 Data Obtained Through Interview**

The general purpose of the interview was to obtain information from both instructors and students on their perceptions and challenges they face in implementing active learning. Accordingly their responses were qualitatively analyzed below.

##### **4.1.5.1 Presentation and Analysis of Students' Interview**

Students were asked different questions so as to investigate the problems they face and their knowledge on active learning. The first question was forwarded to identify their feeling during the practice of active learning. Both the interviewees reflected similar views. For instance student 1 stated the following view.

*Some students do not like to learn using active learning techniques. This is because of our background. Most of us were learning using teacher-centered during our high school. This has an impact on our current level. But now we are developing a good feeling. We have a positive attitude towards active learning.*

Students were also asked to mention some importance of it. The second interviewee mentioned the following advantages.

*Active learning is very important in equipping us the necessary knowledge. There is more interaction with peers and teachers. It enables us to have our own contribution in the teaching learning process. It also helps us to be familiar with our environment by relating it with the actual life.*

The second question was about whether there is any difference and similarity between the methods of teaching in their high school and here at university level. Here also both the interviewees give similar response. Their response is given below.

*In high school teachers do not give group works and pair works. They usually dominate the teaching and learning process. I can say it was totally teacher centered. But here in the university our instructors tried to make the teaching and learning process students- centered. They use different techniques of active learning.*

Here the students reflect that there is a difference between instructional methods employed at secondary level education and at their current level.

In order to obtain information on the practice of active learning, the students were asked the following question. "Do your instructors give you activities that engage you in individual, pair and small groups?" Both the interviewees responded that they were given different activities to be done in individual, pair and small groups. The first interviewee stressed that most of the time pair works are given to them to do different activities.

The last question was about the problems that have affected their learning using active learning. The followings are the responses of both the interviewees.

- Absence of psychological readiness: some students are shy to participate
- Lack of awareness
- Students background
- Absence of facilities like language laboratory.

Generally, it can be concluded that students are aware of active learning and its importance, but still there are challenges facing them in learning EFL courses using active learning.

#### **4.1.5.2 Presentation and Analysis of Instructors' Interview**

Different questions were raised for the instructors to assess their knowledge and at the same time identify the problems they face while putting active learning into practice. The first question was: "what is an active learning to you? Can you mention some of the common active learning techniques that you use for actual class room teaching?" The first instructor gave the following response.

*Active learning is centering the teaching and learning process on students. It is giving most of the responsibility for students to learn by themselves. The common techniques I apply in my class are: class work, home work, drama. Group discussion, role play, presentation and peer teaching.*

The second instructor also responded to the first question as follows.

*Active learning is giving responsibility for students more than simply listening to a lecture. Students will engage themselves in a meaningful way in the process. Less emphasis is given to transmitting information from the teacher to the students. The techniques which I usually apply are: assignments, role play, presentation and question and answer.*

From the above responses, it can be concluded that the teachers are aware of active learning and use different techniques in implementing it. But during the class observation, it was observed that most of the time instructors use group discussion. They were not seen using various techniques at different time. There fore, this contradicts with the above response.

The second question was raised to point out whether the teachers' background affects their present style. As both the instructors reflected, the way they were taught has influenced their current practices. For instance instructor 1 said the following:

*Most of my teachers were my role models and it is obvious that most of our teachers, specially teaching English language were generally based on the grammar approach. They were teaching the language structure and explaining everything: in one way or another has influenced me.*

The third question was about the instructors' observation on the feeling of their students when engaged in active learning. The second instructor responded the following:

*The students feeling is some what mixed. Some are reluctant. They don't like to participate in group activities. Some are very interested. They properly do what is expected from them. This may be because of their difference in their background and awareness on active learning.*

As can be seen from the response, students react differently to wards the implementation of active learning. This was also observed during the actual classroom observation. When students were asked to form groups, some spend their time chatting with their friends on their own issues and others properly do their activity. The last question raised for both the interviewees was to identify the major problems affecting the implementation of active learning in their class. Their responses wee summarized as follows.

- Using active learning is time taking. Thus, time is a problem when the course content is too wide.
- Assignment of large number of students in one class
- There are students who have no the interest to react or be involved in activities

- Tight academic calendar of the university and short duration of a semester
- Performance disparity among students
- Shortage of access to laboratory and other practical works.

## **4.2 Discussion of Results**

In this part, the data that had been gathered and analyzed were discussed under three major themes, in response to the three basic research questions formulated. The major themes of the discussion are:

- Challenges that students face in learning EFL courses using active learning.
- Challenges that instructors encounter in implementing active learning
- Knowledge and perception of instructors and students on active learning.

### **4.2.1 Challenges that Students Face**

Many scholars have noted that the effective implementation of active learning can be influenced by multiple factors. Thus, some of the challenges that students face while learning EFL courses using active learning are discussed below.

Students who are now learning their education in Universities and Colleges had passed through high school experience. When students were asked to tell the instructional approach their teachers used in their high school education, majority (76%) of them reported that it was teacher-centered. Therefore, their past experience may affect their current education. This was also reflected during the interview. Students confirmed that some students were reluctant and this was because of their background. According to Dary and Jerry (1998:83) students past experience can be a resistance for effective implementation of active learning Plass (1998:317) also added that change can be threatening: it brings feelings of inadequacy, it upsets cozy routines, it is hard to predict outcomes and involve and apparent loss of status of power.

The attitude and knowledge of instructors on active learning is a determinant variable. Many researches confirm that there is a strong tie between teacher's attitude and knowledge and their effort in implementing it (Cohen et al, 1993:45). As depicted in the analysis, most students observed their instructors lacking awareness and skills of selecting appropriate active learning technique. Another challenge that students face was related to materials. 68% of the respondents indicated that there was unavailability of materials. In addition to this 63% of the students confirmed that the course materials lack adequate activities and exercises to practice them using active learning. According to EMA (1999), the preparation of curriculum materials should be based on developing problem that the curricular materials should reinforce student-centered instruction and problem solving ability of students. But this was found as a problem facing students while learning EFL courses using active learning. This was also checked by the response given by the instructors.

The class size is was also found as an impeding factor. On this issue the two groups of respondents reported that there is a problem of implementing active learning having such a large number of students in one class. Lue (2000) added that teachers who taught many students in over crowded classroom often say it is certainly not suitable to provide activities and group works for the classes.

#### **4.2.2 Challenges that instructors Face**

Instructors play great role in implementing active learning in classes. Though their role is limited to facilitating and guiding their students during the teaching learning process, their presence in the class is a vital and they are the one who are responsible for the failure or success of the teaching and learning process. In order to identify the problems they face while implementing active learning, many questions were raised and the discussion is given below.

As shown in the analysis, most of the teachers revealed that they had got HDP training and they also got a chance to participate in seminars/work shops.

According to the instructors who got the chance, the training helped them in implementing active learning. But there was also an instructor who reported that it has nothing to do with the implementation. Therefore, emphasis should be given to the gap as the aim of training is to equip instructors for effective implementation. In line with this, Hailom (1993) noticed that there is a strong need for training teachers in how to apply the active learning method in classroom.

As one basic feature, active learning relatively takes much time. As it can be seen in the analysis, 80% of the instructors reported that active learning takes more time than teacher-centered and this created a problem in covering the contents of the course. Capel et al, (1995) also explained that some teachers discourage active learning simply because it brings an extra demand in the planning, preparation and evaluation. They believe that active learning is pressurized by limited time and overcrowded subject matter. As a result, even some come to the conclusion that participatory, activity-based learning is best in theory but unrealistic in practice which might be raised from in adequacy of knowledge on active learning.

The design of curriculum material is was one of the challenges that instructors face in implementing active earning. As it is given in the analysis,60% of the instructors confirmed that there are no adequate activities and exercises in the course materials. In addition, 60% of the respondents agreed that there are no adequate resources that are helpful in facilitating active learning.

According to Lue (2000:26), curriculum material developers should design and organize curricular materials that invite active involvement of learners and teachers must participate in curriculum material development and improvement to contribute a practice, experience based prospective of learning environment. Aggarwal (1996) also added that learning lies not in reading and listening, but in action, performance and experience using different instruction. Lack of language laboratory, sufficient audiovisual aids, learning modules also account for the negative implementation of active learning in language classes.

### **4.2.3 Knowledge and Perception of Instructors and Students on Active Learning**

Among the many factors that can hinder or facilitate the implementation of active learning in classrooms, knowledge and perception of students and teachers is the one. According to Sguazzin and Graan (1993), cited in Amanu (2005:87) teachers' and students' attitude and knowledge have a great impact on the implementation of active learning.

The core elements of active learning are students' activity and engagement in learning process. Good activities develop deep understanding of the important ideas to be learned (Nunan, 1988). Darry and Terry (1993) pointed out that active learning seeks the emancipation from the old beliefs that has dominated earlier methods of teaching and thus teachers and students should get the necessary training or orientation about active learning to challenge their old assumptions. With respect to these ideas, both students and teachers were asked to reflect on their perceptions and knowledge on active learning. As the results of the questionnaire and interview showed, majority of the instructors and students seems to have adequate knowledge and positive attitude towards active learning. Besides, all (100%) of the instructors and majority of the students believe that instructors are not the only sources of knowledge for students. This is to mean that students should also take responsibility for their own learning using different techniques of involving them in the process.

Majority of the students also expressed their positive agreement on the following active learning principles:

- Students should take self responsibility for their own learning.
- Learning is meaningful when students discover knowledge rather than receiving it from the teacher.
- Students learn more when what they learn is related to their environment.
- Students should participate in deciding what should be learned and what methods should be used in class.

Similarly, instructors reflected their view on the importance of active learning by showing their agreement on the following assumptions.

- Students learn better when there is interaction among them.
- Active learning prepares students to solve problems by themselves.
- Active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and enhances their confidence.

This was also observed during the observation. Instructors were seen giving responsibilities for their students in the actual teaching and learning process. The interview also revealed that for majority of the instructors, active learning is a method that helps learners to take initiative for their own learning.

Generally, the possible implication of the above discussion of the result is that both instructor and students have an adequate knowledge on the benefits of active learning. This should be directly practiced in their class as there are some students who still don't have awareness on active learning and its implementation.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This chapter deals with conclusions and recommendations. Accordingly, conclusions of the fundamental findings are drawn. Finally, some possible recommendations are forwarded based on the findings of the study.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

Active learning has the contribution of increasing the learning efficiency and attention of students. It gives due emphasis to students active participation in the whole process of teaching and learning. But if there are constraints, it will be difficult to achieve the desired goals. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges of implementing active learning in Wolaita Sodo University EFL courses in focus. In order to achieve this, the following research questions were formulated:

- 1) What challenges do instructors face while implementing active learning?
- 2) What problems do students encounter in learning EFL courses using active learning?
- 3) Do instructors and students have adequate knowledge and favorable attitudes towards active learning?

The implementation of active learning requires different interrelated human and material resources. Without fulfilling these essential elements, realizing the expected objective is found to be difficult. Based on the findings of the research, the major challenges students and instructors face in using active learning are summarized below.

##### **5.1.1 Challenges students encounter in learning EFL courses using active learning using**

As can be seen in the analysis part, there are many challenges that students face while learning EFL courses. The major ones which were identified using questionnaire, observation and interview are given below.

- 1) The number of students in a class, (large class size).
- 2) Instructors lack of commitment.
- 3) Instructors lack of awareness and mastery of the subject matter.
- 4) The materials are not prepared in such way that active learning can be practiced. There are no adequate activities and exercises in the course materials.
- 5) Domination is one of the impeding factors identified by the students. Some students want to do every activity by themselves with out sharing with their group members.
- 6) Lack of motivation from the instructors.
- 7) Difference in students' background.
- 8) Instructors lack of skills of selecting appropriate active learning technique.

### **5.1.2 Challenges Instructors Face in Implementing Active Learning**

As the findings through questionnaires, interview and observation reveal, some of the major factors, which were found impeding the implementation of active learning for the instructors are:

- 1) Active learning takes much time and this created a problem in covering the contents of the course on time.
- 2) The design of curriculum materials was also found as an impeding factor for the instructors. Educators, based on their research findings have noted that the organization of the curricular material could dictate the teacher to either implement or not to implement active learning instructional strategies. The results of this research show that the organizations of materials don't address the need for active learning. The materials lack activities and exercises that can be done by the students.
- 3) Students' attitude towards active learning affects the effective implementation of active learning.
- 4) Lack of adequate resources was an affecting factor

- 5) Lack of clear understanding about the method by student.
- 6) Diversity of students' interest in the class.
- 7) The number of students (larger class size).
- 8) Students' disciplinary problems.
- 9) Shortage of access to laboratory and other practical works.
- 10) Students' background: some students develop a dependency syndrome.
- 11) It is obvious that the condition of the classroom should be conducive for real implementation of active learning. Nevertheless, the result of the study depicted that the majority of teachers found the classroom condition poor and impedes the effective implementation of active learning.

### **5.1.3. Perception and Knowledge of Instructors and Students**

Concerning the perception and knowledge of instructors and students active learning, the following were the major findings.

- The majority of the respondents assure that active learning promotes interactive language learning.
- Both students and instructors think that teachers should not be the only sources of knowledge for students.
- Students strongly oppose the assumptions that learning occurs when students are silent and teachers should prepare notes and come to class for better learning.
- Majority of the students agreed that the role of the teachers in teaching and learning process should be limited to facilitating than controlling.
- All the instructors supported the idea which states active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and enhance their confidence.
- Instructors also reported that active learning requires a good heterogeneous composition of ability groups.

## 5. Recommendations

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) Class size was found as one of the major challenge of implementing active learning. The number of students should be appropriate for language class. Therefore, proper attention should be given while assigning students to different departments. Departments should also use their own solutions to over come the problem.
- 2) When materials are developed, activities, exercises, group work, pair work, role play and debating should be included in order to invite the learners for active learning. Therefore, pedagogical, language and subject editors should be involved in the process of designing teaching modules.
- 3) Regarding the classroom condition, it was found that they are not suitable for active learning. Therefore, classes should be clean and attractive which can invite for active involvement of students and instructors in active learning.
- 4) As the findings of this study indicate, students have the tendency to resist by being reluctant during the practice of active learning techniques. To alleviate this problem, some awareness creating trainings on classroom practices should be given to students beginning from first year level at the university.
- 5) In successful implementation of active learning, the adequacy of course material can play a significant role. Based on the findings in this study it was found that there is lack of EFL instructional materials. To solve the problem concerned bodies should prepare adequate modules and provide for students.

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## APPENDIX- A

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Faculty of Language Studies**  
**Department of English**  
**Questionnaire for Instructors**

**Dear instructor,**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for a study leading to an M.A in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). The objective of the study is to investigate the challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes. Your sincere responses are very important for the success of the study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire and your responses will be treated with confidentiality.

Thank you in advance.

General instruction:

- Please, don't write your name on the questionnaire.
- Please, follow the directions given in each part.

### **Part I: Personal information**

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
2. Qualification \_\_\_\_\_
3. Experience \_\_\_\_\_
4. Work load per week \_\_\_\_\_



12. Is the class room situation suitable to allow the instructors and students to move around during some activities?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Uncertain

13. Does the number of students (large class size) hinder the implementation of active learning techniques in your EFL classes?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Uncertain

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do students show disciplinary problems when they are engaged in active learning?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Uncertain

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

15. Are there adequate resources that are helpful in facilitating active learning?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Uncertain

16. Are you interested in implementing active learning techniques in your EFL courses?

A) Yes

B) No

C) Uncertain

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

17. What other challenges do you face that hinder the implementation of active learning techniques in EFL classes? Please list them.

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**PART III:**

Below are items related to your knowledge and awareness on active learning. Please give your appropriate response to each item based on your understanding and experience. Your response could vary from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” and use a 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	The instructor holds most of the knowledge necessary for the students.					
2	Students learn better when there is interaction among them.					
3	Teaching facts alone are enough to prepare students to understand their environment and develop their understanding.					
4	Teaching must prepare students to solve problems.					
5	Active learning prepares students to solve problems by themselves.					
6	Active learning makes students responsible for their own learning and enhances their confidence.					
7	Active learning adds workloads on instructors.					
8	Active learning requires a lot of time.					
9	The implementation of active learning requires well trained teachers.					
10	While using active learning, teachers find it difficult to cover the contents on the schedule.					
11	Active learning requires a special seating arrangement.					
12	Active learning requires a good heterogeneous composition of ability groups.					

## APPENDIX- B

**Addis Ababa University**  
**Faculty of Language Studies**  
**Department of English**  
**Questionnaire for Students**

**Dear student,**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data for a study leading to an M.A in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language).The objective of the study is to investigate the challenges of implementing active learning in EFL classes. Your sincere responses are very important for the success of the study. Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill this questionnaire and your responses will be treated with confidentiality.

Thank you in advance.

General instruction:

- Please, don't write your name on the questionnaire.
- Please, follow the directions given in each part.

### **Part I: Personal information**

1. Sex \_\_\_\_\_
2. Department \_\_\_\_\_
3. Year \_\_\_\_\_
4. Load per week \_\_\_\_\_



8. Are there adequate activities and exercises in the materials to practice them using active learning techniques?

- A) Yes                      B) No                      C) Uncertain

9. Does the number of students (large class size) hinder the implementation of active learning?

- A) Yes                      B) No                      C) Uncertain

If yes, how? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Are the arrangements of chairs and tables in your class room suitable to work in different group activities?

- A) Yes                      B) No                      C) Uncertain

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have the interest to engage yourself in different techniques of active learning while learning EFL courses? )

- A) Yes                      B) No                      C) Uncertain

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. Can you mention some of the challenges that you face while learning EFL courses using different techniques of active learning?

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**Part III:**

Items related to your knowledge and awareness of active learning are listed below. Read each item carefully indicate by marking “ ✓ ” the rating that you think correspond to your knowledge and perception.

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un decided	Dis- Agree	Strongly dis- agree
1	A good instructor is someone who prepares notes for study from text.					
2	Learning occurs when students are silent and listen to their instructors.					
3	Students should take self responsibility for their own learning.					
4	Learner centered method makes the teacher free but busy for the students.					
5	Learning is meaningful when students discover knowledge rather than receiving it from the teacher.					
6	Students learn more when each and every activity is done by the instructor.					
7	Teachers should not give assignments on issues which are new to students.					
8	Students learn more when what they learn is related to their environment.					
9	Students should participate in deciding what should be learned and what methods should be used in class.					
10	The role of teachers in teaching learning process should be limited to facilitating rather than controlling.					

## APPENDIX- C

### Classroom Observation checklist for Active Learning

#### Part I: General information

Name of the University \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the course \_\_\_\_\_

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

Number of students in the class: \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification of the instructor \_\_\_\_\_

**Instruction:** Tick yes, if the appropriate activity is observed or No if it is not observed

No	Items	yes	No
1	<b>Class room conditions</b>		
1.1	The desks and chairs are easily movable.		
1.2	There is adequate space for movement between desks.		
1.3	The classroom is well cleaned and attractive.		
1.4	The class size is suitable for active learning.		
1.5	The classroom is conducive for active learning.		
2	<b>Instructor's activities</b>		
2.1	The instructor arranges the students for different class room activities.		
2.2	The instructor gives directions about the procedures and activities.		
2.3	The instructor clarifies the learning objectives.		
2.4	The instructor uses different teaching methods to implement active learning.		
2.5	The instructor encourages the students to participate actively.		
2.6	The instructor gives individual support or explanation.		
2.7	The instructor is more active than the students.		

2.8	The instructor moves around the group and motivates students.		
2.9	The instructor gives feedback to the students work.		
3	<b>Learners' activities</b>		
3.1	Students simply listen to the instructor's talk.		
3.2	Students express their needs, feelings freely.		
3.3	Students discuss issues in groups.		
3.4	Students participate in problem solving activities.		
3.5	Students take part in peer teaching.		
3.6	Students do class works and exercises.		
3.7	Students are interested while participating in active learning.		
3.8	There is group domination.		
3.9	Students are willing to get together.		
4	<b>Utilization of instructional materials</b>		
4.1	There are enough instructional materials (handouts, charts etc.).		
4.2	The teacher uses other materials to explain concepts.		

## APPENDIX- D

### Interview questions (for instructors)

1. What is an active learning to you? Can you list some of the common active learning techniques that you use for actual class room teaching?
2. Do you think your present style of teaching has been influenced by the way you were taught? How?
3. What feelings have you observed from your students when engaged in active learning?
4. What major problems do you think affect the implementation of active learning in your class?

## **APPENDIX- E**

### **Interview questions for students**

1. What is your feeling towards practicing active learning in your class room? Can you mention some importance of it?
2. Do you see any difference and similarity between the methods of teaching in your high school and here at University level?
3. Do your instructors give you activities that engage you in individual, pair and small groups?
4. Did you note any problems that have affected your learning using active learning? Can you mention some of them/



## APPENDIX- F

### Transcription of instructors' interview

#### Instructor – 1

The researcher (R): I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation. Which year students you are teaching here in the University?

**Instructor 1 (I-1)** - I mostly teach third year students and I teach Literature courses.

**R:** What is active learning to you? Can you list some of the common active learning techniques that you use for actual classroom teaching?

**I-1:** Active learning is centering the teaching and learning process on students. It is giving most of the responsibilities for the students to learn by themselves. Regarding the techniques that I use in my classroom, homework, class work, drama, group discussion, role play, presentation and peer teaching are frequently used in my class.

**R:** Do you think your present style of teaching has been influenced by the way you were taught? How?

**I-1:** Yes, certainly. Most of my teachers were my role models and it obvious that most of our teachers, specially teaching English language were generally based on the grammar approach. In one way or another this has influenced me.

**R:** what feelings have you observed from your students when engaged in active learning?

**I-1:** Since they are from different schools found in Ethiopia, they don't not have the same feeling. Some are very interested and still some others are very poor. They want to get every thing from us like spoon feeding.

**R:** what major problems do you think affect the implementation of active learning in your classes?

**I-1:** actually there are many challenges that I face when implementing active learning. Some are time related factors, Tight, academic calendar and shortage of materials. Class size is also another factor.

**R:** Thank you very much for your cooperation

**I-1:** It is OK!

## Instructor- 2

**R:** Thank you for your willingness to answer my questions. Can you tell me the course you are teaching and the students you are assigned?

**I-2:** I teach linguistics related courses and I mostly teach second and third year students.

**R:** what is active learning to you? Can you list some of the common active learning techniques that you use?

**I-2:** Well, active learning is nothing but giving responsibility for the students- more than simply listening to a lecture. Students will engage themselves in a meaningful way in the process. Less emphasis is given to transmitting information from the teacher to the students.

**R:** Do you think your preset style of teaching has been influenced by the way you were taught? How?

**I-2:** Exactly- especially when I was in elementary and secondary, the dominant was teacher-centered. This influenced me to think as teachers were the only source for knowledge. But later in universities this was gradually changed.

**R:** What feelings have you observed from your students when engaged in active learning?

**I-2:** some strongly oppose when assignments, peer teaching and discussions are given to them. But there are also students who are interested to participate in different activities.

**R:** My final question is about the problems that you face while implementing active learning. Can you mention some of them?

**I-2:** There are many problems like shortage of laboratory. There is no language laboratory especially for courses like linguistics. The other problem is students' interest, difference in students' performance and etc.

**R:** Thank You

**I-2:** You are Welcome

## APPENDIX -G

### Transcription of students' interview

#### Student – 1

**R:** Thank you for your cooperation. What is your feeling towards practicing active learning in your classroom? Can you mention some importance of it?

**S-1:** Some students do not like to learn using active learning. This is because of our difference in background. Most of us were learning in high schools using a teacher –centered. This has an impact on our current level. But now after taking methodology course, I have developed a positive attitude and it help us to develop our confidence.

**R:** Do you see any difference and similarity between the methods of teaching in your high school and here at University level?

**S-1:** Yes, there is a big difference. Here teachers usually give us different activities like group works, peer teaching and role play. But in high school it was only teacher catered.

**R:** Do your instructors give you activities that engage you in individual, part and small groups?

**S-1:** As I tried to mention earlier, our instructors give us different activities to be done in pair, small groups and in individual.

**R:** My final question is about the problems you face while learning EFL courses using active learning can you mention them.

**S-1:** There are many problems like lack of confidence, lack of awareness and number of students in a class.

## Transcription of Student 2's interview (S<sub>2</sub>)

R – First, I would like to thank you for your cooperation. What is your feeling towards practicing active learning in your classroom? Can you mention some importance of it?

S<sub>2</sub> – At the beginning, I used to dislike participating in active learning, but now I have understood its importance and I enjoy in participating. It is very important in equipping us the necessary knowledge. There is more interaction with peers and teachers. It enables us to have our own contribution in the teaching learning process. It also helps us to be familiar with our environment by relating it with the actual life.

R – Do you see any difference and similarity between the methods of teaching in your high school and here at University level?

S<sub>2</sub> – In high school teachers don not give group works and pair works. They usually dominate the teaching and learning process. It can say it was totally teacher centered. But here in the university our instructors try to make it student centered. They use different techniques of active learning.

R – Do your instructors give you activities that engage you in individual, pair and small groups?

S<sub>2</sub> – Yes, They usually give us assignments. Peer teaching and group works. This helps us to share idea with our classmates.

R – Can you mention some of the problems you face while learning EFL courses using active learning?

S<sub>2</sub> – The problems that I face are lack of psychological, readiness. We are shy to participate. Our background has also an impact. There is also shortage of facilities like language laboratory.