A study on the compatibility between EFL learners' preferred learning styles and teachers' teaching styles: Colleges of teachers' education in Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the Compatibility between EFL learners' preferred learning styles and teachers' teaching styles: Colleges of Teachers' Education (henceforth CTE) in Oromia. Two research questions were set to identify the preferred instructional styles of both parties. Under a mixed research approach, a descriptive survey design was employed to achieve the objectives. For this effect, all 3rd year students of the English language department and their teachers of the 2021 academic year were taken using a comprehensive sampling technique and participated in the study. These groups were used as sources of both quantitative and qualitative data. To collect quantitative data, two sets of questionnaires, one of which was used to identify students' preferred learning styles and the other to identify teachers' teaching style/s, were utilized. For this effect, Reid's (1987) perceptual learning style preference questionnaire (PLSPQ) which was further developed in a way it suits to inspect teachers' teaching styles were used in the investigation of the styles of both groups. The findings, in general, revealed that when the CTE EFL learners' dominant learning styles were 'visual' and 'group' styles, teachers' teaching styles were found to be 'auditory' though 'group' teaching style was also in place to some extent. It could be concluded that there is a mismatch between how EFL students want to learn [learning styles] and how their teachers teach them [teaching styles]. The findings of the study have implications for EFL teachers' teaching methods, material developers and research endeavors.

Keywords: teaching styles, learning styles, visual, auditory, kinesthetic, individual, group styles

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1. Introduction

The field of education in general and that of the [English] language pedagogy in particular ever changes to fit the current situations and philosophies of education regarding what, how and why students should learn a particular course. This ever-changing trend of education schemes inevitably forces teachers and education practitioners to change or modify their specific activities as per the roles and goals set for each stakeholder (Schunk, 2012; Mekasha, 2005; MoE, 2002). Hence, to operate education systems well, developing appropriate means of delivery that suit the changing trends of how the teaching methods can be inclusive and address learners' various learning styles have of great importance for the operations. Though the central focus of education in all its spheres is the target learners, the emphasis should also be given to other aspects of the instructional processes such as teachers' teaching styles, the teaching materials and other rudiments. Of these components, however, it is a belief of many researchers (Schunk, 2012; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Cabrillana & Mayany, 2017, for example) that teachers' ways of teaching simply called *teaching styles* has a major contribution for learners' proper or improper learning because learners' educational success highly relies on how teachers teach.

Teaching is made for the learners and if one teaches learners in the way their learning styles are not accommodated, the real teaching and learning is not taking place (Shaari, Yusoff, Ghazali, Osman & Dzahir, 2014; Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017). More specifically, Yassin and Almasri (2015) stressing the argument explicates that instructional problem happens when teachers insist on teaching using their own teaching methods without paying attention to the students' learning styles. As a result, students will not comprehend the materials and will blame themselves for not being able to understand the lesson. According to the authors, at the center of any instructional process are learners and all other things should come to support the target learners.

To be to the point, students' academic achievement is the main agenda for any educational institution. To realize this big agenda, the appropriateness of teachers' teaching styles i.e., matching the teaching styles to that of the learners' learning styles, if not, looking for ways of accommodating learners' different learning styles have a lion's share (Cabrillana & Mayany, 2017; Cassidy, 2004; Peacock, 2001). This, according to for example Shaari et al. (2014) and Oxford (2001), is because students' ability and readiness to learn does not only depend on students themselves but also their teachers' teaching at large.

However, the issue of instructional styles [the teaching and learning styles] has not been getting proper attentions and unstudied well. And this, according to Sreenidhi and Helena (2017) was due to the attention given to students Intelligence Quotient (IQ) measurements and their achievements than the process [instructions] which are unthinkable to be realized without the proper consideration of how well the instructional processes have been done i.e., how well the learning and teaching methods are matching (the process) to measure students' intelligence and/or achievement (the outcomes). The present researcher, however, argues that no value judgment can normally be given to the outcomes or achievements of a certain instructional process unless the necessary attention is given to its processes (how the teaching and learning procedures have been carried out). Therefore, the current researcher strongly argues that academic achievements are hardly expected and worrying the instructional authorities unless proper inspections and corrections are made right during the actual teaching and learning times.

As part of the whole educational circumstances, a shift of attention has also taken place in second/foreign language pedagogies research from the emphasis on products of instructional activities to the processes through which the intended products can properly be achieved (Oxford, 1990). As a result of this change in emphasis, language teaching-learning styles and/or strategies were re-emerged not only as integral components of various theoretical models of language proficiency but also as a means of achieving learner autonomy in language learning

(Oxford, 1990; Dorji, 2017; Jie & Xiaoqing, 2006; Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017).

Briefly put, though the idea of considering instructional styles dated back to years, its disparities in getting attention becomes challenges in conducting a thorough study on the issue. Consequently, staying passive in scholars' minds, it reemerged as one of the most crucial areas to be studied in language pedagogy after the 1970s. This time was also taken as the remarkable era for the introduction of different new methodologies of English language teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Ahmad & Rao, 2012; Dorji, 2017). So, in the history of ELT, this period was regarded as the turning point at which the previous 'traditional' structure-based teaching methods or approaches were replaced by the CLT approach and also other concerns of the learners began to be introduced (Rahman, Singh, & Pandian, 2018).

The movements from the total ignorance of learners to that of bringing them to the center of language pedagogy started with the introduction of CLT which was paved based on the Constructivist Theory of language teaching and learning (Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017; Brown, 2007). The Theory dated back to the works of Piaget (1954), Vygotsky (1978) and other psychologists who have been advocating that knowledge is actively constructed by the learners themselves; not something passively received from the teachers. Learning should be something made by the learners under their teachers' support; 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. These may include acknowledging learners' differences while teaching, appealing to learners' preferred learning approaches, encouraging self-learning and involving learners in the active process of knowledge construction. Therefore, both the Cognitive (individual) and the Social (group learning) Constructivism assumptions becomes the base for the present study because they are revealed in accommodating learners' different learning styles.

To realize this theory and make it more feasible for this study, it is justifiable to further see it in the lens of the *Differentiated Instruction* (DI) paradigm of classroom practice (Tomlinson & Imbeau, 2011). So, under the umbrella of Constructivist Theory, the Differentiated Instruction paradigm which was deep-rooted in the Theory of *Multiple Intelligences* (MI) is 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 highly advocates the importance of varying teaching techniques in ways it entertains various groups of the students in the classroom. 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 all from the courses being taught.

The theory of MI which was developed by the psychologist Howard Gardner in the late 1970s and early 1980s posits that individuals possess eight or more relatively autonomous intelligences, and students draw on these intelligences either individually or corporately to make meanings out of what they learn and solve problems that are relevant to what they learn (Gardner, 2010). The founder of MI theory, Howard Gardner, argues that humans (learners) possess a number of distinct intelligences that manifest themselves in different skills and abilities, and all learners apply these intelligences to solve problems, invent processes and create things. So, properly implemented differentiated instructions by the classroom teachers can play vital roles in realizing the theory because it tries to recognizing the learners' different learning styles and their intelligences.

It can be understood that in the contexts of ELT, the attempt to accommodate different learning styles and attempts to make the instructional activities address those differences started to get more attention with the introduction of CLT. This new trend in language pedagogy also recognized the importance of active participation in language teaching-learning, cooperative or group works for [meaningful] language learning which all are leading learners to be independent and responsible for their own learning. In short, it brought a significant alteration from teacher-dominated ways of teaching i.e. only using one adapted teaching style to that of learners-centered ways of teaching in which learners' learning and teachers' teaching styles are redefined in the language instructions. And the redefined approach of the teaching-learning methodologies in general and in that of ELT context in particular was believed to enhance learning and improve the concerned instructional achievements.

In the support of the above idea, scholars in the area, for example, Reid (1987), Peacock (2001) and Razak,

Ahmad and Shah (2007) have agreed that when learning styles and teaching styles match or 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. According to Gafoor and Babu (2012) and Antony Grasha (2002), 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. Tomlinson (2005) further stressed articulating that teachers' failure to recognize and treat learners in accordance with their preferred learning styles not only lower achievements in whatever they teach but also the alienation of students from the learning of whatever they teach.

It is argued that teachers have 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). Hence, researchers in the area, for instance, Yassin and Almasri (2015), and Tomlinson (2005) have 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 should be what is worth considering. Hence, the major focus of this study was on the latter concern, to what extent do the EFL teachers accommodate these varied learning styles in teaching the English language.

In the same token, in Ethiopia, the history of the country has shown that different Education and Training Policies (ETP) have been implemented during different government regimes, and it is evident that the 1994 Ethiopia ETP laid a notable foundation in the presentation of rigorous alternative approaches/methods for how learners can acquire knowledge in a better way. That means, efforts to bring learners to the center of pedagogic activities have formally started since the introduction of this Education and Training Policy of the country. Before the 1994 ETP declaration, there was no room for learners and their learning practices other than making them accept all that is told from their teachers because teachers were assumed the only knowers in the teaching-learning arenas. Since its inception that time, the acknowledgment of learners' different learning styles (when summarized as visual, auditory, kinesthetic/tactile, individual, and group) and how to accommodate them by the classroom teachers seemed to get a gradual appreciation in Ethiopia. Though different models were reviewed, only the concept of the above mentioned styles and the rationale of selecting the taxonomy are highlighted here.

According to Nostratinia et al. (2014), for example, learning styles are individual natural, habitual, and preferred way(s) of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills. This means that all learners have unique individual characters that appeal appropriate for them in the learning processes. Reid (1987) also stressed that people learn differently and these differences in learning abound ESL/EFL settings. In Reid's study, six learning styles referred to the Perceptual Learning Style preference were identified though others make them five by merging the kinesthetic and tactile styles together. For Reid, Perceptual Learning Style Preference (PLSP) refers to the perceptual channels through which students like to learn. According to this taxonomy, students are divided into auditory styles, visual styles, kinesthetic styles, tactile styles, group styles and individual style learners. So, hereunder is a brief presentation of each of the styles as described by Sreenidhi and Helena (2017) and Nostratinia et al. (2014).

Auditory style learners prefer listening to lectures, oral explanations and tapes to learn better. They need to approach whatever they learn through oral-aural channels than any other channels. *Visual style learners* are groups of learners that prefer to learn by reading and studying diagrams and other objects which appeal to their eyes than ears. *Kinesthetic style learners* like physical activities and movements to learn better. These kinds of the learners prefer to do things by making physical activities rather than listening to a lecture or merely reading and watching demonstrations. It is also referred to as *tactile learning* style because students with a kinesthetic learning style preference are also commonly known as **doers** because the bodily movement is made to do or perform a certain activity (Sreenidhi & Helena, 2017, p. 20). *Group style learners* belong to those students who prefer studying with others. These kinds of students work better through cooperative learning than when they study alone. Finally,

individual style learners prefer studying alone for their achievements. Students with this kind of preferred learning style need individual assignments, exams other activities that encourage individual works than cooperative learning.

This taxonomy also works to identify the teachers' teaching styles, and it is this that was the major rationale to use the model for the present research. That means the common instructional styles preferences of both parties [the teachers teaching and the learners' learning styles] are found in the model. In other words, teachers can also have visual, auditory, kinesthetic, group or individual teaching style preferences in teaching a course (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. Therefore, the model or the taxonomy can make it easier to investigate the match or mismatch between the learners' preferred learning styles and the teachers' teaching styles that can affect the learners' final achievements and also make the accommodations of the learners' different learning styles possible in the teaching activities.

2. Study Context

Oromia is the biggest Regional State among the nine/ten regions in Ethiopia. Though not logically as per its big share, the region has been given the opportunity to expand primary schools that can accommodate its children to attend education. To realize this, primary school teachers holding at least diploma have to be trained effectively and sufficiently. For this effect, the existing few TTIs such as Nekemte and Jimma before the introduction of the new (1994) ETP were promoted to CTE levels and also other additional CTEs of which the CTE this research focused on were opened to train the required teachers.

To produce competent and qualified teachers, teacher candidates must pass through a long and tough competition and join colleges. After candidates enter colleges passing through all the necessary steps, they take different common courses for one year under the name *Generalist* which literally means attending *freshman program.* Then based on their previous results in the English language courses (both in National Exam and in their freshman program), trainees are given chance to join the English language department. Here, it is possible to claim that primary school EFL teachers' selection criteria and procedure is by far tougher when compared to those who join universities because in the latter case, there is no checking points to drop, if not, to minimize the entrance of incompetent trainees as it relies *only* on the national exam results which might also be scored by cheating.

However, the EFL trainees selected all these ways and also trained by qualified instructors at the CTEs could not come up to the expected level in their teaching practices (practicums) and the final English language achievements (Temesgen, 2017 & the researcher's own experience). The expected level was derived from the principle that states 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 exam or the CoC exam; 2) they should perform well on their teaching practice which is reflected during different practicums. The feedback assessments always made at the end of different trainings for the catchment area primary schools EFL teachers also reveal that the teacher candidates are poorly performing in their teaching practice. So, this disparity, the mismatch between the efforts made to produce competent EFL diploma graduates and the students' actual performance and/or achievement inspired the current researcher to conduct a study on the issue. For this effect, the following specific research questions were posited to be answered:

➢ What is/are CTEs EFL learners' learning style preferences in learning the English language?

➢ What is/are CTEs EFL teachers' teaching style/s dominantly used in teaching the English language?

3. Materials and Methods

Research Paradigm, Design and Subjects - With the intention of describing the existing phenomenon

pertaining to EFL instructional styles preferences, survey research design was employed. Thus, under a Pragmatic Research Paradigm and a mixed research Approach, survey research design was preferred to the other ones because of its power to describe individuals' practices, attitudes, and preferences (Cresswell, 2014) about a phenomenon under investigation. Pragmatism was taken as the best assumption that suits this study because the present researcher holds the notion that different research questions that invite the utilization of different kinds of data should be designed so as to investigate the issue of EFL instructional style preferences. Here, the researcher believes that the instructional styles issue has to be carefully investigated [as it is relatively a new phenomenon] in EFL teaching and learning contexts.

Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative data was collected from 20 (all males) EFL teachers and 40 (28 males and 12 females) year III English language majoring students (graduating class of the 2021 academic year) at Nekemte CTE found in East Wollega Zone, Nekemte Town, Ethiopia. Since the total population was manageable if used altogether, comprehensive sampling strategy in which all the population can participate in the study was used and the required data was gathered, in one way or another, from these bodies. Regarding the selection of the CTE, convenience sampling technique was used for the college's proximity to the university where the researcher studies. This could minimize the transportation fees and other expenses for the researcher.

Tools - Questionnaire, classroom observation and post observation interview were used to gather the data. The former tool was employed to collect quantitative data pertaining to the participants' [both the students and teachers'] preferred instructional style/s. For this effect, Wong's (2015) English Language Learning and/or Teaching Style Preference Questionnaire (ELLSPQ) was used with a little modification so as to suit the current study context. The rationale to adapt and use this questionnaire was that the instrument has been piloted or tested by different researchers and recommended as it fits into the EFL/ESL contexts because it mainly focuses on how learners receive and process information in language learning scenarios. It encompasses the *cognitive, physiological and sociological* features of learning and teaching activities. The questionnaire was, in fact, originally introduced by Reid (1987) Perceptual Learning Styles Preference Questionnaires (PLSPQ) which was formerly set to study the learning style preferences of EFL students.

Classroom observation was used to collect qualitative data related to the EFL teachers' actual or live classroom practices matches up with what they report pertaining to their teaching styles, on one side. On another side, it was used to see the EFL teachers' actual accommodation practices of learners' different learning styles in teaching different English courses. Thus, this tool was the main instrument to answer research question 3. Post observation interview (only some discussion after classroom observation) was used to elicit information with regard to why they behaved classroom activities of teaching in the ways they performed or if it was actually their regular teaching styles looks like that. These two instruments were developed by the researcher himself consulting different kinds of literature in the area as supported, for example, by Cohen et al. (2007).

Accordingly, to identify the major, minor or negligible learning/teaching style preferences, the summated [squared] means of the values of groups of statements that were used to measure the respondents' preferences (in 5 themes according to the taxonomy used for the current study) were computed and seen in the lens of what previous researchers theorized, for example, Reid (1987).

Table 1

Learning/Teaching Styles Scales as Proposed by Joy Reid (1987) and others

Learning/teaching style	Mean Scores	
	Summated Mean	Squared Mean
Major	3.68 and above	13.50 and above
Minor	3.39 – 3.67	11.49 –13.49
Negative/Negligible	Less than 3.39	Less than 11.49

However, the current researcher argues that there should not be negative style as far as a teacher is there to teach all his/her learners. That means the teacher should at least fairly reach all his students accordingly so that

there will not be a group that is privileged or neglected as a result. Therefore, only the major and minor learning styles are identified and seen if EFL teachers are striving to accommodate the different learning styles in their instructional activities. Parallel to this, the summated mean scores of the items meant to examine teachers' practices of accommodating the different learning styles.

Data Collection Procedures - Data for this study was gathered passing through all the necessary procedures and research ethics. An official letter was written to from the host university, Wollega Wniversity to Nekemte CTE where this study was conducted. The purpose of the letter was to make the study formal and also to keep the research ethics so that the necessary data could be secured from the setting without any hesitation. After handing over the letter to the CTE and thereby having pre-discussions with the concerned bodies, classroom observations were conducted with the identified three EFL instructors (their pseudo names TA, TT, TZ and TG) of the CTE. Each instructor was observed four times (x4) so that meanings and implications could logically be made possible. And thereby, brief post observation interviews were made with the observed instructors so as to get the reflections on how they have been teaching. Finally, the readied questionnaire was distributed and collected back after filled by the participants. The main reason for postponing the questionnaire to the last step was to avoid or minimize the fake or the unusual teaching practices the teachers may reveal as a result of the information they get from the questionnaire, i.e. it was used to get genuine data from the side of the teachers. Thereby, data was analyzed according to the theme and nature or types of data obtained and conclusion was eventually made based on the research findings.

4. Results and discussions

In this study, an attempt was made to identify CTE's EFL learners' learning and teachers' teaching styles. To this effect, two sets of questionnaire that were developed for this purpose were administered for both teacher and student participants. The first two research questions concerned with identifying the English language instructional styles preferences of the students and teachers. And the third research question was meant to look into teachers' actual accommodation practices of students' different learning styles while teaching the language. To analyze and interpret the collected data, a descriptive statistic, i.e., 'mean' and 'standard deviation' were computed. The researcher also would like to note here that he used *concurrent or parallel analysis technique* (Cohen, et al., 2007) in which data is presented, interpreted and thereby the discussions of the findings are made comparing with what scholars said about it before than giving separate room for this part.

4.1 Learners' Preferred Learning Styles

The first research question of this study was formulated to identify learners' Major and Minor learning styles in learning the English language courses. Accordingly, in the next sub-section/s, the analyses and discussions of these styles are presented and seen in the lens of what scholars proposed (see section 3 above).

Table 2

Students' preferred learning styles (a summary of data after tallied)

Learning Style Category	Items used to measure the preferences	N	M	SD
Visual	Items 1, 4, 11, 17, 19, 23 & 27	40	4.46	0.59
Auditory	Items 2, 13, 20, 24, 26, 29 & 34	40	2.39	0.83
Kinesthetic or Tactile	Items 3, 6, 9, 14, 21, 30 & 33	40	1.92	0.69
Group	Items 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18 & 31	40	4.49	0.66
Individual	Items 7, 16, 22, 25, 28, 32 & 35	40	2.09	0.74

As revealed in Table 2 above, the summary of the learning style models or category was made after student respondents' response for all the items was computed using descriptive statistics on SPSS Software and the scores for each items were selected and thermalized according to the construct they were supposed to measure. That means the 35 items in students' questionnaire that were meant to identify students' learning styles, seven questions were set to detect each of the 5 learning style groups and distributed in an unpredictable order so that students can

show the degree of their agreement and disagreement on a Likert Scale continuum.

The result, in general, has shown that the majority students' preferred learning styles are *Group* (*M = 4.49; SD = 0.66)* and *Visual* (*M = 4.45; SD = 0. 59*) *styles*. So, these two learning styles, according to the taxonomy used for the current study, were what the majority of students want to learn in and hence, the two learning styles are said to be the major learning styles for CTEs EFL learners. This was given because the results in both cases were found in the range of the major learning styles category (*i.e., 3.68 and above*) as proposed by Reid (1987) and others. The least preferred learning style was *Kinesthetic/Tactile* style (*M = 1.92; SD = 0.69*). In fact, none of the learning style, as it is the argument of the current researcher, is considered as negligible and hence ignored. Other learning style preferences were found in between these two continuums and can be taken as the minor styles. So, the results implied that third year EFL learners had multi-style preferences, though with varied degree, that teachers have to address in their teaching practices.

Some of the previous research findings on EFL/ESL learners' learning styles are in a good conformity and some others are against the current finding in relation to students' preferred learning styles. In other words, there are research findings having similar results with the present study though there also exist others with different results. For instance, Sherif Ali's (2018) study showed that students' major learning style preferences were *kinesthetic and visual learning styles*. Furthermore, Vaseghi, Ramezani and Gholami's (2012) study also showed that *kinesthetic and/or tactile* and *group styles* were perceived as the major learning style preferences for EF/SL learners. Therefore, the result of the current study is in partial congruence with the two research findings because except kinesthetic learning style both the visual and the group learning styles were also found out as learners' major learning style preferences in the present study.

However, Reid's (1987) study result on learners' preferred learning styles showed a quit different result from the present study. It found out that *Kinesthetic and/or Tactile* was the major and *Auditory* was the minor learning styles of EFL learners. According to Reid' research report, learners' favored *kinesthetic learning styles* and disfavored *Group style*, and this seems to be contradicting with the result of the present study. In similar manner, Mulalic, Shah and Ahmad's (2009) research report indicated that students' preferred learning style was *Kinesthetic*. According to the researchers, students expressed minor preferences for *Visual, Auditory, and Group learning*, while on the other hand, students expressed negative preference towards *Individual* and tactile learning styles. But one thing researchers have agreed on, which the present researcher also shares, is that the results of learning styles research can vary because many factors may influence students' preferences towards particular learning style, such as educational background and motivation to learn. So, disparities of results among different researchers and in different contexts might not be uncommon.

It has also been the argument of the English Language Instructional Theorists that classroom teachers have to know their learners' preferred ways of learning a subject or course and prepare themselves in a manner that it at least takes account of each group of the learners in teaching the language. In similar vein, the current researcher also believes that it is essential to reach all students in a classroom. This is because, the *teacher should be a common property of all groups of students* in the classroom and needs to fairly accommodate them first by accepting the inevitable style variation facts and then trying to work towards its inclusions. One major and also simple strategy of accommodating different groups of learners, according to Tomlinson (2005), and Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011), is implementing the Differentiated Instructions (DI) via designing different activities that can appeal to different learners. Based on this, one can justifiably argue that there must not be a learning style which is negative or negligible and can therefore be ignored by teachers. So, as revealed in Table 1 above, the last darkened raw is to remark that no learning style should be labeled as negligible style since it is preferred at least by a less number of students, and these students should also be accommodated with different degrees than being left out or neglected.

In brief, by identifying students different learning style preferences, teachers have to try their best in order to reach as much as possible all the students while teaching their respective course. So, there will be no one group of

students in a class who are more or less privileged than the others in learning the same course. They all have equal right to learn in their own preferred ways [even though a perfect balance could not be expected] and classroom teachers have to discharge their professional responsibilities in this regard. This is also what Tomlinson and Ibmeau's (2010; 2011) theory of Differentiated Instructions highly supports, and that is why the study of the compatibility between students' preferred learning styles and teachers' teaching styles becomes the major concern of the current study.

4.2 Teachers' Teaching Styles

In this study, the second research question attempted to identify CTEs' EFL teachers' dominant teaching style/s in teaching the English language. So, holding the aim of investigating EFL teachers' teaching styles parallel to the learners' learning styles, questionnaire was administered for the teacher participants in a similar manner with students. For this effect, all EFL teachers of Nekemte CTE and also other English language teachers who have the experiences of teaching in CTEs were invited to fill in the questionnaire. Accordingly, 20 EFL teachers participated in filling the questionnaire and some of them were also observed while teaching different English language courses to the target students.

Here, to minimize a doubt that some research theorists may have about the trustworthiness of data obtained from small sample size, classroom observation was conducted to professionally predict the EFL teachers' dominant teaching style/s and also their practices of addressing different learning styles. Table 3 below presents teacher respondents' brief summary of data obtained from their questionnaire.

Table 3

EFL teachers' teaching style/s (a summary of data after tallied)

Teaching Style Category	Items used to measure the preferences	N	M	SD
Visual	Items 1, 4, 11, 17, 19, 23 & 27	20	1.93	0.63
Auditory	Items 2, 13, 20, 24, 26, 29 & 34	20	4.40	0.66
Kinesthetic or Tactile	Items 3, 6, 9, 14, 21, 30 & 33	20	2.26	0.77
Group	Items 5, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18 & 31	20	3.19	0.66
Individual	Items 7, 16, 22, 25, 28, 32 & 35	20	2.16	0.74

As it can be seen from Table 3 above, the summary of the teaching style categories was computed and displayed in a similar manner with students' learning style categories. That means each teacher respondents' response to all the items was worked out and the mean scores and Standard deviations for each theme were presented according to the concept they were supposed to identify. Similar to the students', from the 35 items in the questionnaire that were meant to identify the possible teaching styles (Wong, 2015), seven questions were set for each teaching style group and put up randomly so that teachers can show the degree of their agreement and disagreement against each statement and thereby the means and standard deviations were computed.

Accordingly, the analysis of the teachers' questionnaires has shown that EFL teachers' dominant teaching style was found to be *auditory style* (*M = 4.4; SD = 0.65*) i.e., they prefer using oral-aural teaching techniques or styles since, as they believed, it promotes language teaching and learning (justified in the items related to the auditory style). Besides, though it was not as such a highly preferred teaching style, almost on average (*M = 3.19; SD = 0.66*) EFL teachers also appeared to have positive attitude towards *group teaching style*. So, this could be taken as another preferred teaching style. All other styles were found to be below the average mean value and hence taken as negligible styles, i.e. they have not been employed by teachers and students with these kinds of learning styles are disadvantaged.

Similarly, the data obtained from classroom observations has also shown that EFL teachers are predominantly using oral explanations that suit merely students with auditory learning style preferences. They were observed hardly using even chalk and board that teachers are expected to use to give notes, draw or sketch some diagram or tables and stabilize points using those things when teaching. It was evident that teachers use chalk and board only

sometimes when they want to simply jot down some word level and incoherent concepts. To this end, it is possible to claim that there found a mismatch between how students prefer to learn English language (learning style) and how teachers are teaching them (teaching style) in the CTEs.

However, Sherif (2018) study, though it seems to mainly focusing on learners' learning style preferences, has shown that *tactile and group* modes of presentation were the first two most preferred teaching styles of instructors in the selected context. Grasha (1996; 2002; Gafoor & Babu, 2012) further strongly suggest that when a mismatch between teachers' teaching and learners' learning styles occurs, it will be dangerous to the language instruction though it might sometimes be purposively and carefully used by teachers.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The major findings of the study revolved around two major themes. These were the EFL learners' learning styles and the teachers' teaching styles preferences. Putting together, how compatible is the two party's instructional style preferences. When EFL learners' major preferred learning styles are Visual and Group styles (*M = 4.49; SD = 0.66 and M = 4.45; SD = 0. 59* respectively) teachers' teaching style was mainly found to Auditory (*M = 4.4; SD = 0.65*). To cross check whether the data obtained from teachers' questionnaire was genuine (because they might pretend to do or not to do the accommodation practices), the repeated classroom observation was conducted with three EFL teachers [TA, TT, TG, and TZ]. It has further found out that the teachers were observed not addressing the students' varied learning styles than gearing only towards one and slightly another teaching style in which only a certain group of the students are advantaged and others not.

In all, it could generally be concluded that there found to be a mismatch between how EFL students want to learn the language [preferred learning styles] and how their teachers' teach them [teaching styles].

The key implication of this finding is, therefore, that CTE English language teachers in the research setting need to realize and accommodate learners' inevitable differences in the way they want to acquire different language elements. To this effect, teachers have to at least vary their teaching styles as per the theory of *Differentiated Instruction's (DI)* recommendations to reach at least different groups of students in the classroom. The basic tenet behind this theory is planning and using different kinds of classroom activities or tasks that invite a *multi-styles* approach to teaching which resolves *style conflicts* that are likely to occur between a teacher and students.

Based on the conclusions made, it was suggested that it is important to conduct more studies of this kind at various EFL settings to gain a broader perspective on the EFL instructional styles in different EFL learning-teaching contexts. Accordingly, other researchers can either replicate this study adapting instruments to their specific EFL context or study the other aspects of EFL instructional styles such as how ELT teaching materials are developed and the factors affecting the practices of accommodating learners' varied learning styles in teaching the English language.

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