

# Innovations

## Research Article: A study on Cognizance of EFL Teachers Regarding the Accommodation of Learners' Different Learning Styles in ELT Context: Focus on Two Colleges of Teachers' Education in Oromia, Ethiopia

**1. Aliye Geleta 2. Zeleke Teshome 3. Mekuria Zewdie**

<sup>1</sup>[PhD Candidate, Department of English Language and Literature, Wollaga University, P. O. Box 395, Nekemte, Ethiopia

<sup>2</sup>[PhD, Assoc. Professor, Director of University Industry Linkage, Department of English Language and Literature, Wollaga University, P. O. Box 395, Nekemte, Ethiopia

<sup>3</sup>[PhD, Ass. Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Wollaga University, P. O. Box 395, Nekemte, Ethiopia,  
Corresponding author: **Aliye Geleta**

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### **Abstract**

*This this study was aimed at exploring EFL teachers' cognizance of students' learning styles and also their attempt to address them in teaching English Language in Shambu and Jimma Colleges of Teachers' Education (henceforth, CTEs), Oromia, Ethiopia. To achieve the intended objective, a descriptive survey design was employed and this design was selected since the prime intention of the study was to describe the existing realities concerning the EFL teachers' practices of accommodating learning styles. EFL teachers and Year III EFL students of the English language department, altogether 60 participants were taken using a comprehensive sampling technique. Besides, classroom observations were conducted to see the teachers' actual practices while teaching the English language, this method was used to triangulate the different kinds of the data obtained from the two parties. Finally, the finding of the study revealed that the EFL teachers' practices of accommodating their learners' different learning styles in the English language teaching at the CTEs was found to be poor. In other words, EFL teachers of the aforementioned CTE are not addressing their learners' learning styles while teaching the English language courses. And it could be inferred that this failure of accommodation emanated from teachers' lack of cognizance of students' learning styles.*

**Key words:** 1.EFL learners, 2.EFL teachers, 3.Accommodation, 4.Accommodation Practice, 5.Learning Styles

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### **1 Introduction**

A shift of attention has taken place in second/foreign language pedagogies research as part of educational system change and as a result, the emphasis on products of instructional activities to that of its processes through which the intended products can properly be achieved thought over (Oxford, 1990). As part of the scenario, language teaching-learning styles and/or strategies were (re)emerged not only as an integral component of the various theoretical models of language achievement but also as a means of achieving learner autonomy in language learning (Oxford, 1990; Dorji, 2017; Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006; Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017).

Gradually, the totally ignored aspects of learners' learning was changed and brought them to the center of language pedagogy. This was mainly realized with the introduction of CLT which was paved based on the Constructivist Theory of language teaching and learning (Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017; Brown, 2007). According to this theory, learning should be something made by the learners under their teachers' support; it is not that what is imposed on the learners. It is based on the belief that for the effective teaching-learning processes, learners' related issues have to be reconsidered.

Constructivism acknowledges teachers' justifiable provisions of the necessary inputs for students. In doing this, teachers need to have cognizance of learners' different learning styles to vary their teaching methodologies by designing different tasks in a way they can address all, if not, at least the majority of the learners. In the study of instructional styles, thus, teachers' meaningful inputs and learners both as individual and social efforts of knowledge constructions are worth considered and justifiably traced on constructivist theory.

The theory of Constructivism could further be made viable for the present study, if seen in the lens of the *Differentiated Instruction* (DI) paradigm of classroom practice (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011). Under the umbrella of Constructivist Theory, the Differentiated Instruction paradigm which was deep-rooted in the Theory of *Multiple Intelligences* (MI) was used as a more relevant and immediate theory used to guide the different assumptions in the current study. This is because as a wing of MI Theory, Differentiated Instruction paves ways for teachers to accommodate learners with different learning styles. The theory assumes that a subject teacher should employ different teaching techniques in order to fairly reach or accommodate at least all groups of the learners and benefit them in the course being taught. So, properly implemented differentiated instructions by the classroom teachers plays vital roles in realizing the theory because its major concern is to recognize the learners' different learning styles and their intelligences.

The major assumption behind the Differentiated Instruction is that when teachers recognize the learners' different learning styles and try to teach them accordingly, the intended holistic academic objectives can be achieved (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011; Zebari, Allo & Mohammedzadeh, 2018). According to these scholars, educational objectives in general and the specific course objectives or achievements in particular are set for all the learners not for a certain group of the students whose learning styles match with the teacher's teaching style. According to this theory, though a perfect matching may not be expected, teachers can address different learners in their teaching activities and this can be done first by having cognizance about the different learners' learning styles and then accordingly plan for it and vary the teaching techniques. And this can be applicable in teaching any subjects and more appropriate to language teaching especially in the CLT approaches.

Scholars in the area, for example, Reid (1987), Peacock (2001) and Razak, Ahmad and Shah (2007) have agreed that if the learners' learning styles are addressed in one's teaching practices, the goals of a particular language instruction can successfully be achieved and learning is enhanced. Gafoor and Babu (2012) and Grasha (1996) also claimed that the most effective language teachers are those who use their students preferred learning styles as the basis for their instruction. Operative teachers, according to those scholars, always listen to their learners' learning motive and try to respond to it rather than insisting on their own preferred teaching style.

For this effect, teachers need to acknowledge learners' different learning style preferences and try to address these varied styles through the use of a *multi-style* teaching approach in order to bring the desired academic success which benefits both of the parties\_ the teacher and the learners (Al-Deeb, 2016; Cabrillana & Mayany, 2017; Cassidy, 2004). Other researchers in the area, for instance, Yassin and Almasri (2015), and Tomlinson (2005) have also agreed that though a perfect match between students' learning styles and a teacher's teaching style might not be expected, the teacher's attempt to use different teaching styles that can address the various learning style preferences of the classroom learners should be what is worth considering. Hence, the major focus of this study was on the latter concern, the EFL teachers' accommodation practices of learners' varied learning styles in teaching the English language.

If the accommodation is properly made, both parties are undoubtedly benefited. Gafoor and Babu (2012, p. 57) identify five different but interrelated benefits of addressing learners' different learning styles in teaching. These are: students increased motivations in learning, positive attitudes towards the course and the respective teacher,

mutual understanding and harmony between the teacher and learners, course achievement improved or language skills developed, and the satisfactions of both parties as a result of the success.

In Ethiopia, too, it has been evident that efforts to bring learners to the center of pedagogic activities have formally started lately. In the history of the country's education system, it was the 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) that was believed to bring several significant changes regarding how should the classroom instruction be effectively run (Getachew & Derib, 2006; Hirut, 2007). So, addressing the learners' learning styles that recognizes the learners' diversity in behavior, learning styles and different exceptionalities were seen to be among the momentous changes in the country's education systems. Thus, the trial to address learners' varied learning styles in language teaching seemed to begin since then as the policy tried to bring the learners to the center of language pedagogy and also encourage teachers consider the various aspects of their learners while teaching.

Though there exist various classifications of learners' learning styles, only the perceptual learning style preferences viz. *visual, auditory, kinesthetic/tactile, individual, and group* and how to accommodate learners with this kings of preferences by the classroom teachers was the concern of the present study. So, hereunder is the highlight of the concept of these styles.

The selected taxonomy also works to identify the teachers' teaching styles. Hence, the rationale to use this model for the present research was that it brings the instructional styles preferences of both parties together. That means teachers can also have visual, auditory, kinesthetic, group or individual teaching style preferences in teaching a course and can easily accommodate their learners in such categories (Peacock, 2001). For instance, teachers who always like to present things orally using well-organized oral lectures are said to follow auditory teaching style, whereas, those who always prefer to give group works in and outside classrooms and always encourage cooperative learning follow group teaching styles, and so on.

## **2 Study Context and Initiations**

Each of the eleven regional governments of the country, Ethiopia, could develop their own strategic plans to improve their regions education systems based on the existing realities in their own contexts though the cumulative effect is seen as a whole in the country's overall education system development. Due to this, many researchers and policy analysts commented that the change of Ethiopian Government made in 1991, more than ever before, was believed to bring remarkable changes in the attention given to education systems of the country (the researchers' experience). So, it was commented that the 1994 ETP was expected to prepare teachers with the professional knowledge, skills and interest that fit for the teaching profession that should be adhered to learners' different learning styles (Temesgen, 2017).

Oromia Regional State Government, as part of the scenario has opened various campaigns which were believed to improve the region's education qualities. To realize the campaigns, primary school teachers holding at least a diploma have to be trained effectively and sufficiently. For this effect, the existing few teachers training institutes (TTIs) were developed to college of teachers education (CTE) levels where qualified diploma teachers have to be trained and graduated. There is no easy-going way for students (teacher candidates) to join the college and also to choose the subject they want to be trained in. The teacher candidates who enter the colleges for their diploma level training are made pass through toughest competitions at which the entrants could have been dropped if failed to pass the given check-points.

Nevertheless, EFL trainees selected passing through all these processes and then after trained by qualified instructors in the CTE were not observed to come up to the expected level in their final achievements and also in

their teaching practices (Temesgen, 2017 & Researcher's own experience). The final expected level of competency was that any EFL Diploma Graduates should achieve two major objectives at the end: 1) they should score good points or at least the average value i.e., 70% and above on exit exams known as the COC; 2) they should perform well on their teaching practices which are reflected during different practicums. So, it was this disparity that created a big doubt, though there might still be other factors that can affect learners' achievements, on the EFL teachers' accommodations of learners' different learning styles while teaching the English language and initiated the current researcher to conduct this research. In brief, regardless of all the efforts made to produce competent teachers, many EFL [teacher] candidates were found to be below the expected level of competency and that was why the current researcher was inspired to see whether or not the trainees have been taught in ways they prefer to learn the language, if not, in the way at least the majority students are addressed. It is also strongly suggested in the Higher Diploma Program (HDP) that college instructors have to accommodate learners' learning styles in order to improve their academic achievements and thereby maintain quality education in colleges in general (HDP Manual, 2011, p. 50). The HDP training is an international program that is given to build higher institution instructors' capacities in all spheres of the teaching-learning activities. It is mandatory to take this training since it is believed to add different new insights for teachers such as the effective ways teaching and learning, assessment techniques and the like concerns. Hence, this study attempted to answer the research questions: *Do EFL teachers have cognizance of learners' difference in their learning styles? Have they been attempting to address these styles in ELT?*

### **3 Materials and Methods**

#### **3.1 Research paradigm and design**

This study relied on *pragmatic research paradigm* because this view supports an assumption arisen out of the existing situations, actions and consequences rather than some pre-hand or antecedent conditions as most of the other research philosophies do. In a pragmatic worldview, researchers have the greatest concern for practical matters which is guided by practical experience rather than theory (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Hence, researchers emphasize on how to solve the research problem using all the available methods to understand the problem instead of focusing on fixed preset method. For this effect, this worldview best fits for the *mixed methods studies* which utilize pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem (Willis, 2007). And to counterbalance the defects of single sourced data, *mixed research* approach that involves a combination of both the qualitative and quantitative data by (Mertens, 2010; Dornyei, 2007) was employed. Since different kinds of data were utilized for the investigation of the issues pertaining to EFL instructional styles and the teachers' practices of accommodating learners' varied learning styles, a mixed research approach was preferred to be used. From the various research designs that have been commonly used by different researchers, this study deployed a *descriptive survey* design. The rationale for the selection of this design was that the issue of learning and teaching styles has not been yet researched well in TEFL especially in Oromia CTEs contexts. Such relatively new phenomena in which sufficient empirical studies are hardly found better fall under descriptive survey research design and the data needed for such investigation need to be widely assembled. According to Ary et al. (2010), a *descriptive survey* study is used to provide an insight into a situation, people or event as it exists in its operating conditions, but it *may not explain why or why not an event has occurred* and it is much suitable for a relatively new or unexplored research area. Cohen et al. (2007, p. 205) on this also wrote, "Many educational researches are descriptive; that is, they are set out to describe and to interpret what exists and what is not, but not why is it or why is it not."

#### **3.2 Study Participants**

The target population of the study was EFL teachers and students of Shambu and Jimma CTEs in Oromia and the CTEs are found in South West part of the country, Ethiopia. So, all the EFL teachers of the colleges (n=20) and year III (Graduating Class) EFL students (n=40) were participating in the study and both groups were selected

using *comprehensive sampling technique*. The reason for using this sampling technique was that both the EFL teachers and students of the college were manageable in size ( $N_T = 60$ ) so that all were used to participate in the study by filling the questionnaire and also for classroom observation purpose. Such inclusive sampling technique is highly recommended by many scholars, for example, Dornyei (2007), Ary et al. (2010) and Gray (2004).

### **3.3 Research Instruments**

The main research instruments used were Questionnaire and Classroom Observation. According to Bhattacherjee (2012), Brown (2001), Dornyei (2007) questionnaire is recommended to get people's factual, behavioral and attitudinal data in conducting related studies. So, questionnaire as a research method for this study was believed to be the right tool to collect data about the teachers' teaching style preferences, thoughts and practices in a systematic manner To this effect, two sets of questionnaires of which one was used to get data regarding the teachers' self-perceived practices of accommodating students' different learning styles and another was used to collect data regarding teachers' cognizance of the students' learning styles were developed consulting different related literature.

Observation was also another major tool for this study. It is appreciated by many research experts as it gives an investigator the opportunity to look directly into what is taking place rather than relying on second-hand accounts of the data required. It draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand (Denscombe, 2007; Robson, 2002). In the current study, too, the method was acknowledged and used as it was believed to meet this requirement and the tool was preferred as it was believed to earn live data regarding the teachers' actual classroom practices of accommodating different learning styles. Thus, using of a non-participant observer approach, the researcher observed the classroom scenarios and filled in the checklist that was developed to serve this purpose. The observation checklist was developed by the researcher focusing on typical elements that helped him dictate whether or not the teachers have been accommodating students' learning styles in their classroom teaching practices. The researcher himself designed the observation schedule based on Cohen, et al. (2007) premises that state a researcher needs to carefully design an observation schedule based on his knowledge, expectations and experiences of the issue under investigation.

The observation theme was mainly focusing on the major teaching styles expected to be applied which are also the taxonomy used for this study are *auditory style* (oral-aural or lectures, etc.), *visual styles* (demonstrations via charts, diagrams and written notes, etc.), *kinesthetic/tactile styles* (movements, involvements, dramatizing, etc.), *individual* (doing things alone) and *group* (doing things with others) styles. For this effect, the researcher mainly focused on basic preset instructional elements such as instructional materials or aids teachers bring to class (e.g., flip charts, videos, Power points, etc.), grouping forms or classroom organization (individual, pair or group work), varieties of activities/tasks of lessons, major mode/s of delivery (e.g., the inclination towards either lecture methods or interactive methods) and other related classroom scenarios undertaken while teaching the English Language at the CTEs. However, for the sake convenience and observable security problems around Shambu CTE, the repeated classroom observations were conducted in Jimma CTE where there relative stability was experienced at the time of data collection for this study (i.e. in March and April, 2022).

### **3.4 The Validity and Reliability of the Tools**

Both the validity and reliability of the instruments were checked before used for the research. The validity of the instruments, in terms of content, face validity and construct validity were checked by the advisors' and expertise comments and amendments. And the reliability especially that of the internal consistency of the items was confirmed by using the existing statistical test, particularly using Cronbach Alpha value.

#### 4. Results and discussions

This section presents the research results and the discussions of findings. So, at this outset the researcher would like to note that the *parallel or concurrent discussion* technique is used. In this technique no separate room is given for the analyses and discussions parts but parallel presentations, comparing and contrasting what is obtained with other scholars' views or findings in the area. This approach is recommended by many research expertise since it is believed to be reader friendly (Cohen et al., 2007).

##### 4.1. EFL teachers' cognizance of students' learning styles

The studies of EFL instructional style preferences have shown different results regarding the teachers' cognizance of learners' different learning styles. For example, Tuan (2011) and Soliven (2003) have agreed that teachers know well the existence of different learning styles and recommended that they need to vary their teaching styles in ways they address the various kinds of the learners so that fairly all the learners can be benefited from the classroom instructions. Shaari, Yusoff, Ghazali, Osman & Dzahir (2014), on the other hand, concluded that teachers do not really know the learners' learning style preferences and this lack of cognizance about the learners' learning styles could be one major cause for teachers' failure to accommodate these styles while teaching their courses and this is also true in ELT contexts. Aliye, Zeleke and Mekuria (2022) also found out that there exist a mismatch between students' learning style preferences and their teachers' teaching styles and it could be anticipated from this result that teachers may lack knowledge of the learners' different learning style preferences. As part of this study, therefore, the attempt was made to see if the EFL teachers have cognizance of their students' different learning styles in the context of the present study and this subsection deals with the issue.

**Table 1: The EFL Teachers' Cognizance of Different Learning Styles**

No.	Statements	N	M	SD
1	Learning style differences do not exist among EFL students in learning the same course.	20	4.25	0.62
2	Failure to understand our students' learning styles when teaching can affect the students' achievements	20	2.75	0.71
3	Classroom teachers are the important figures that should determine what and how students learn.	20	4.6	0.50
4	Students' learning styles should be addressed by the subject teachers to bring holistic improvements on students' achievements.	20	2.9	0.73
5	Students should learn in the way their teachers prefer to teach them than in the ways they prefer to learn.	20	4.15	0.83
6	A single teaching style the teacher uses is enough to teach all students in the class; no need of employing different teaching styles as is wastes teachers' times	20	4.45	0.69
7	Students' learning styles can have influence on our teaching styles.	20	2.30	0.58
8	Accommodating students' various learning styles is difficult and impossible in ELT context.	20	4.7	0.47
	<b>Grand Average</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3.76</b>	<b>0.66</b>

As revealed in Table 1 above, a questionnaire containing about 8 items was provided for the EFL teachers. The purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit the required information regarding the teachers' knowledge of students' learning style preferences and its impacts on the effectiveness of the teaching and/or learning activities.

It could be evident that each of the item or question set for the purpose was designed to check out whether or not teachers have cognizance of their students' learning style preferences and also if failure to know this fact can affect the instructional processes and final achievements.

The analysis has shown that in the items that were designed to indirectly inspect teachers' knowledge about and attitude towards the learning styles and accommodations of different learning styles (questions with implied meaning) *low mean and high standard deviation values* were registered. Whereas, in the items that were meant to apparently check the extent the teachers know about the topic (explicitly stated questions) *high mean and low standard deviation values* were computed. For example, in the three items (Item 2, Item 4 and Item 7) in which the positive aspects of addressing students' learning styles were asked, low mean and high standard deviation values (i.e.,  $M = 2.75$ ;  $SD = 0.71$ ,  $M = 2.9$ ;  $SD = 0.73$ ,  $M = 2.30$ ;  $SD = 0.58$ ) respectively were registered. Apart from these three items in which the positive things of knowing and accommodation students' different learning styles, the remaining 6 items have shown high values (see the above table for the results).

In conclusion, the results have generally shown that the EFL teachers of the selected CTE do not have cognizance of their students' learning style preferences. Had they been known it well, they wouldn't have given opposite marks (high marks for the one demanding low marks and vice versa) for each of the items provided to investigate this fact (see Table 1).

However, different previous research findings have shown contradicting results with this finding. Gafoor and Babu (2012), Al-Deeb (2016), Cabrillana and Mayany (2017) and Cassidy (2004) were among the scholars who claimed that teachers' of the contemporary era have knowledge of what and how their students want to learn. According to the scholars, however, the teachers might not teach, though they know well about students' learning style variations, as per what the theories of instructional style preferences have suggested it to be. In fact, this needs further investigations.

#### **4.2. EFL Teachers' Practices of Accommodating Students' Learning Styles**

The second research question (RQ 2) endeavored to investigate whether or not the EFL teachers are accommodating students' different learning style preferences while teaching the English language courses. For this effect, two sets of questionnaires were set: one for teachers' self-evaluation, another for students' evaluation of the teachers' practice. To confirm the results obtained, classroom observation was further employed.

##### **4.2.1 Teachers' Self-perceived Practice**

Teachers were made to evaluate their own practices of accommodating different learning styles. For this part, 9 items that were meant to generate data on teachers' efforts regarding the accommodation practices were developed and included in the questionnaire. These items were mainly used to inspect the extent to which EFL teachers do vary their teaching styles considering that learners in the classroom have varied learning styles to fairly reach at least all groups of the learners. Table 2 below could display a summary of this fact in point.

**Table 2: EFL Teachers' Self-reported Practice of Accommodations**

No.	Statements	N	M	SD
1	I plan in advance to teach the English language in a way I can accommodate learners' various learning styles.	20	4.20	0.69
2	I employ different teaching styles or lesson presentation techniques in teaching English language.	20	4.45	0.60
3	I design and bring different language tasks or activities that appeal to different learning styles and apply in the class.	20	4.25	0.62
4	I believe that students are happy and motivated when I accommodate their different learning styles preferences in a classroom.	20	4.30	0.66
5	I use different Teaching Aids such as charts, videos, shows, flashcards, pictures, models, etc. when teaching the different aspects of English language.	20	4.60	0.50
6	During practicums (teaching practices), I encourage EFL teacher candidates to practice designing different activities that can support learners with different learning styles.	20	3.95	0.76
7	I employ varied teaching techniques or methods while teaching the different aspects of the English language.	20	4.35	0.74
8	In teaching the English language courses, I predominantly use one adapted teaching style or technique that I have been accustomed to.	20	<b>2.25</b>	<b>0.78</b>
9	I teach English language in the way or style my students want to learn. For example, learning by seeing, by listening, by doing, by moving or doing, etc.	20	4.5	0.60
<b>Summated M and SD</b>			<b>4.09</b>	<b>0.66</b>

As depicted in Table 2 above, in items that were meant to directly look into teachers' self-evaluations to address learners' different styles of learning (ex: *Item 2, Item 5, Item 7, Item 9 and also in other items*) higher mean values and relatively low standard deviation results were registered. All mean values are almost nearer to the maximum point of the Likert scale, i.e. nearer to 5. Whereas in a case the teachers were asked other way round i.e., in the question that shows they do not accommodate or address the students' learning styles, the opposite results were found, for example, *Item 8* (see the results in the Table 2).

It can be evident from the results that the EFL teachers' self-evaluation of their own practices of accommodation is high (*Summated M = 4.09; SD = 066*). The result, in this case, revealed that teachers have been accommodating their students' preferred learning styles in teaching the English language. That means the teachers claimed that they are addressing their students' preferred learning styles by employing different teaching techniques, encouraging learners learn in ways they prefer to learn, designing and bringing different activities or tasks that can entertain different groups the learners, using different instructional/technological materials in teaching English language courses, etc.

#### 4.2.2 Students' Evaluation of Teachers' Accommodation Practice

Parallel to the teachers' evaluation of their practices, students were requested to evaluate the teachers' practices of accommodating their different learning styles in English language teaching. This was used to generate the *actual* data regarding teachers' classroom experiences of acknowledging the learning style differences and their effort to address them when teaching the language. For this part, similar to the teachers' questionnaire, 8 items (one is left out as it works only for teachers) that were meant to dictate the extent to which teachers have been employing different teaching techniques or styles that can accommodate fairly all groups of learners in the class

were included into the questionnaire. Table 3 below presents the summary of this case using mean values and standard deviations.

**Table 3: A Summary of Students' Evaluation of Teachers' Accommodation Practice**

No.	Statements	N	M	SD
1	Your English language teachers employ different teaching styles or lesson presentation techniques in teaching English language.	40	1.80	0.60
2	Your English language teachers design and bring different language tasks or activities that appeal to different learning styles and apply in the class.	40	1.98	0.58
3	Your English language teachers make you happy and motivated to learn the language by addressing your different learning styles preferences in a classroom.	40	1.93	0.61
4	Your English language teachers use different Teaching Aids such as charts, videos, shows, flashcards, pictures, models, etc. when teaching the different aspects of English language.	40	2.13	0.56
5	During practicums (teaching practices), your English language teachers encourage you to practice designing different activities that can support learners with different learning styles.	40	2.15	0.70
6	Your English language teachers employ varied teaching techniques or methods while teaching the different aspects of the English language.	40	2.05	0.57
7	In teaching the English language courses, your teachers predominantly use one adapted teaching style or technique that they have been accustomed to.	40	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.76</b>
8	Your English language teachers teach in the way or style their students prefer to learn. For example, learning by seeing, by listening, by doing, by moving or doing, etc.	40	1.95	0.59
<b>Summated M and SD</b>			<b>2.28</b>	<b>0.62</b>

As displayed in Table 3 above, the students' evaluation of their teachers' practice of accommodating learning styles revealed that the teachers do not consider and accommodate the students' learning styles. It could be evident that in all the items that purport to indicate teachers' practices, for example, *Item 1, Item 2, Item 3, Item and others* very low mean scores were observed, all the mean values of the items were found to be far below the average mean value i.e., *3.00*. Whereas, in the item or question in which students were asked to rank the teachers use of only one adapted teaching style high mean value (showing students' agreement on teachers use of invariable teaching style) was experienced, for example, *Item 7* ( $M = 4.28$ ;  $SD = 0.64$ ). The general summated mean value of the students' response regarding their teachers' practices of addressing different learning styles was also found to be below the average mean ( $M = 2.29$ ;  $SD = 0.66$ ). In summary, the result obtained from this part could imply that there was **almost no** of accommodating students' learning styles in teaching the English language at the CTEs.

As it can be seen in sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 above, two different findings were obtained from the two groups (the teacher and student respondents). To check the trustworthiness of the obtained result and come up with a valid conclusion about the EFL teachers' practice of accommodating learners' different learning styles, the researcher conducted repeated classroom observations with four EFL volunteer teachers (pseudo names: TGe, TGi, TT, TS) who have been teaching in Jimma CTE. To get sufficient data regarding how the teachers teach and what they are doing in the classroom while teaching the English language courses, about 16 sessions (4 times with each teacher) were repeatedly observed and the necessary data were secured using checklists developed for this purpose.

The data were transcribed, organized and analyzed qualitatively based on the themes developed:

- The *teaching methods or techniques* the teacher repeatedly used,
- The *nature of activities designed and used* by the teacher,
- *Teaching Aids or materials* the teacher bring to the class and
- *The classroom organization techniques* the teacher used while teaching.

The above themes were used because according to the Theory of Differentiated Instruction (DI) these are the major components to be considered by the classroom teachers to accommodate learners' learning styles, and failure to do these things means that the learning styles of students are not attempted to be addressed.

In sum, the finding of the classroom observation showed that the EFL teachers have not been observed properly accommodating students' various learning styles while teaching English language courses. In other words, different teaching techniques were not observed being applied by considering the students' inevitable learning styles differences in the classroom. The inference made from the repeated classroom observations revealed that almost all the EFL teachers of the CTEs failed to use different teaching styles such as for *visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, individual and group learning styles*. Though only sometimes chalk and board were used to write words and some unfinished sentences, the teachers were predominantly using one teaching style i.e., an *oral-aural teaching style* in which teachers explain the language contents orally and students are listening. So, this teaching style could benefit only a few groups of students with the auditory learning style.

In conclusion, the summated mean value of teachers' response regarding their own practices was found to be higher than the average mean value ( $M = 4.09; SD = 0.66$ ). This could evident that there have been accommodation practices by EFL teachers when compared to the students' result which claimed that there was ***almost no practice*** ( $M = 2.28; SD = 0.62$ ). To triangulate these discrepancies of results and come up with a valid conclusion about the teachers' practice, classroom observation was conducted and the result from this method has also shown similar results with the student respondents' result. It was found out that the EFL teachers have not been observed employing different teaching techniques that could address groups of students with different learning styles. In brief, from the results of the three instruments, it could be concluded that Shambu and Jimma college of teachers education EFL teachers have not been addressing their learners' different learning styles in teaching the English language, and this problem could inevitably affect the students' over all English language achievements and their language performances.

However, Mulalic, Shah and Ahmad (2009) in their study of learning styles preferences highly recommended that determining the learning styles of students is vital and there should be an effort from teachers/lecturers to accommodate those differences in the classroom. When the learning styles are determined, it is suggested that teachers take into considerations the differences in learning styles among students and design different classroom tasks that can accommodate the varied learning styles. Similarly, Gafoor and Babu (2012) stressed that the most effective teachers are those who used their students preferred learning styles as the basis for instruction. Furthermore, the very concept behind the theory of Differentiated Instruction, according to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010; 2011), is creating opportunities via designing different classroom activities to reach at least all groups of learners while teaching the given course.

#### 4.2.3. A summary of teachers' classroom presentation practices

Three EFL teachers were repeatedly observed while teaching the English Language courses. Throughout their presentations, the teachers were observed following almost similar procedures and teaching styles. For example, they orally introduced the day's lesson, orally presented the lesson, they asked different questions in between their teaching and students were responding to it together (in chorus) in which only some of them were participating and the rest were not considered. Finally, teachers were observed summarizing the main points of

each day's lesson and left the class telling students to continue next time. In general, the teachers were observed mainly using *oral styles* that can invite only *auditory style learners* though they were observed writing some unfinished sentences on the board which seemed to invite visual learners. Other learning styles such as group, visual, kinesthetic and/or tactile were not addressed by employing different activities for different students. So, except some introductory oral questions asked by the teachers, no other activities were observed brought to the class to let students perform it either differently or in the same ways.

Therefore, it could be claimed that the lesson was dominantly lecturing mode or styles (oral-aural style) only considering some students (volunteers) to participate in which the majority of the learners were hardly addressed. During their presentation, EFL teachers used ***merely oral or auditory style*** which suits only such groups of students in the class. The teachers didn't properly use even the blackboard to write down things and display it for students than only writing the present lesson topic. Regarding the activities expected to be done in the class, no activity was found except some questions students were asked to try.

## 5. Conclusion

EFL teachers were found not to have cognizance of their students' different learning styles. And it could be inferred that this failure to understand students' different learning style preferences could be resulted in the EFL teachers' failure to accommodate learners' different learning styles in teaching the English language at the CTE. In all, it could generally be concluded that there seemed to exist a mismatch between how EFL students want to learn the language [preferred learning styles] and how their teachers' teach them [teaching styles]. Finally, it is worth suggesting that be it by the current researchers themselves or by others, related issues such as the effect of one on the other or expanding the same topic further to include many more research sites and study by employing different research design could be possible.

### Data Availability

The data used to support the findings of this study are available upon request to the corresponding author.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Corresponding E-mail: [zmeku1995@gmail.com](mailto:zmeku1995@gmail.com), [aliye.geleta@yahoo.com](mailto:aliye.geleta@yahoo.com), [tzeleke11@yahoo.com](mailto:tzeleke11@yahoo.com)