

## **Exploring EFL Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes and Perceived Practices of Differentiated Instruction in English Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate English language teachers' knowledge, attitudes and perceived classroom practices of differentiated instruction in English classrooms at some selected general secondary schools of west Gojjam zone, Ethiopia. So as to achieve this goal, a mixed research design was employed. Forty five grade nine English language teachers of Wad, Arbegnoch, Anjenie, Gelila, and Yezeleka general secondary schools were selected as participants using comprehensive sampling technique. Interview, questionnaire, and observation were utilized to gather data. The findings indicated that the English language teachers had good conception about differentiated instruction, but there was approximately no practice. The results also revealed that teachers had an adverse attitude towards differentiated instruction. Moreover, large class size, time constraint, lack of commitment and motivation due to inadequate payment, job dissatisfaction due to unmotivated learners and so were reported as deterring factors for DI implementation in EFL classrooms at schools. Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that EFL teachers' had a good awareness of DI, but they have lack of commitment in practicing it in the EFL classrooms. Finally, taking note of the results, recommendations were ahead.

**Keywords:** 1.EFL; 2.Differentiation; 3.Differentiated Instruction; 4.Practice

### **Introduction**

It is important to know that educators all over the world recognize that students do not learn in the same way. There are a number of ways that enable learners in learning and processing of information in their learning walks of life. It needs teachers to suppose possibilities to one-size-fits of type of instruction where it primarily shows the desires of average students. Differentiated instruction as a choice to one-size-fits of all instruction is a pedagogical method so as to teach learners who are distinct in their own level of readiness, concerns, pace of learning and learning profiles within the same classroom (Saunders, 2005). The writers catch the view that DI is "the process of pairing learning objectives, activities, and learning help for individual learners' needs, styles and paces of learning" (Saunders, 2005, p.201). In addition, Tomas (2014) suggests that the ultimate aim of differentiated instruction is to scale up students' academic success by meeting all students where they are at the time and assisting or scaffolding them to reach the expected competence level in their learning process.

In English as a foreign language teaching, Scanlon (2011) points out the fact that giving the appropriate way of instructions has an impact on students attaining language skills. The writer states that for instance, most reading problems occur due to the loss of instruction to address the requirements of learners (Scanlon, 2011). Thus, as another choice to one size-fits of all instruction, differentiated instruction is assumed to be helpful in providing the needs of low, average, and high achieve learners including talented and the once who are not being gifted/benefited. This is therefore, the main purpose of this study was to find out teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and actual classroom practices and the possible impeding factors that may assist for the effective implementations of differentiated instruction (DI) in Ethiopian general secondary schools' English language classrooms in general and in the area of the study.

Students have their own learning styles, linguistic background cognizance/awareness or individual pace of learning and progressing. Similarly, the majority of English as a foreign language classes involve students those who have manifested by different abilities/backgrounds (Rodgers, 2007). In line with this, Romsin (2011), underlines that students have different learning capacities in their own learning history. In this case, they are at the top level, medium level and some of them are poor academically. Although teachers in the latest learners-centered instructional approach or a traditional instructional approach, trying to differentiate the instruction as some studies have betoken, (i.e. it might be active learning methods, tutorial, continuous assessment (CA) and all these are meant to ferret out learners gaps and to assist them according to their interests, they are not practicing as they intended and it is unsystematic manner/characteristics.

On the contrary, from the researchers' personal experience, informal discussions with their colleagues and their readings are concerned, there is no appropriate response on the part of teachers. However, there should be a planned and systematic way of delivering lessons so as to differentiate the content, the process and the product of learning, so in Ethiopian context, differentiated instruction might be a better way of narrowing the achievement/competence gap of students at any level because there is no homogeneity among any group of students rather they are distinct at least in some ways. Therefore, so as to provide fair education, considering these varying levels of students' capacity might be one of the remedies and to do that the researcher assumed that implementing differentiated instruction enables students to achieve their learning goals.

Currently, in the Ethiopian education's curriculum context, all schools and universities in the country are obliged to follow learners-centered instructional approach of teaching rather than using teachers centered/a traditional instructional approach. This implies that all teachers those who are teaching at any levels are anticipated to account for the needs of their students. Concerning to this point, Marion (1997) points out that in students-centered instructional approach classrooms, teachers tend to employ a number of instructional strategies and methodologies to organize learning so as to assure that each student acquires the knowledge necessary to understand and to reach to their goals. It is worthwhile therefore, the question is, and can today's schools differentiate the instructions to address the diverse needs and interests of students? As far as this concern is in mind, the researcher intended to investigate the teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and classroom practices of differentiated instruction (DI) in heterogeneous classrooms in general and the area of this study in particular.

In line with this point, there are studies conducted at global level, but almost all of the studies focused at primary schools level. For instance, Stewart (2016) carried out a study entitled "Teachers' Perceptions of Differentiated Instruction in Elementary Reading." He came to conclude that in many elementary schools at Florida, teachers have good perceptions about differentiated instruction (DI) and apply different differentiated instruction strategies. With regard to studies conducted in Ethiopia, the researcher has found few studies which deal with differentiated instruction (DI) in English language teaching. However, having the researcher's reading is concerned, in studies conducted at colleges and universities in the country, for instance, Abate (2013) said that most of the teachers did not employ it since they believed it as an additional burden for their

work. Similarly, Belachew (2017) reported that teachers did not apply differentiated instruction due to poor of conceptions.

To summarize, the conclusive challenges for the effective implementations of differentiated instruction in schools is teachers' knowledge, and attitudes to employ it as part of their teaching. Teachers training about differentiated instruction is needed, but it seems that this part is lacking in Ethiopian schools. To evaluate the effectiveness of the employment of differentiated instruction in schools, the researcher was argued that secondary school teachers' knowledge, attitude and practice of differentiated instruction in their classrooms need to be studied. Hence, this advisement ignited him to respond to the following research questions. (1) Do secondary school EFL teachers have the adequate knowledge of differentiated instruction? (2) What are EFL teachers' attitude towards differentiated instruction in EFL classes? (3) What kinds of differentiated instructions do EFL teachers employ in EFL classes? And (4) what are the major challenges EFL teachers confront to implement differentiated instruction in EFL classes?

## **Methods**

### **2.1. Research Design**

In this study, a mixed method research design which applies quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection was employed. This is because, it is applicable to obtain valuable information about teachers' knowledge, attitude, and perceived practices of differentiated instruction in the EFL class rooms. Mixed research design enables the researchers to come up with what has happened or what is happening (Kothari, 2004). According to Dorneyi (2007) has indicated that in mixed method study is advisable to use an embedded model of data collection where one form of data (either qualitative or quantitative) predominates. The rationale why a mixed approach was employed is that it enabled the researchers to see the issue under study both from qualitative, and quantitative perspective. Also, the nature of the problem and the research objectives invited the researchers to use this research method.

### **2.2. Research Site and Study Participants**

The study was conducted in Addis Zemen, Lay Gayint, Tach Gayint, Woreta, and Hamusit general secondary schools in south Gondar zone, Ethiopia in 2020/2021 academic year. These schools were purposively selected from the total sixty general secondary schools in south Gondar zone. In these secondary schools, there were 45 (21 male and 24 female) English language teachers who were assigned to teach English as a subject for grade nine. As the number of participants was manageable, the present researchers found comprehensive sampling technique more convenient. The researchers were interested to find out teachers' knowledge, attitude and practices of differentiated instruction (DI) in areas which are farther away from the zonal town of south Gondar zone, Amhara Region, Debre Tabor. The sites were chose based on their convenience for data collection. Based on this fact, all English language teachers (N=45) were selected for this study through using comprehensive sampling technique as they are available in the schools. This is because, the number of teachers were manageable to take the sample as comprehensive.

### **2.3. Instruments**

To collect the data, there were three instruments used in this study, those are interview, questionnaire and observation.

In the current study, semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher for sample secondary school EFL teachers those who were teaching at selected secondary schools. As part of the research design, semi structured interview is deliberately selected to obtain valuable information about challenges teachers face while implementing DI in EFL classes. This is because, semi-structured interview is more flexible to collect the data

for the current study as needed. The researcher interviewed ten teachers (two from each schools) who are randomly selected from among the total participant EFL teachers (n=45). The researcher took notes while the interviewee teachers responded to the interview questions. This is because, this kind of recording process helped the researcher to avoid or minimize loss or miss interpretation of information during the write up phase of the research.

To deduce teachers' knowledge, attitudes, and actual practices of differentiated instruction in EFL class rooms, and get additional information to the data obtained from the teachers through the interview, and classroom observation, questionnaire was used as one of the data collection instruments and was designed to collect relevant data from the sample EFL teachers. The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first section required personal information about the respondents. The first part prepared to gather information about respondents' knowledge of differentiated instruction (DI). The second section was prepared to obtain valuable data regarding respondents' attitude and practices of differentiated instruction.

The final part was open-ended questions that required respondents' reflection about the advantages and disadvantages of differentiated instruction based on their practices in the classrooms. The respondents were informed to give more than one response if they think that the answers could be more than one. The questionnaire consisted of 35 close-ended, and two open ended items. Of the close ended items, 10 were designed to get information about teachers' knowledge, 10 items about their attitudes, and the remaining 15 about their practices of differentiated instruction in English classrooms. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The objectives of the study and theoretical background in the review of literature were used as a resource for the preparation of the questionnaire. The items had a five-point Likert rating scale ranged from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' which were given scales from five to one, respectively.

Observation is important tool that can be employed in a mixed research and other qualitative research types for gathering genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting (Kumar, 2006). In the current study, the researcher used this data gathering tool as supplementary instrument to collect the available information regarding differentiated strategies implemented in the actual classrooms. Accordingly, the classrooms of ten English teachers those who were randomly selected (i.e. two from each schools) were observed for three days each for 40 minutes to check/triangulate whether what the teachers' responses to the questionnaire and interview questions match what they actually did in the EFL classes.

The validity and reliability of the research data gathering instruments were checked before collecting data for the study. To do so, the interview item, questionnaire item and observation item were checked by instructors those who were teaching at Debre Tabor university. Comments related to EFL teachers' knowledge of DI, the focus area of observation and similar comments were suggested and considered before data collection. For instance, instead of asking what is meant by DI, the researchers considered comments and reframed the questions in a way that addresses the issue of DI, but indirectly as mentioned in the questionnaire section.

#### **2.4. Procedures**

In the course of collecting data for the study, all the necessary procedures were followed. First, the researchers contacted the schools directors, and explain the purpose of the study before conducting the instruments. This helped the researchers to collect the data effectively. Then after getting permission from the school directors, the researchers observed teachers' English classes three times each at the different times. Next to the classrooms observation, interview was held for sample EFL teachers regarding challenges they face while implementing differentiated instruction in their English classes. Finally, the questionnaire was distributed for the EFL teachers at selected secondary schools. Then, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated for the reliability of the sub-scales based on preliminary investigations given to 28 teachers those who were teaching at

Yifag general secondary school, and the results revealed that 0.84, 0.60, and 0.82 for knowledge, attitude and practices, respectively.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

For the current study, the researchers employed mixed method to see the issue under study both from quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Further, the researchers chose the integration of qualitative and quantitative approach with the notion that any inherent weaknesses of the quantitative method would be balanced by qualitative method and vice versa (Kumar (2006). The responses of close ended items of the questionnaire was analyzed, and described quantitatively through using mean, and standard deviation. A one sample t-test was calculated using SPSS 16 to analyze the close-ended questionnaire results. The one sample t-test was used because the researcher believed that a certain standard should be set to gauge the obtained means against it.

Accordingly, the one sample t-test compared the observed mean and the population mean (expected mean). In this study, the population means were pre-determined to be 31, 29 and 42 for knowledge, attitude and practices, respectively. The open ended questionnaire item responses were thematically grouped and analyzed through using frequency and percentages. However, the analysis of the data collected using the interview, and observation items were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis through using narrative form and in an interpretive manner.

## Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. Findings

**English language teachers' knowledge, attitudes and actual practices of differentiated instruction (DI).** A one sample t-test was administered using SPSS version 16 so as to see whether or not university EFL teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices were statistically significant. The following table (Table 1) summarizes the findings.

**Table 1: English language teachers' knowledge, attitudes and actual practices of differentiated instruction {N=45}**

No.	Variables	M	SD	T-test value	Df	Sig (2 tailed)
1.	Knowledge	37.8532	6.78431	6.584	44	0.000
2.	Attitudes	26.2459	3.91352	-4.082	44	0.000
3.	Practices	28.9835	4.86435	-24.631	44	0.000

{Key: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Df = Degree of Freedom}

As the data can be seen in table 1, a one sample t-test was computed for further analyses of the significance level using the pre-determined value for each of the variables. Accordingly, the means of teachers' knowledge, attitudes and perceived practices were compared against the expected means of 31, 29 and 42, respectively. The findings revealed that the mean of teachers' knowledge significantly differed from the expected mean in favor of the observed mean. The means of teachers' attitudes and perceived practices of differentiated instruction (DI), however, were significantly below the expected means 29, and 42 accordingly.

**Table 2: English language teachers' knowledge about the roles of differentiated instruction in improving students' behavioral changes {N=45}**

No.	Variables	M	SD	T-Value	Df	Sig(2 tailed)
1.	Learners motivation	3.8024	1.0384	5.791	44	0.000
2.	Social interaction	3.7403	0.7506	8.663	44	0.000
3.	Emotional changes	3.8253	0.71461	9.971	44	0.000
4.	Physical development	3.0531	1.04524	0.831	44	0.000
5.	Intellectual development	3.073	1.0742	6.054	44	0.397

{Key: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, Df = Degree of Freedom}

As it can be stated in the above table (table 2), the means of teachers' knowledge about the roles of differentiated instruction in bringing learners' motivation, social interaction and emotional changes skills showed that they significantly differed from the expected mean (3) in favor of the observed mean. The purposes of differentiated instruction in bringing physical development, and intellectual development/performance among students was not significantly different from the expected mean.

#### Findings obtained from the open-ended questionnaire item

The two open-ended items that asked participants about the advantages and disadvantages of differentiated instruction were included in the questionnaire. The results of the participants' responses to the open-ended items revealed the findings summarized in the following table (Table 3) below.

**Table 3: EFL teachers responses about the merits and demerits of differentiated instruction in English teaching and learning in percentage (N = 45\*)**

Merits	%	Demerits	%
1. Enhanced students study habits and problem solving skills	43 (43.4%)	1. It impedes to provide individual needs and preferences especially individuals those who prefer to work alone/individually.	66 (66.7%)
2. Rises students' motivation in approaching academic tasks/activities	24 (24.2%)	2. It consumes time for planning, organizing, managing, ordering and scheduling individuals and groups in a large class settings context.	37 (37.4%)
3. Students recognized the value of paying attention to different learning styles and the need to apply this approach to their classroom teaching during practicum	19 (20%)	3. The examination culture which has pervaded teachers' education institutions seemed to have great impact. Some students questioned the fairness of the process when assessments were differentiated.	21 (21.2%)
4. It helps to bring the topics of curriculum studies to life; increased understanding by making connections to real life classroom situations	11 (11.1%)		
5. Scales up group cooperation and collaboration	8 (8.0%)		
6. It improves students' classroom involvement, understanding and their performance.	7 (7.0%)		
7. Enables to Improves relationships between students and teachers.	9 (9.1%)		

\* Due to participants' responses to questions they gave, total percentage surpasses/exceeds one hundred

As it can be indicated in table 3, nearly half (43.4%) of the respondents reported that differentiated instruction (DI) increases students' motivation in approaching academic tasks. 24.2% of respondents assumed that it enables to improve students study habit, and problem solving skills, while 20% said it helps students in

recognizing different learning methods and the need to apply this approach in their own classes. Another 11.1% of the participants reflected that DI helps them in bringing the topics of curriculum studies to life; improved their understanding by making connections to real life classrooms. 8.0% of the respondents thought that differentiated instruction (DI) is helpful in promoting students' cooperation, and develop their independency of work ethics. Whereas, 7.0% assumed that it helps students to improve their involvement to the classrooms, understanding and academic progress at all. Furthermore, 9.1 % of the respondents reported that it helps in creating good relationships between students and teachers. In expressing its demerits, 66.7% assumed that it consumes time, and impedes to cater learners' needs and preferences (37.4%). Moreover, differentiated instruction may encourage teachers to offer students biased results (21.2%).

### **Findings obtained from Interview Data**

Regarding to this, another question raised for the interviewees was about the hindrances that cause to the implementation of DI in English classrooms. As result of this data was indicated, there are so many challenges that affect EFL teachers while practicing DI in the EFL classrooms. Each of the interviewed teachers identified that learners per class for grade nine was too big so that they were not conducive to practice differentiated instruction in the classroom. Most of the teachers mentioned that class size was ranged from 75 to over 80 learners per class. As teacher 1&2 said, "there are round about 70 to 75 per class. Teacher 4 & 7 also mentioned that 65-74 in a section. With reference to the mentioned number, most of the teachers indicated that the large numbers of learners made it difficult for them to give individual attention to learners. Another respondent reported that large number of students in class took a long time to identify learners who had difficulty of understanding (T<sub>3</sub>, T<sub>6</sub>, & T<sub>9</sub>). Also, teacher- 4 in the interview said, "...where the numbers of students in a class are very big and you have many groups, then the unmanageable control seems to slip.

Also, lack of teachers' training on DI (which entails lack of awareness), commitment, and motivation hinders teachers on their practice of DI in EFL classes (T<sub>5</sub>, T<sub>8</sub>, & T<sub>10</sub>). However, most of them are related and to summarize as: large class size, time constraint, lack of commitment and motivation due to sufficient payment, job dissatisfaction due to unmotivated learners and so on were reported as deterring factors for DI implementation in EFL classrooms at schools.

### **Findings obtained from observation Data**

With regard to this data, the researchers observed the classrooms of teachers after designing guidelines for observation which was adapted from King's (2005), classroom observation checklist for differentiated instruction. The observation targets on exploring EFL teachers' classroom practices in a way that responds to the needs of the students that is whether or not teachers adapt the content, the process, the product and the learning environment. Hence, observation on the teachers' face concerned on answering questions like "do EFL teachers respond to the needs of the students? "Do teachers explain unfamiliar concepts in different ways? Is there individual, pair, small group and whole class instructions? Do teachers apply multiple modes of instruction? Likewise, observations on the students' side also incorporate questions such as do learners appear to know how to complete activities? This is related to the ability of teachers in communicating the goals. Is there a positive association between teachers with learners and learners with learners? Do learners permit presenting what they have done based on their preferences and intelligence? Thus, having these and other points in mind, the researcher observed teachers classrooms.

As it can be indicated earlier, the teachers' classroom observation was intended to assess the practice of DI in English classrooms at secondary schools (area of this study). Accordingly, the classroom observation was carried out with six English teachers. As teacher one (T<sub>1</sub>) class; for instance, one of the lessons was about reported speech. The teacher after introducing the daily lesson by providing one example, he let the students

work on the activities from the textbook in groups. Then, he moved to the class and checked on their work. Then after, he asked some students to respond randomly. Next, the teacher wrote two different exercises on the blackboards which ask students to change direct into reported speech and vice versa. So, the teachers' class continued in such away. Similarly, classrooms of the other teachers focused much on grammar and doing homework especially for the reading and writing sections. The reason why they gave reading and writing activities as homework as the teachers during interview responded was because grade nine English textbook is too wide and there was no time to cover the material within the academic year.

In addition, beyond to the grammar part of the text, for instance, in teacher 3 classroom, students were given alternative topics from the text book and they were asked to discuss what they prepared about the topic. For example, a student came up with a piece of paper and wrote the topic simple past. Then, he identified the form of simple past tense and then gave sentence examples about the uses. The teacher tried to interfere the student to check whether he understood or not and asked the meanings of the sentences and he also invited the class to participate in responding to the questions. In class room observation session, almost all teachers mainly used group work, whole class discussion, individual presentation and loud reading. All in all, even if English language teachers had good theoretical conceptions about differentiated instruction, but there was almost no practice.

### 3.2. Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate secondary school English language teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices of differentiated instruction in English classes. A one sample t-test and descriptions were employed to achieve this aim. The one sample t-test indicated that secondary school English teachers had a decent theoretical awareness of differentiated instruction. As indicated in Table 1, the mean 37.85 was significantly above the expected mean 31. This was true probably since the majority had taken training about differentiated instruction, and this is because it is already in the Educational and Training Policy, these teachers might also have acquainted with the government's Educational Policy. This result differs from Tahir's (2011) findings which reported that primary school teachers had lack of knowledge of differentiated instruction. Although the levels are different between Tahir's study and this study, secondary education levels, it is important to state the incongruity of teachers' awareness about differentiated instruction since it informs about where we are. The difference between the results has occurred as like as not because of the training given to the secondary school English language teachers, while this was not true in primary education institutions.

The findings also revealed that participants recognized that differentiated instruction (DI) significantly plays the role of enhancing students' motivation, social interaction skills, bringing emotional changes and their physical development even if they were not practice it in EFL classes. Contrary to, one might expect and the objectives of employing differentiated instruction (DI) in Ethiopian lowest to higher education level (ETP, 1994), the participants disclosed that DI's contribution to students' intellectual development is less than it does for other skills. That is to mean, the observed mean was not significantly different from the expected mean. This can be interpreted that teachers averagely imply differentiated instruction for students' intellectual development. However, when this result is compared with DI's beneficence to the development of social, physical and emotional changes, it is very infinitesimal.

The result is also distinct from the participants' responses to the open-ended items. Therefore, they have divulged that differentiated instruction (DI) is weighty to enhance students' capability by giving teachers the advancement to follow up, to increase students' accomplishment and others related to their intellectual development. Only 7.0% substantiated that DI contributes both for intellectual and physical development. Over 28% of the participants convinced that differentiated instruction (DI) never brings behavioral changes due to students' wrong perception, and this is a mere thought of their practice. This proves teachers' propensity

to comply with socially desired hope while responding to the close-ended questionnaire items. Thus, taking into account the participants' practical responses, it may be possible to be convinced that the result does not thought to Simonette's (2013) view of DI's role in evaluating students' overall development. It also differs from Hussen's (2010) ideas because in this study DI hardly resulted in cognitive, affective and behavioral outcomes when we observe the practical thought of the activities teachers gave.

As the one-sample t-test has divulged, English language teachers, in the studied general secondary schools, had an adverse attitude towards differentiated instruction (DI). Positive attitudes are driving forces to action. However, this was not true in the case of this study. As shown in Table 1, the difference between the observed mean and the expected mean for teachers' attitudes was significant, the observed mean (26.24) being significantly lower than the expected mean 29. Therefore, it is possible to convince that the participants had bad attitude towards differentiated instruction (DI). Some responses the participants gave to the open ended questions can also imply that they disfavored DI. Differentiated instruction is accessible as the doorway for teachers to be biased. That is to mean, students questioned the fairness of the process when assessments were differentiated. It was also considered as time consuming and tiresome.

Likewise, the observed mean (28.98) was significantly lower than the expected mean (42) in teachers' perceived practices. This indicates that the participants were not employing DI as a component of their teaching. Teachers' practice of DI in the English language classrooms, their responses to the open-ended items as well as their responses to the interviews also pointed out this fact. What was on the ground was complete deviation from what actually was expected in applying differentiated.

Prominent scholars in the field also underline that implementing DI strategies is a challenge for teachers and due to this, they prefer to teach in a one-size-fits-all approach even if they are aware of learners' strengths and weaknesses as well as their preferred mode of learning (Joshi & Verspoor, 2013). Hertberg-Davis (2009) also states that differentiation is unsuccessful due to time-constraints and since it involves tribulation activities. In relation to differentiating the lessons particularly for secondary school learners, Tomlinson (1999) on her part affirms that it is difficult to differentiate instruction for middle school aged students. The use of DI is demanding; students have different needs, communication barriers, learning abilities, and achievement gaps (Tomlinson, 2005). However, the same writer, moreover, conveyed that even though applying DI is demanding, teachers are responsible for their students and they need to do whatever they can to help students to learn in a better way. In her view, teachers should be optimism, and vigor to support their students as they pledged to the teaching profession (Tomlinson, 2005). Ayalew's (2009) study also inferred that the strength of any educational system largely depends on the peculiarity and engagement of teachers. In addition, Bondley (2011) suggests that without proper planning of DI, teachers' workload may be increased and led them to become exasperating.

As one of the most censorious problems in most Ethiopian schools is large class size, research shows that small group instruction is one of the powerful ways to differentiate instruction to lessen the problem of providing individual instruction in such situations (Tomlinson, 2005). The author also believes that the application of DI is discouraging and time consuming, but it is possible to make it as it requires implementation and what is required is teachers' motivation and conviction in practicing differentiation. Likewise, Maag (2010) encourage teachers to address learners' interests using DI due to the fact that differentiation brings to positive learning because learners are involved and challenged in the classroom.

## Conclusion

Based on the results and discussions of the findings, it is possible to conclude that EFL teachers' had a good awareness of DI, but they have lack of commitment in practicing it in the EFL class rooms. It is thus, seemed that there was a mismatch between the teachers' theoretical awareness and their practices of differentiated

instruction in the EFL classes rooms. Teachers had an adverse attitude towards differentiated instructions they had incredulity on the purposes and effectiveness of DI in learning. As the information obtained from the respondents, there are a number of deterring factors for implementing differentiated instruction as one of components of teaching English. Among them, large class size, time constraint, lack of commitment and motivation due to insufficient payment, job dissatisfaction due to unmotivated learners etc.

To summarize, there is an inconsistency between what the coincident literature says about DI and what was being practiced. The literature suggests that everywhere in the world, students in the same classroom have different readiness, interests and learning profiles and teachers should adjust teaching to cater these diversity. Based on the findings and the conclusions made, it was recommended that teachers should be given trainings for all teachers continuously about theoretical and practical orientations on how to implement DI in English language classrooms.

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