

English Teachers' Beliefs about Active Learning and Classroom Practices in Secondary Schools: The Case of Grades 11 and 12 in North Shoa Zone (Salale), Oromia

Mulugeta Addisu Hararu
mulugetaaddisu8888@gmail.com
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

Taye Regassa
taye12regassa@gmail.com
Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

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Corresponding Author:

mulugetaaddisu8888@gmail.com

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The study aimed to investigate secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs about active learning and classroom practices in North Shoa of the Oromia Regional State. The researcher used a mixed-method technique to collect the relevant data. The study used a simple random sampling technique to select the schools. Data were collected from 72 EFL teachers who teach in grades 11 and 12 in 15 government schools using census/complete enumeration and purposive sampling techniques. The data were collected via questionnaire, interview, and classroom observation. Then, the data were analyzed both quantitatively by using descriptive statistical tools such as mean and standard deviation and qualitatively through descriptive with brief reports following a grounded theory model and teacher's instructional patterns and students' behaviors. The findings from the questionnaire and interview revealed that teachers hold strong positive beliefs regarding the contribution of implementing active learning for the students' learning. Conversely, the results from classroom observation data indicated that teachers predominantly use a teacher-centered approach. This discrepancy is attributed to constraints such as

teachers in favor of teacher-centered practice, students' poor background, and lack of support from stakeholders. These factors hinder the effective implementation of innovative teaching strategies. Therefore, to solve these challenges, increasing collaboration among teachers, educators, and stakeholders is important.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, there is a tremendous emphasis on the English language among the Ethiopian societies. This is because the language is used as a means of communication to maintain international relationships in politics, business, education, diplomacy, science, technology, tourism, and others at both national and international levels (Parupalli, 2019). The significance of English language is regarded as means of communication to facilitate the country's success in economic interest and to gain access information that serve as a foundation for social and economic development (Kitaw, 2017: 1). Likewise, the language mostly serves as a crucial means of communication not only in government organizations such as telecommunication, airlines, banks, education, publication and research but also in film industries, media, commerce, and other areas (Telore & Damtew, 2023:173). Therefore, since English is a significant medium of communication in both national and international settings, there is a need to improve the language education to equip individuals with effective language skills.

In relation to the introduction of the English language into the modern Ethiopian education system, various sources state that the language was launched started as a foreign language for educational purposes in the early 20th century after the Menelik II School in 1908 (Gerencheal, 2019; Pankhurst, 1976: 305-325). It is taught as a subject area starting from primary school and serves as the medium of instruction for subjects such as biology, chemistry, economics, history, and others from the secondary school and tertiary levels (Ministry of Education or MOE, 2002:121; Meseret, 2012:16). Moreover, students are required to be proficient in speaking, reading, and writing the English language effectively after completing their higher education to use the language effectively and have broader access to be

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employed in different fields. Students are also required to have more practical knowledge of the communicative skills rather than the mere knowledge of structural rules and vocabularies (MOE, 2003).

Considering the importance of the English language in both domestic and global affairs, there has been a notable change from the conventional teacher-centered method of teaching to an active learning (student-centered) approach since the new education policy was introduced in 2002 (Adeye, 2003: 23-25). The goal of this change was to make learners an independent learner, to maximize their learning, and to extend their understanding through constructing their own knowledge (Tesfaye, 2015; MoE, 2007). Furthermore, because the English language is used as a medium of instruction starting from elementary school to tertiary levels in Ethiopia; it is significant to address the quality of the language (MOE, 2002: 13). The Ministry of Education indicated that the insufficient English proficiency throughout educational systems is a critical problem, which the government is dedicated to resolve.

Progressively, many developments and improvements in the process of language pedagogy have been introduced, and there has been a continuous change in the ways of building teaching and learning methods. Thus, the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (EETP) have been working effectively to make new changes in education policy. For example, Tesfay (2015) reported that one of the changes was to shift from the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching to the active learning (student-centered) method of teaching. This change was required because the teacher-centered approach did not make learners comprehend their environments and take part in complex contexts.

Following the introduction of the new policy, some forms of curriculum modifications have been made, focusing on a problem-solving approach that engages learners at the center of learning by making the curriculum more appropriate and adapting suitable pedagogical practices (MOE, 2002:121). Moreover, a new education and training policy has been offered for teachers at various levels, such as pre-service and in-service, and Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) program in Ethiopian educational training institutions program (Abebe & Woldehanna,

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2013:4; MOE, 2003:7). One of the main objective of this training was to qualify teachers in the English Language Teaching (ELT) field and make them more proficient in implementing the active learning approach. The revised new students' textbook for grade 11 and 12 is also developed based on the practical implementation of active learning and a competency-based approach so that students can practice the different types of learning strategies, such as pair work and group work, discussion, role play, presentation and others.

However, as a practitioner in the field of English language teaching, the researcher observed that most of the EFL teachers were not seen implementing the active learning properly in ELT classrooms. They still play a dominant role in guiding and controlling the teaching and learning process. As Rahman et al., (2022) stated, although active learning has been practiced for decades in the education system and has produced positive effects, many teachers are still dominantly practicing the traditional teacher-centered approach. Moreover, during the departmental meetings, the departmental heads and supervisors complained that the active learning approach could not be practiced in ELT classrooms as intended in the curriculum. That means what has been incorporated into the curriculum could not be practiced in the actual classrooms. In relation to this idea, Tesfaye (2015:29) stated that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice in the Ethiopian teaching and learning context. Therefore, teachers could be exposed to the lack of the necessary knowledge, beliefs, or skills in implementing the approach. Teachers' beliefs act as an influence on what they feel, know, and practice (Johnson, 1992, 83-108). Thus, teachers' beliefs should be viewed as one of the factors to realize the subject matter properly.

It is widely acknowledged that education is a complex psychological process, and teachers' beliefs shape their instructional choices in the teaching halls (Serbessa, 2006). Teachers' classroom instructions could be influenced by different factors, such as their beliefs, educational background, learning environments, curriculum, practical training, and personal dispositions (Li, 2012). Hence, the inconsistency between the theoretical framework and the practical application of the

active learning approach prompted the researcher to investigate teachers' beliefs regarding the approach and their actual classroom practices.

Several studies have been conducted on related issues both at national and international contexts at different grade levels, from upper primary to tertiary educations (Kitaw, 2017; Mulatu & Wondwosen, 2018; Telore & Damtew, 2023; Teshome, 2017; Zewdu, 2017). However, the concern of practicing active learning approach is still poor. For example, Zewdu (2017) conducted research to investigate teachers' practices of active learning and challenges to implement the approach at Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia. The result of the study indicated that the interaction between teacher and students in EFL class was not by the principles of active learning. Kitaw (2017) also conducted research to assess the implementation of the active learning approach in the teaching of English language support courses to first-year university students. The result of the study revealed that the techniques that the teachers used were limited to pair work, group work, and individual presentation.

Likewise, Tadesse et al. (2024) conducted research to assess challenges EFL teachers face in implementing active learning approach in Sidama Region. Classroom conditions, material, and teacher related challenges are the major factors for ineffective implementation of the approach. Furthermore, other related studies have been conducted around this area and revealed that teachers failed to practice active learning properly although they perceived the approach positively (Girma, 2020, and Mulatu and Wondwosen, 2018).

Other extended researchers (Melese et al., (2009) carried out a study to investigate the practice of an active learning approach in upper primary schools in Ethiopia. The result of the study revealed that although the teachers try to implement the approach, it is not adequate due to large class sizes, constraints of time, and lack of resources. Menistie (2023), in North Wollo, Woldia Town, primary schools, conducted research to investigate the practice and challenges of implementing active learning approach between the old curriculum-trained teachers and the new curriculum-trained teachers. The findings of the study revealed that there was a difference in the perception of the utilization of the approach by the old curriculum-

trained teachers and the new curriculum-trained teachers. Teachers and students preferring the lecture method, lack of teaching materials, and shortage of time were among the identified challenges to implementing the approach

However, the current study is different from the previous study in several ways. First, many of the previous studies have been conducted at the university and college levels. However, the use of English in secondary schools within the Ethiopian context is slightly distinct from the first one. Second, none of the previous studies, particularly those focusing on secondary school levels, were conducted within the specific setting of the present study, which investigates the EFL teachers' beliefs and practices about active learning and their classroom practices. Thus, this shows a gap in the research, as a study in the current setting has not yet been done. Third, in conducting the current study, a large number of participants, schools, and data-gathering instruments were used to obtain potential and detailed data. Moreover, the previously reviewed studies tended to employ either quantitative or qualitative method, not mixed methods. As a result, they lack the necessary corresponding data needed to address the variables under the research investigation.

Finally, though there have been some research attempts on related issues, the researcher believes that further investigation is needed regarding teachers' pedagogical beliefs about the active learning approach and how these beliefs are practiced in EFL classroom within local contexts. The current research aims to explore how secondary school English language teachers perceive active learning approaches and to what extent the active learning approach practiced by the teachers.

METHOD

The study employed a mixed-method research design to gain significant insights into teachers' beliefs regarding the active learning approach and their corresponding classroom practices. It was also employed to complement the weakness of one method with the strength of the other method and to cross check the quantitative figures with the qualitative results. As a result, combinations of quantitative and qualitative procedures were used. A mixed-method research design

integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches to extract comprehensive evidence of the research topics (Creswell et al., 2003).

The participants of the study were 72 (58 male and 14 female) EFL teachers of grades 11 and 12 in fifteen selected secondary schools in the North Shoa Zone (Salale). The researcher selected the school using a random sampling technique. This technique was chosen because it would provide every school an equal chance of being chosen. Based on the statistical data got from the Educational Office in the fall of the 2024/5 academic year, there are about 298 (240 male and 58 female) teachers teaching English in 62 public secondary schools at grades 11 and 12 levels. There could actually be slight variations in the number of teachers as a result of some leaving the schools or new teachers joining because of transfers or assignments.

Furthermore, 6 teachers for an interview and 5 teachers for classroom observation were chosen from those who participated in filling out the questionnaire using purposive sampling techniques based on their qualifications and teaching experience. The researcher selected grades 11 and 12 EFL teachers because they had been teaching at these grade levels for about twelve years and observed teachers' problems in implementing the active learning approach. Moreover, they aimed to obtain rich and detailed information, assuming that one teacher could teach the two grades, 11 and 12.

Data were collected through questionnaire, interview and classroom observation. A closed-ended questionnaire was used for the study to gather information regarding teachers' beliefs, feelings, and responsibilities related to the implementation of the active learning approach, and their classroom practices of the approach, allowing the researcher to collect data from a large number of participants. To develop the questionnaires, previously used national and international questionnaires like Horwitz (1988) were reviewed. Most items and ideas were modified to align with the objective and context of the current study. The questionnaires were analyzed using a five-option "Likert scale." The reports that emphasis teachers' beliefs about the importance of active learning and their academic roles in active learning classes were coded as 'strongly agree' = 5; 'agree' = 4; 'undecided' = 3; 'disagree' = 2; and 'strongly disagree' = 1. On the other hand,

the items of the questionnaires for teachers' classroom practice of active learning were coded as 'very frequently' = 5; 'frequently' = 4; 'sometimes' = 3; 'rarely' = 2; and 'not at all' = 1.

Then, the semi-structured interview was used to better understand about teachers' beliefs regarding active learning approach for the students' academic achievements in English language and their professional roles in practicing the approach. In doing so, six EFL teachers were designated for the interview from those who had participated in questionnaires using purposive sampling techniques. The interview was audio recorded with the consent of the interviewees. The teachers were nominated with pseudonyms (Teacher-01, Teacher-02, Teacher-03...) during the collected data grounded on their turn of interviews.

Last, classroom observation was held to complement the data generated through the questionnaire and interview regarding the teachers' beliefs of active learning and their classroom instructions. The data were also valued to see some related issues that had been elucidated during the questionnaire and interview for further clarification. In this process, five English teachers were observed twice in different consecutive periods based on their willingness and availability during the data generation process. Ten classroom observations were conducted in total. The researcher tried to focus on some elements of instructional events going on, during the classroom observations. These included classroom conditions and facilities, teachers' and students' interaction, and classroom management (individual exercise, pair or group work, and instructional activities). To validate the pertinence of data, video recordings thoroughly and observation notes were used thoroughly.

Data analysis both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistical tools, such as mean and standard deviation, with the help of SPSS software. The reliability coefficient of each questionnaire was examined. Hence, the questionnaire's Cronbach's alpha for teachers' beliefs about the active learning was (0.807), whereas classroom practice was (0.808). Moreover, the data collected through the interviews were analyzed descriptively, while classroom observation data were presented with brief reports on each teacher's instructional patterns e. In the process of analyzing

and discussing, there was a mixing of results and validating the data through employing the instruments.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Active Learning Approaches (ALA)

In this section, ten items were designed to capture teachers' perspectives on the significance of implementing an ALA for enhancing students' achievements in English language learning.

Table 1. Teachers' Beliefs about the Importance of Active Learning Approach (ALA)

No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	The students' English for communicative competence is increased when they learn through active learning.	72	4.17	1.904
2	I know that active learning enhances students' self-confidence for participation.	72	4.20	0.894
3	Active learning values student-centeredness and makes them more responsible for their own learning.	72	4.03	1.021
4	The students' cultures of working together and sharing experiences are improved when they learn through active learning	72	4.24	0.927
5	Learning through active learning approach helps to better success of students' English skills than teacher- centered method.	72	4.15	1.122
6	Using active learning in ELT class takes much class time so that it is difficult to cover the portion in a given semester.	72	2.50	1.267
7	Active learning makes learners understand ways of critical thinking and problem-solving ability.	72	4.22	0.953

8	I know that active learning places a significant burden on teachers to manage the teaching-learning process.	72	2.57	1.207
9	Active learning encourages learning with real-life settings, as activities make students use language in authentic context.	72	4.14	0.939
10	The quality of education can be improved if teachers implement an active learning approach in their ELT classes.	72	4.29	1.027
Grand Mean			3.85	1.126
Source: Authors' Work (2024/25)			N =Number of respondents	

As can be noticed from Table 1, the teachers' mean responses to four items (2, 4, 7, and 10) indicated strongly agree with mean score (4.20, 4.24, 4.22, and 4.29), respectively. That is, the teachers acknowledged the significance of implementing an active learning approach in fostering students' engagement and their skills of lifelong learning in English language. For example, the teachers strongly agreed with the statements highlighting that students' cultures of working together and experience-sharing is improved when they learn through active learning ($M = 4.24$), and as well as the overall quality of education is improved ($M = 4.29$). The data tell us that the participants perceived positively active learning, as it is a significant approach for enhancing the students' learning of the language and improving the quality of education. The practice of active learning not only enhances the students' critical thinking and problemsolving ability but also improves the quality of education (Harrie et al., 2014).

Likewise, the teachers' mean responses to four additional items: increasing the students' English language for communicative competence ($M = 4.17$), valuing student-centeredness and responsibility for their own learning ($M = 4.03$), contributing to better success of students' language skills than teacher-centered approach ($M = 4.15$), and encouraging learning with real-life settings ($M = 4.14$) revealed agreement. Therefore, it is fair to conclude that teachers understand the significance of using an active learning approach for the students' successful English language learning. On the other hand, for items six and eight that express using active learning in ELT class takes much time so that it is difficult to cover the portion

in a given semester, and it places a significant burden on teachers to manage the teaching-learning process, the teachers expressed their disagreement, with mean values of 2.50 and 2.57, respectively.

The result obtained through teachers' interview also revealed that teachers perceive active learning approach positively in terms of contributing to the students' practical learning of the language. They confirmed that implementing the approach in EFL classes engages students in activities with a sense of responsibility and encourages them to reflect on their actions. It also enhances their cognitive abilities in critical thinking, fostering a culture of collaboration and problem-solving skills. For example, according to responses given by Teacher-01, active learning promotes students' long-term retention of knowledge and builds the skills needed for self-directed learning. Teacher-01 further added as follows:

Implementing an active learning approach in ELT classes is very significant for the students' learning of the English language. This is because it fosters the students' learning confidentially and develops their culture of working together. They become critical thinkers and problem-solvers, while a teacher is a facilitator of the teaching and learning environments (Teacher-01).

Likewise, Teacher-03 and Teacher-04 stated that practicing active learning in English classrooms places students on the correct path for learning the language effectively and fosters a culture of cooperative learning. Students can accomplish the given class activities much more accurately and quickly than individuals working because they share individual experiences for common benefits. Students could read and discuss, write and report, and share their individual understandings.

However, these convictions were not consistently demonstrated in the classroom practices observed during the study. Their teaching styles were more teacher-centered, based on the activities provided in the students' textbook. Students were not encouraged to participate in the instruction and were not provided with adequate time to think or discuss the new subject with their partners. The only things they did were copy notes from the blackboard and discuss some class activities in pairs or groups at their desks.

2. Teachers' Beliefs about their Role in Active Learning Classes (ALCs)

Table 2. Teachers' Beliefs about their Role in Active Learning Classes (ALCs)

No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I facilitate the way to impart activities and lead the overall teaching-learning process through interesting and challenging activities.	72	4.22	0.996
2	It is my role to give clear directions to the students on how to advance their use of the English language.	72	3.74	1.278
3	I monitor the level of my students' understanding and involve them in problem-solving activities	72	4.07	1.214
4	As an EFL teacher, I should understand the basic principles of active learning and know how to implement it.	72	3.99	1.216
5	I encourage my students to practice learning through various methods with their peers.	72	4.03	1.210
6	I differentiate instructions in order to meet an individual student's needs in active learning classes	72	4.14	1.092
7	I provide extended feedback to my student to check their progress in learning the language	72	3.50	1.148
Grand Mean			3.96	1.165

Source: Authors' Work (2024/25)

N =Number of respondents

Table 2 presents seven items that were intended to collect data regarding teachers' beliefs about their professional roles in active learning classes in EFL classrooms. These beliefs are critical for understanding how teachers perceive their responsibilities in facilitating effective learning environments. As noticed, the teachers' responses to the majority items (six items) portrayed agreement, with mean scores ranging from 3.50 to 4.14. These mean values revealed that the teachers seemed to be aware of the pedagogical roles they play in active learning classrooms. For instance, the teachers agreed that one of the teacher's roles in active learning class (ALC) is differentiating instructions to meet an individual student's needs ($M = 4.22$). Moreover, they agreed with the statement emphasizing that one of the

teacher's roles in active learning class is providing feedback to the students to check their progress ($M = 3.99$). That means the teachers recognized their pivotal role in the teaching and learning process within EFL classrooms. Likewise, during the interview sessions, the teachers stated that the successful implementation of active learning is contingent upon the teachers' classroom actions. This confirms the belief that teachers are anticipated to possess experience in the principles of active learning strategies to effectively support students. The teachers' mean responses to one item, facilitating the way to impart activities and lead the overall teaching-learning process, revealed strong agreement ($M=4.22$). This indicates that the participants possess the professional roles that teachers need to play.

The results of the interview also support the above survey's results. The teachers confirmed that the role of the teacher is facilitating favorable classroom conditions, getting the students to learn through means of collaboration, and orienting the mode of teaching and learning, and promoting social interaction among the students. As a result, students actively participate, think critically, and cultivate a collaborative learning culture under the teacher's facilitation. In relation to this, Teacher-02 explained that the role of the teacher in active learning classrooms goes beyond planning and delivering lessons. It involves creating a relaxed environment and being a model on how to utilize and apply knowledge in the students' lives. Similarly, Teacher-03 stated that teachers are expected to design methods that can positively influence students' learning and motivate them to achieve more. Likewise, Teacher-05 explained that the role of the teacher in an active learning class is to assign responsibilities to students, allowing them adequate time to complete tasks. Finally, Teacher-06 elaborated the same teacher's role as follows:

Teachers have many professional roles in active learning classes. This includes understanding the students' learning backgrounds and designing lessons based on their learning abilities. Teachers are also expected to encourage students to check each other's work and engage in peer assessment. Furthermore, teachers need to evaluate the students' progress and provide constructive feedback (Teacher-06).

The other participants further elaborated on similar ideas, emphasizing that the role of the teachers is to create favorable learning atmospheres and present lessons in a way that is interesting to the students.

Generally, this result revealed that the participants perceive their role as extending beyond merely delivering routine lessons. Instead, they sight their roles as encompassing the design, delivery, organization, assessment, and evaluation of individual students' progress.

3. Teachers' Practice of Active Learning Approach in EFL Classrooms

The following table summarizes the extent to which the active learning approach is practiced by EFL teachers. Thus, the teachers' responses to eight items are untaken below.

Table 3. Teachers' Practice of Active Learning Approach in EFL Classrooms

No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I provide activities that inspire students to interact with each other.	72	2.41	1.182
2	I provide students adequate time to express their sights on the topic they have been taught.	72	2.27	1.113
3	I create relaxing classroom to foster students' learning.	72	2.52	1.165
4	I facilitate contexts for students so that they get the chance to reflect on their work.	72	2.19	1.158
5	I encourage students to develop responsibility for their learning.	72	2.63	1.122
6	I motivate students to present their classwork allied with their real-life experiences.	72	2.49	1.363
7	I encourage my students to practice the given activities in sharing of individual experiences.	72	3.09	1.272
8	I go around the class and encourage my students to engage in and practice the given activities in pair.	72	2.64	1.127
Grand Mean			2.53	1.188

Source: Authors' Work (2024/25)

N =Number of respondents

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Table 3 presents teachers' practice of the active learning approach in their ELT classrooms. The teachers' mean answers to five items revealed infrequent classroom practices, with mean score of ($M = 2.19, 2.27, 2.41, 2.49 \text{ \& } 2.57$), respectively. That is, the teachers reported that they rarely practice the active learning approach in their ELT classes. From this, it can be said that teachers mainly practice the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching. For example, the participating teachers reported that they rarely provide students with activities that encourage them to interact with each other (mean = 2.41) and create relaxing classroom settings to foster students' learning (mean = 2.52). Thus, this practice could hinder students' opportunities for collaborative learning and deeper understanding of the given materials. As a result of a teacher's ineffective instructional methods, students could fail to acquire the necessary knowledge, critical thinking skills, and problem solving ability (Martha, 2017).

Conversely, the teachers' mean responses to three items: encouraging students to develop responsibility for their learning ($M = 2.63$), practicing the given activities in sharing of individual experiences ($M = 3.09$), and helping the individual students to engage in and practice the given activities in pairs ($M = 2.64$) demonstrate sometimes. That is, the teachers reported that they sometimes encourage students to devote themselves to their learning, do it collaboratively, and coach the individual activities and practice in pairs. From this, it can be concluded that most of the instructional time is covered by the teachers.

Furthermore, during the interview session, the teachers also confirmed that they infrequently practice the approach because of different barriers, such as large class size, a shortage of time and teaching materials, and fixed seating arrangements. Teacher-01, for example, explained as follows:

Most of the time, I use the lecture method followed by giving some notes based on the activities in the students' textbook. I use this strategy frequently for two purposes. First, since most of the students do not have textbook, I give them with adequate notes that align with the topic exists in their textbook, and then I give an explanation. Second, because of class sizes and a shortage of time, I use lecture method to go with my annual plan (Teacher-01).

The other participants also explained that they use frequently teacher-centred method of teaching because the volume of textbook is huge with intensive contents, which is difficult to cover the portion in allotted semester, or year, large class size, shortage of time and teaching materials. However, occasionally they practice the active learning strategies such as pair work, group work, presentation and class discussions. Teacher-03 also elaborated the same ideas as follows:

I teach large number students in one class. Besides, the classroom conditions, such as the students' seating arrangements are not conducive to monitoring students for active learning. Further, most of the students do not have textbook, and the contents of the book is too extensive to cover in the given time. Thus, the only option I have is to use the lecture method, but I sometimes try to practice the approaches like pair work, group work, and class discussion (Teacher-03).

The classroom observation data also depicted the teacher's responses. That is, the researcher observed teachers' tendency to favor the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching. Most of the classroom time was covered by the teacher, revising the previous lesson, writing notes, and explaining with very few students' participation.

In general, the teachers' overall grand mean score is (2.53), indicating that teachers rarely practice the active learning approach in their ELT classes. This result shows that although teachers perceive active learning positively, they frequently practice the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching because of various factors. These factors include large class size, unsuitable students' seating arrangements for active learning classes, lack of textbook and teaching aids, and a shortage of time.

In this subsection, ten items were designed to generate data on how often teachers practice the different types of active learning strategies in their ELT classrooms. The teachers' responses to each item are discussed and presented in the following table.

Table 4. How Often Teachers Use Active Learning Strategies in ELT Classrooms

No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Cooperative Learning	72	2.51	1.199
2	Role play	72	2.35	1.103
3	Project- based learning	72	2.25	1.184
4	Exercises for individual students	72	3.31	1.296
5	Group work	72	3.43	1.149
6	Pair work	72	3.49	1.267
7	Class discussion	72	2.82	1.282
8	Debate	72	1.78	0.826
9	Lecture method	72	3.97	1.061
10	Presentation	72	1.92	1.004
Mean			2.78	1.173

Source: Authors' Work (2024/25)

N =Number of respondents

As can be seen in Table 4, the teachers' mean responses to four items, i.e., exercises for individual students ($M = 3.31$), group work ($M = 3.43$), pair work ($M = 3.49$), and lecture method ($M = 3.49$) indicated frequent classroom practices. That is, the participants reported that they frequently undertake these strategies in their ELT classes, with pair work and lecture method having the highest mean scores.

During the interview session, the teachers also confirmed that they frequently use pair and group work because the students share textbooks, which allow them to discuss the given topic together in their seating. Moreover, the students' seating arrangement, where two to three students sit on one desk, is conducive to practice such strategies. According to responses provided by Teacher-01, nevertheless he has the interest to practice the active learning approach, the students' lack of interest and motivation to take part in instructional process; large class size and shortage of time, made him use lecture method in most his ELT classes.

I know that students can learn more through active learning strategies than the teacher center method. This is because students are actively involved in the lesson, i.e., they do things by themselves by sharing their understanding. They ask each other questions without fear since they

are friends and are responsible for their own learning. However, classroom conditions and lack of teaching materials such as large class size, shortage of textbook, large class sizes and other related problems impede us to practice the approach meaningfully (Teacher-01).

Similarly, Teacher-02 replied that she uses the lecture method and pair work most of the time because of a shortage of time and teaching materials. Teacher-03 also explained that he commonly uses the teacher-centered method. He stated this is because of students' lack of experiences learning through active learning from the lower grades, and their lack of skills and experiences in using the target language. As to the responses of teacher-04, students prefer to learn through the teacher's explanations rather than through active learn. Thus, he uses the teacher centered method to satisfy the students' interest. Following Teacher -04, Teacher -05 elaborated as follows:

Most of the students and even the school administration perceive the teacher as being unprepared for the traditional teacher-centered method "chalk and talk" lessons and, therefore, he uses the active learning to hide his lack of preparation through keeping students too busy.

Furthermore, the data obtained from classroom observation corroborated the findings from the survey and interviews. The teachers' primary method of instruction remains the lecture format, followed by giving notes on specific topics.

DISCUSSION

Based in the finding about how do secondary school English language teachers perceive active learning approaches, it indicated the same perceptions among the participants. Regarding teachers' beliefs about the active learning approach for the students' language learning, the results of the questionnaire and an interview revealed that teachers possess strong positive beliefs about the significance of implementing the approach. They explained that it enhances the students' learning of the language meaningfully because it holds students' responsibility for their own learning, inspires them to work in collaborative, and

endorses critical thinking and problemsolving ability. This finding is different from that of Telore and Damtew (2023), who concluded that teachers lack an appropriate understanding of the active learning, practices, their roles and efficacy of the approach.

The teachers also believe that practicing active learning does not make difficulty for them to cover the portion within the allotted semester. Moreover, they believe that practicing active learning in ELT classes does not add burden of facilitating student participation. Therefore, it can be concluded that practicing active learning in ELT classrooms helps teachers cover the portion within the allotted semester and minimizes their workload since students share the teacher's work for their learning. In relation to teachers' classroom roles, Murphy (1993) stated that the role of the teacher is guiding, developing comfortable contexts for the students to discover and evaluate the progress of their learning, and promoting social interaction among the students.

The results of the study related to teachers' beliefs about their professional roles in active learning classes (ALCs) also indicated that teachers have role-focused expectations like facilitating, encouraging, providing feedback, and evaluating the students' learning progress. However, the interview results disclosed that teachers were not playing most of the roles that are expected of them in active learning classes. They reported that though they have an interest to implement the approach, classroom condition, teaching and learning materials and students' learning background and other factors impede them from accomplishing their professional roles.

On the other hand, the findings about the active learning approach practiced by the teachers revealed that teachers were not effectively practicing the approach as intended in the curriculum. This could affect the assumptions underlined in the Ministry of Education's (MOE) 2003 policy, which implemented an active learning approach to foster students' learning by improving the quality of education. This result shows that although teachers perceive active learning positively, they frequently practice the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching because of various factors. The analysis of the data indicated that large class size, fixed seating

arrangements, shortage of time, lack of students' motivation, and teaching materials impede teachers from practicing the approach effectively. In relation to this, Tadesse et al. (2024) conducted research on challenges English language teachers face in implementing active learning and concluded that various factors, such as large class size and shortage of teaching materials, hinder the implementation of the active learning approach. However, some active learning strategies like pair work, group work, and presentations were practiced based on the activities provided in students' textbooks. This finding agrees with the findings of Yenyet (2021) and Teshome (2017) that studied the practice of active learning and concluded that the approach is not practiced effectively because of different contextual factors. Also, this result aligns with the previous study by Mulatu & Bezabih (2018), who conducted research and concluded that although teachers perceive the active learning approach positively, they still practice the teacher-centered method of teaching dominantly.

Overall, it can be evidenced that teachers dominantly use the lectures method. However, they practice pair work, group work, and questioning and answering occasionally rather than fully engaging students in the teaching and learning procedures. The results achieved through interview items also support the survey results. Furthermore, classroom observation results suggest that most of EFL teachers use a teacher-dominated approach, leaving students as the only receivers of information rather than part of the the teaching and learning process. This finding was in line with Biruh (2018) and Taye (2008) who conducted studies on similar issues and concluded that teachers hardly practice the strategies of active learning.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The current study tried to investigate the secondary school English teachers' beliefs about the active learning approach and their classroom practices in the EFL context, the case of grades 11 and 12 in focus. Questionnaires, semi-structured interview and classroom observations were employed to collect data from the respondents. Based on the analysis and discussions, the findings from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that teachers possess strong positive conviction regarding the significance of implementing an active learning approach

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for the students' English language learning. On the other hand, teachers were observed using a routine pattern of teacher-dominated methods of teaching with little practice of active learning strategies, such as pair work, group work, and presentation. Students were passive for the entire period except for the reaction of a few students on the given homework or class activities. Teachers looked to fail to have the theoretical and practical conceptions about the active learning approach for the students' academic achievements. This discrepancy suggests that while teachers acknowledge the potential benefits of active learning approach for the students' academic career, they may feel constrained by traditional teaching practices or lack the necessary support and training to fully integrate these methods into their classrooms.

Overall, although teachers perceive active learning approach positively, they predominantly practice the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching. However, they sometimes incorporate pair and group work, and exercise for individuals. This was due to various factors, such as classroom conditions, fixed seating arrangements, large class sizes, and shortage of time, shortage resources and teachers' training gaps. Finally, it is recommended that teachers should examine their teaching methods. To support this, stakeholders such as the education experts should make classrooms more conducive to implement active learning by facilitating teaching materials. In addition, they should provide need-based training that facilitates a better implementation of the active learning approach and recommendations for future studies.

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