

The Reality of Active Learning Application in Jeddah Schools by English Teachers

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Abstract

This study explored the extent to which teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) adopt and implement active learning strategies in their classrooms. The study, also, examined the obstacles encountering high school teachers to use active learning and it delved further into exploring the participants' recommendations to mitigate these obstacles. The study followed a quantitative methodology. Sixty-six EFL teachers (Male n=22 and Female n=44) from Jeddah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia participated in this study. The researchers used an electronic custom-designed, 19-items rated on a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, for ease of dissemination and data collection. The findings revealed that the degree of employing active learning was medium (54.8%). However, 55% of the participants responded that they encountered some acute obstacles to implementing active learning in their classrooms. The findings showed no statistically significant differences attributed to gender, experience, and training about using active learning, obstacles, and recommendations to overcome the obstacles. The study discusses some of the obstacles to implementing active learning and concludes with some recommendations to the Ministry of Education to reinforce active learning in the education system of EFL contexts.

Keywords: active learning, EFL school teachers, obstacles of teaching, quantitative methods, Saudi Arabia, survey

1. Introduction

1.1 Importance of Education

Pioneering education systems that seek to enlighten the future generation must enable them to take the lead in serving themselves and the world at large. Such a goal is at the heart of Saudi Arabia's schooling system. Yet, this overarching goal is difficult to accomplish unless the education sector is given utmost planning and support before the Kingdom's ambitious economic transition as an oil-dependent country. On this basis, the education reform can make enormous achievement when the Ministry of Education assigns a sizeable portion of the revenues for the education system reforms to provide the best education outcomes for the future generation of the Kingdom.

1.2 The Roles of English as a Lingua Franca

The English language is a dominant language worldwide in business and research. Most of the world's researches are written in English. The role of the English language in the world economy and sciences is apparent manifesting literacy in English as a key to knowledge. Therefore, the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) strives to introduce the best educational practices to apply in schools. Accordingly, active learning is employed as one of the definitive criteria for efficient schooling in the Kingdom. Nevertheless, the definition of 'active learning' itself is still vague and tended to be interpreted in different ways. Therefore, the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education has placed seven criteria to tell whether or not the educator uses active learning. This paper aims to measure the use of active learning approaches implemented by teachers of English as Foreign Language (EFL) in their classes at schools in the city of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Active learning has been defined as early as the beginning of the 20th century. An Italian educational expert, Maria Montessori, explores transforming education from a static to an active process that involves the teachers and students. Montessori emphasizes that education does not happen through the negative activity of only

listening, but instead, through a spontaneous process of experiences in the environment (Montessori, 2012). She believes that the teacher is not in charge of transmitting knowledge, but instead prepares activities for the students from which they can learn (Middlecamp, 2005). Furthermore, the eminent American philosopher John Dewey argues that learning is best acquired from experience and no book or map is a replacement for personal experience (Schmidt, 2010). Until almost the second half of the 20th century, active learning continues to develop gradually. Fern, Anstrom, and Silcox (1995) defines active learning as “the level of engagement by the student in the instructional process; it implies the development of a community of learners with the integration of the learner’s home and parents, community, and culture as key elements of the approach”. Greiner, Grove and Roth (1996) believe that active learning allows learners who seek to understand how they learn to become more self-motivated and self-directed in their learning where the researchers presented some of the tasks which the students participated in, such as reading, writing, problem-solving, and discussion. Although the concept of active learning is fundamental for education reforms and has been emphasized by many theorists, traditional learning remains dominant (Hernik & Jaworska, 2018; Niemi, 2002). Vanhorn et al. (2019) state that “Education has evolved from Sophists lecturing to their students centuries ago to instructors lecturing to their students a few short decades ago; school learning has largely consisted of passive activity of listening and processing” (p. 3).

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is acknowledged that active learning is an essential and research-proven method of constructive teaching. However, there seems to be a scarcity of research studies conducted in this field. There is a knowledge gap that exists between theory and practice and active learning is a construct of paramount significance to be researched. O’Leary (2017) explores various factors that enable scholars to judge the significance of their research issue. The first factor is the existence of a gap in the literature. The present study explores the level at which English teachers employ the strategies of active learning. The paper is expected to provide educators with new insights on the extent to which active learning is employed and how it can be enhanced. It would explore the obstacles that teachers encounter to utilizing active learning strategies

Although active learning is common among supervisors and educators, little data is available on its implementation.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

- 1) To identify the percentage of English teachers who use active learning in their everyday classes.
- 2) To identify the obstacles that EFL teachers encounter in implementing active learning.
- 3) To identify the English language recommendations to overcome the encountered obstacles in employing active learning from the teachers’ perspectives.

1.6 Research Questions of the Study

The present research study attempts to address a primary question:

How involved are school teachers in the implementation of active learning in their classes and if active learning is not employed, then what are the difficulties, and what are the teachers’ perspectives to enhance the status of active learning?

The research study is guided by the following secondary research questions:

- 1) What is the percentage of teachers who use active learning strategies?
- 2) Are there any obstacles that teachers encounter in employing active learning strategies?
- 3) What are the participants’ recommendations to overcome the obstacles that hinder implementing active learning strategies?
- 4) Are there any statistically significant differences owing to the variables, language competency, training, experience, and gender on the employment of active learning?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies

A few studies have explored the implementation of active learning strategies in the regional Arabian EFL context. The studies found a medium level of employment of active learning (Samara & Sawalha, 2018; Saadah & Al-Rushdi, 2017; Al-Motiri, 2017). Samara and Sawalha (2018) explored the extent to which Jordanian high school teachers of science used active learning and they examined the barriers that hampered the implementation of active learning. Besides the degree of active learning strategies, they found that the three main encountered

obstacles were related to the school environment, the heavy workload, and a large number of students. Al-Motiri (2017) explored the primary school teachers' implementation of active learning in Riyadh from the supervisors' viewpoint. Similarly, Saadah and Al-Rushdi (2017) explored the degree of active learning usage in Kuwait. They found that dimensions of experience in higher education did not seem to affect the implementation of active learning. Niemi (2002) explored implementing active learning and the main obstacles in teacher education departments and in schools in Finland. The study found that "active learning methods are implemented by a few teachers" (p. 776). However, the major obstacle was that implementing active learning entails that teachers must produce their own materials and that the teachers were worried about whether they have the time and energy to implement active learning.

3. Method

The study adopted a positivist paradigm where it aimed to identify the level of the application of active learning and the EFL school teachers' perspective of active learning. An electronic survey was adopted for data collection to take advantage of the extensive use of the web (Cresswell, 2012). The descriptive design using the questionnaire allows the researchers to quantitatively measure the degree of the application of active learning. Moreover, surveys are an efficient and attractive instrument to collect data because it saves the researchers' time, effort, and financial resource. During the construction of the instrument for data collection, the questionnaire was piloted on twenty-five (38% of the sample) EFL teachers at several schools in Jeddah city to ensure the clarity of its statements and its seamless flow. The study utilized an online custom-designed, 19-items questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained four main sections. The first section collected demographic information about the participants' gender, teaching experience, and the number of training hours on active learning. The statements in sections two, three, and four were graded on a five-point Likert scale and ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The second section weighted the respondents' strength of agreement/disagreement regarding their level of employing active learning strategies and it included seven statements. The third section collected data about the obstacles that the respondents encounter to employ active learning strategies and it contained seven obstacles. The last section of the questionnaire focused on the recommendations and suggestions to address the obstacles from the participants' perspectives. The online questionnaire was shared with the sample of the study which comprised sixty-six (66) school teachers, 22 males, and 44 females. They were English language schools teachers in the city of Jeddah in the Western Region of the KSA.

3.1 Questionnaire Validity and Reliability

3.1.1 Internal Consistency (Validity)

Validity refers to the process of ensuring that the survey accurately measures what it is intended to measure (Ruel, Wagner, & Gillespie, 2015). Besides piloting to enhance the validity of the instrument, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was conducted to test the relationship between each item/phrase and the total score of the dimension to which it belongs. The following tables show the correlation results.

Table 1. Pearson correlation results for each item in dimension I

Items No.	Pearson Correlation	p-value
a1	0.594**	0.002
a2	0.872**	<0.0001
a3	0.883**	<0.0001
a4	0.891**	<0.0001
a5	0.901**	<0.0001
a6	0.848**	<0.0001
a7	0.748**	<0.0001

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 1 shows Pearson correlation coefficients for each item and the total score of dimension I, the degree of using active learning. It was found that Pearson correlation coefficients for each item and the total score of the first dimension ranged from (0.594–0.901), which were positive, high, and were statistically significant at the level (0.01). This indicates a high level of internal consistency of dimension I, and the items measured the dimension accurately.

Table 2. Pearson correlation test results between each item in dimension II

Items No.	Pearson Correlation	p-value
a8	0.492*	0.013
a9	0.473*	0.017
a10	0.658**	<0.0001
a11	0.645**	<0.0001
a12	0.793**	<0.0001
a13	0.604**	0.001
a14	0.709**	<0.0001

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2 shows Pearson correlation coefficients for each item and the total score of dimension II, the challenges, and obstacles. We found that all Pearson correlation coefficients for each item and the total score of the second dimension range from (0.473–0.709), which were positive, high, and were statistically significant at levels (0.05) and (0.01). This indicates a high level of internal consistency of dimension, and the items measured the dimension accurately.

Table 3. Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of dimension III

Items No.	Pearson Correlation	p-value
a15	0.659**	<0.0001
a16	0.694*	<0.0001
a17	0.791**	<0.0001
a18	0.679**	<0.0001
a19	0.671**	<0.0001

Note. **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3 shows Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of dimension III, recommendations. We find that all Pearson correlation coefficients between each item and the total score of the third dimension range from (0.659–0.791), which are positive, high, and statistically significant at level (0.01). This indicates a high level of internal consistency of Dimension III, and the items well measure the dimension.

3.2 Questionnaire Reliability

The reliability of a questionnaire refers to its ability to achieve similar results when it is re-administered under similar conditions (Scott & Morrison, 2007). In some cases, it is difficult to obtain replication of data when dealing with people (Robson, 2007). Dawson (2017) defines reliability as “the extent to which a measurement is free from error—or to put it another way, how consistent the measurement would be if it were repeated” (p. 15). Reliability for quantitative research focuses mainly on stability. The reliability of a questionnaire is the degree to which it provides similar outcomes under similar conditions when administered twice. Reliability coefficients range from 0.00 to 1.00 and the higher the values, the greater the reliability. Rattray and Jones (2007) consider efficient reliability to be indicated by a coefficient > 0.7.

Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient ranges typically between 0.0 and 1.0. However, there is no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the higher the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Table 4. Reliability test by Cronbach’s alpha method

Dimensions	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha
1. The degree of using active learning	7	0.917
2. Challenges and Obstacles	7	0.711
3. Recommendations	5	0.730
Whole questionnaire	19	0.815

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 4 shows the results of reliability tests by using Cronbach’s Alpha method. We find that the Cronbach’s Alpha for dimension one (of 7 items) was (0.917), and for dimension two (of 7 items) was (0.711), and for

dimension three (of 5 items) was (0.730), and for the whole questionnaire (of 19 items) was (0.815). We find that all of Cronbach's Alpha values were higher than (> 0.70). Therefore, these results indicated that the questionnaire in its final form enjoyed high reliability, which demonstrated its suitability for collecting data.

Table 5. Five-point Likert scale items

Answer	Weight	Weighted M
Strongly Disagree	1	1 to 1.8
Disagree	2	1.8 to 2.60
Somewhat Agree	3	2.60 to 3.40
Agree	4	3.40 to 4.20
Strongly Agree	5	4.20 to 5

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 5 shows the weights of responding levels of the statements and the weighted mean—according to the five-point Likert scale. Likert scaling is a bipolar scaling method, measuring either positive or negative responses to a statement (Willits, Theodori, & Luloff, 2016).

3.3 Statistical Process, Tests, and Tools

The researchers used the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software program version (24) to analyze the data and Microsoft Excel to generate the charts. The following statistical tests were employed:

- 1) Descriptive analysis is represented in the form of frequencies and percentages.
- 2) Cronbach's Alpha coefficients
- 3) Pearson correlation coefficients
- 4) Measures of central tendency and dispersion mean, and standard deviation
- 5) Independent samples t-test
- 6) One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA).
- 7) $p\text{-value} < 0.05$

4. Findings and Discussion

This section presents the descriptive-analytical analysis to answer the research questions. The analysis process included descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) to describe participants' demographic characteristics, the mean and standard deviation for each statement in each dimension. Moreover, the independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance were reported.

4.1 The Demographic Characteristics

Table 6. Frequency distribution of the participants according to gender

Gender	n	Percent
Male	22	33.3%
Female	44	66.7%
Total	66	100.0%

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 6 shows the frequency distribution of the sample according to gender. We found that the sample consisted of sixty-six (66) English teachers in Jeddah schools. The majority (66.7%) of the participants were female, while (33.3%) were male. The following pie chart shows the respondents' ratio of gender.

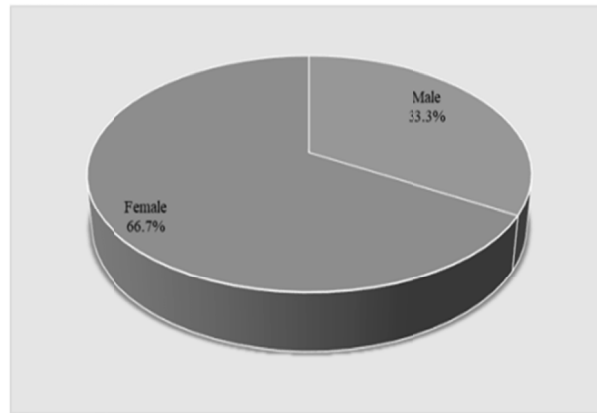


Figure 1. Frequency distribution of the participants according to their gender

Figure 1 shows the frequency distribution of the participants according to their gender. It can be seen that there were 66.7% females and 33.3% males.

Table 7. Frequency distribution of the participants according to years of experience

Experience	n	%
<= 5 years	10	15.2
6–10 years	19	28.8
11–15 years	16	24.2
>= 16 years	21	31.8
Total	66	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 7 shows the frequency distribution of the sample according to experience. We found that 31.8% of the participants have (>= 16 years) of experience, 28.8% have (6–10 years) of experience, 24.2% of the participants have (11–15 years) of experience, and (15.2%) have (<= 5 years) of experience. The following bar-chart shows these percentages:

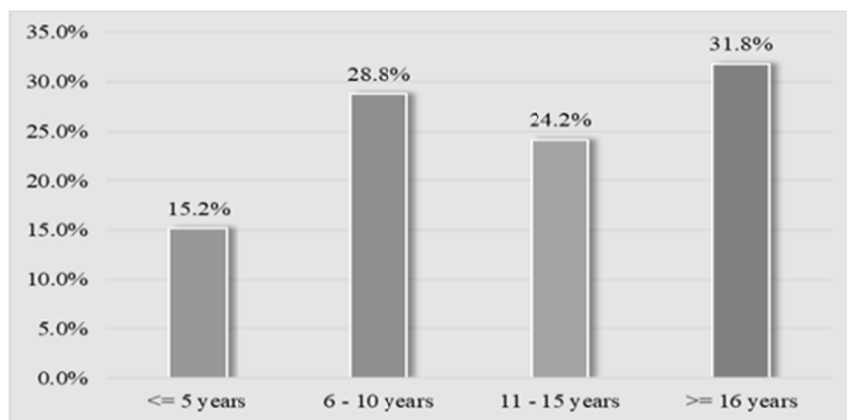


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of the participants according to experience

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Figure 2 shows the number of years of the participants’ experience. It can be seen that most participants had over sixteen years of experience in teaching.

Table 8. Frequency distribution of the participants according to training hours

Training Hours	n	%
< 12 hours	37	56.1
< 30 hours	18	27.2
< 60 hours	4	6.1
> 60 hours	7	10.6
Total	66	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Table 8 shows the frequency distribution of the sample according to training hours on active learning. We find that more than half (56.1%) of the participants had (< 12) training hours on active learning, 27.2% had (< 30) training hours, 10.6% had (> 60) training hours, and only 6.1% of the participants had (< 60) training hours. The following bar-chart shows these percentages:

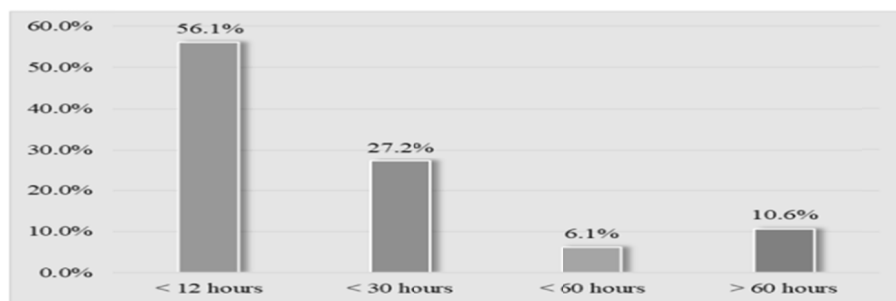


Figure 3. Frequency distribution of the participants according to training hours

Source: Field survey, 2019.

Figure 3 shows the frequency distribution of the number of training hours that the participants had undergone. These results reveal that the majority of the participants (56.1%) had less than 12 hours of training.

4.2 Answers to the Research Questions

This section presents the analyses of the responses to the questionnaire items of each dimension. It reports the frequencies, percentages of each response, means, standard deviations, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA.

Q1. To what extent do the English language teachers use the strategies of active learning?

To answer this question, the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were computed for the answers of the statements of the first dimension as follows:

Table 9. Frequencies and percentages for the answers towards using active learning strategies

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Somewhat Agree		Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	N	%	N	%
1. The role of the teacher is a facilitator, and the students engage in the learning process under the teacher's supervision	21	31.8	20	30.3	16	24.2	6	9.1	3	4.5
2. Students discuss what they have learned in the class with their teacher and with each other	22	33.3	22	33.3	17	25.8	3	4.5	2	3.0
3. Students know the objectives of each lesson with or without the help of their teacher	13	19.7	28	42.4	17	25.8	5	7.6	3	4.5
4. Students know their role in achieving the objectives of the lesson	11	16.7	25	37.9	12	18.2	13	19.7	5	7.6
5. Students use what they learn in real or designed contexts	13	19.7	24	36.4	19	28.8	5	7.6	5	7.6
6. Students describe what they learn using their language	14	21.2	17	25.8	15	22.7	16	24.2	4	6.1
7. During the class, I find the majority of students active and discussing with each other	9	13.6	14	21.2	30	45.5	9	13.6	4	6.1
Total	103	22.3	150	32.5	126	27.3	57	12.3	26	5.6

Table 9 shows the frequency and percentage of the respondents to the degree to which they use active learning. The respondents' strength of agreement, strongly agree, and agree combined, for statements one, two, three, four, and five were 61%, 66%, 62%, 54%, and 56% respectively. In addition, some sort of agreement to the same statements ranged from 18.2% to 45% of the respondents. In other words, more than half of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed to the statements about their employment of active learning strategies. 47% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statement six and 22.7% somewhat agreed, whereas 30.3% of them either strongly disagreed or disagreed with this statement. This means that two-thirds of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the students describe what they learn using their language while about one-third of the respondents disagreed. The strength of agreement with statement seven was weaker. 34.8% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that during the class the teacher finds the majority of students are active and discussing with each other. 45% of the participants hesitantly agreed somewhat to statement seven. On the one hand, the respondents' overall strength of agreement to using active learning strategies was 54.8% and 27% of the participants somewhat agreed that they generally use active learning strategies. This means that 81.8% of the respondents used active learning strategies or at least sometimes they used them. On the other hand, the strength of disagreement to using active learning strategies was 17.9%. This shows that less than one-fourth of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed that they utilize active learning strategies.

The following bar graph represents the respondents' overall strength of agreement and disagreement with the first section of the questionnaire on using active learning strategies.

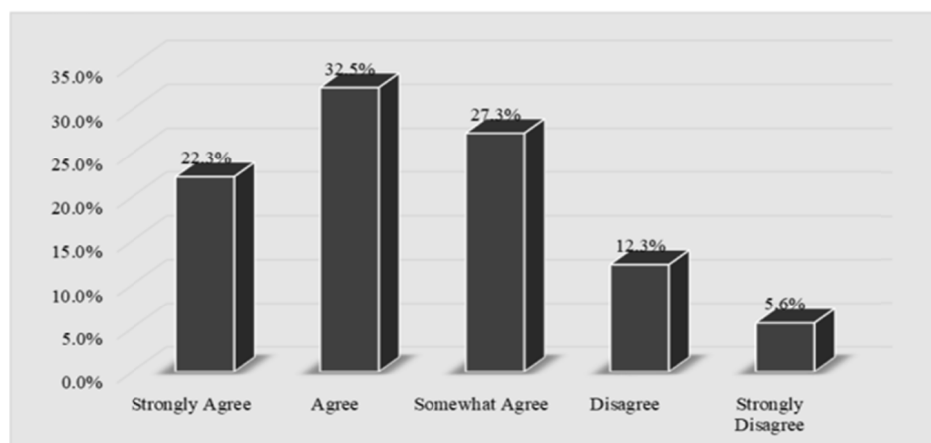


Figure 4. Total responses level toward the statements of Dimension I: The degree of using active learning

Table 10. Means and standard deviations of the statements of dimension I: The degree of using active learning

Statements	M	SD	Response level	Order
2. Students discuss what they have learned in the class with their teacher and with each other	3.89	1.02	Agree	1
1. The role of the teacher is a facilitator, and the students engage in the learning process under the teacher's supervision	3.76	1.14	Agree	2
3. Students know the objectives of each lesson with or without the help of their teacher	3.65	1.03	Agree	3
5. Students use what they learn in real or designed contexts	3.53	1.12	Agree	4
4. Students know their role in achieving a lesson's objectives	3.36	1.19	Somewhat Agree	5
6. Students describe what they learn using their language	3.32	1.23	Somewhat Agree	6
7. During the class, I find the majority of students are active and discussing each other	3.23	1.05	Somewhat Agree	7
Total	3.53	1.11	Agree	

Table 10 shows the mean and standard deviation of each statement in dimension one (The degree of using active learning). It is clear that the mean of the whole dimension (3.53) lays in the range (3.40 to 4.20)—according to the five-point Likert scale, which indicates that the majority of participants agreed to the statements of the first dimension. According to the mean value, the statements were ranked in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest mean. Statement (2) 'students discuss what they have learned in the class with their teacher and with each other' ranked the first order with a mean of (3.89) and a response level of (Agree). Statement (1) 'the role of the teacher is a facilitator, and the students engage in the learning process under the teacher's supervision' ranked the second order with a mean of (3.76) and a response level of (Agree). Statement (3) 'students know the objectives of each lesson with or without the help of their teacher' ranked the third order with a mean of (3.65) and response level of (Agree). Statement (5) 'students use what they learn in real or designed contexts ranked the fourth order with a mean (3.53) and a response level of (Agree). In the fifth order, statement (4) 'students know their role in achieving the objectives of the lesson obtained a mean of (3.36) and response level of (Somewhat Agree). Statement (6) 'students describe what they learn using their language' ranked the sixth order with a mean of (3.32) and a response level of (Somewhat Agree). Statement (7) during the class, I find the majority of students are active and discuss with each other' ranked the seventh order with a mean of (3.23) and a level of response (Somewhat Agree).

The findings to statements one, two, three, four, and five of research question one showed a medium level of agreement concerning using active learning strategies. More than half of the participating teachers of English (54.8%) generally agreed that they used active learning strategies. This finding is congruent with Samara and Sawalha's, 2018 and Saadah and Al-Rushdi's (2017) studies, which found that the level of implementing active learning was medium. The key findings in this section that received the most agreement were:

- 1) The role of the teacher is a facilitator, and the students engage in the learning process under the teacher's supervision
- 2) Students discuss what they have learned in the class with their teacher and with each other
- 3) Students know the objectives of each lesson with or without the help of their teacher
- 4) Students know their role in achieving the objectives of the lesson
- 5) Students use what they learn in real or designed contexts

However, the strength of agreement to statements six and seven was quite low.

- 6) Students describe what they learn using their language
- 7) During the class, I find the majority of students are active and discussing with each other

These seven statements under dimension one comprise a scheme of active learning indicators based on which the KSA Ministry of Education evaluates educators' performance of active learning. Failing to apply one indicator means that the teacher is traditional and he/she is not using active learning. On this basis, the percentages at hand might be much smaller than what statistics imply according to the ministry. This suggests that more efforts are required to achieve the scheme of active learning indicators

Q2. Are there any obstacles that teachers encounter in employing active learning strategies?

To answer this question, the researchers used descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and

standard deviation for the answers of the statements of the second dimension. The results are as follows:

Table 11. Frequencies and percentage for the answers towards dimension II: obstacles

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Somewhat Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
8. Active learning requires a language competency from the teacher part	19	28.8	26	39.4	11	16.7	7	10.6	3	4.5
9. Active learning is challenging to apply in a class with a large number of students	38	57.6	12	18.2	11	16.7	3	4.5	2	3.0
10. The traditional way of teaching is better than active learning.	9	13.6	13	19.7	24	36.4	16	24.2	4	6.1
11. The application of active learning leads to chaos in class.	9	13.6	9	13.6	26	39.4	17	25.8	5	7.6
12. Application of active learning takes a long time of home preparation from the part of the teacher.	32	48.5	20	30.3	10	15.2	3	4.5	1	1.5
13. Teaching is not my ideal job.	15	22.7	7	10.6	12	18.2	16	24.2	16	24.2
14. Little appreciation of teachers' hard work on the part of the ministry of education does not encourage using these strategies.	39	59.1	7	10.6	12	18.2	7	10.6	1	1.5
Total	161	34.8	94	20.3	106	23.0	69	14.9	32	6.9

Table 11 shows the frequency and percent of the respondents about to the obstacles that they encountered to employ active learning. Statement numbers eight, nine, twelve, and fourteen in Table 11 demonstrate that the respondents encountered obstacles to utilizing active learning where 68.2%, 75.8%, 78.8%, and 69.7% of the participants respectively either strongly agreed or agreed that they encounter obstacles. This means that more than half of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they face difficulties to employ active learning strategies. On the other hand, the strength of agreement to statements ten, eleven, and thirteen in Table 11 was weaker. 33.3% and 27.2% of the respondents respectively either agreed or strongly agreed that the traditional way of teaching is better than active learning and that the application of active learning leads to chaos in class. In other words, 30.3% and 33.4% of the respondents respectively disagreed or strongly disagreed with the same statements. Statement number eleven showed that 33.3% either agreed or strongly agreed that teaching is not their ideal job and 18.2% agreed somewhat to the same statement, whereas 48.4% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. This means that at least 51.6% of them did not think that teaching is an ideal job. Overall, 55.1% of the participants strongly agreed or agreed that they encountered obstacles; and at least 23% agreed somewhat they faced difficulties in using active learning strategies as Table 11 shows. The following bar graph shows the overall percentages of the obstacles which the participating teachers of English stated that they encountered.

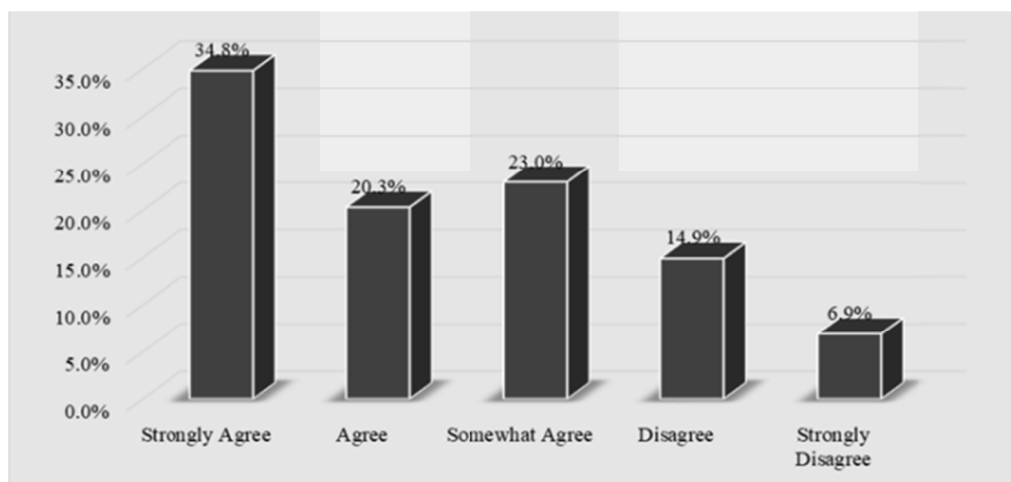


Figure 5. Total responses level toward the statements of dimension II: obstacles

Table 12. Means and standard deviations of the statements of dimension II: obstacles

Statements	M	SD	Response level	Order
9. Active learning is challenging to apply in a class with a large number of students	4.23	1.08	Strongly Agree	1
12. Application of Active learning takes a long time of home preparation from the part of the teacher.	4.20	0.96	Strongly Agree	2
14. Little appreciation of teachers' hard work on the part of the ministry of education does not encourage using these strategies.	4.15	1.15	Agree	3
8. Active learning requires a language competency from the teacher part	3.77	1.12	Agree	4
10. The traditional way of teaching is better than active learning.	3.11	1.11	Somewhat Agree	5
11. The application of active learning leads to chaos in class.	3.00	1.12	Somewhat Agree	6
13. Teaching is not my ideal job.	2.83	1.49	Somewhat Agree	7
Total	3.61	1.15	Agree	

Table 12 shows the mean and standard deviation of each statement in Dimension II (Challenges and Obstacles). It is clear from the mean of the whole dimension (3.61) lays in the range (3.40 to 4.20)—according to the five-point Likert scale, which indicates that the majority of participants agreed to the statements of the second dimension. According to the mean value, the statements were ordered in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest mean. The statement (9) active learning is challenging to apply in a class with a large number of students ranked the highest (4.23) and a level of response (Strongly Agree). Statement (12) application of active learning takes a long time of home preparation from the teacher's time ranked the second in order with a mean of (4.20) and a level of response (Strongly Agree).

In the third rank statement (14) little appreciation of teachers' hard work from the part of the ministry of education does not encourage using these strategies, with a mean of (4.15) and a level response (Agree). Then statement (8) active learning requires a language competency from the teacher's part ranked the fourth with a mean of (3.77) and a response level (Agree). Statement (10) the traditional way of teaching is better than active learning ranked the fifth-order with a mean (3.11) and a response level of (Somewhat Agree), followed by statement (11) the application of active learning leads to chaos in the class ranked the sixth in order with a mean of (3.00) and a response level of (Somewhat Agree). Statement (13) teaching is not my ideal job ranked the final in the seventh order with the lowest mean (2.83) and a response level of (Somewhat Agree).

The findings to the second research question revealed enormous obstacles encountering teachers of English to use active learning where 55% of them stated that they encountered difficulties and 23% of them somewhat agreed; making the overall strength of agreement 78%. The following key obstacles that heed attention from the Ministry of Education and superintendents were:

- 1) Active learning is challenging to apply in a class with a large number of students.
- 2) Application of Active learning takes a long time of home preparation from the part of the teacher.
- 3) Little appreciation of teachers' hard work from the part of the ministry of education does not encourage using these strategies
- 4) Active learning requires a language competency from the teacher part.

These obstacles cast huge responsibilities over the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education to mitigate the barriers and encourage the teacher to implement active learning strategies. The obstacles can be mitigated by offering in-service teacher training on enhancing teachers' language competence and workshops on employing active learning to reform the status of education in the Kingdom. Also, the number of students in every classroom should be reduced and might not exceed 20 students per classroom.

Q3. What are the participants' recommendations to overcome the obstacles that hinder implementing active learning strategies?

To answer this question, the researchers used the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation to quantitatively analyze the answers of the statements of the third dimension. The results are as follows:

Table 13. Frequencies and percentage for the participants' recommendations to overcome the obstacles

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Somewhat Agree		Disagree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	N	%	n	%	n	%	N	%
15. The fewer the number of students in class, the more accessible for the teacher to apply active learning	38	57.6	15	22.7	10	15.2	3	4.5	0	0.0
16. Intensive training for teachers on the methods of active learning may simplify it for the teachers	38	57.6	19	28.8	6	9.1	2	3.0	1	1.5
17. The language competency of the teachers may play an essential role in applying active learning.	26	39.4	17	25.8	17	25.8	5	7.6	1	1.5
18. The application of active learning requires strict class management rules for the class not to become chaos	32	48.5	25	37.9	5	7.6	2	3.0	2	3.0
19. Appreciation of creative teacher helps using active learning strategies.	45	68.2	12	18.2	8	12.1	0	0.0	1	1.5
Total	179	54.3	88	26.7	46	14.0	12	3.6	5	1.5

Table 13 shows the frequency distribution and percentage of the respondents' recommendations to overcome the obstacles hindering the implementation of active learning. All the five statements in this section obtained high strength of agreement. Table 13 showed that 80.3%, 86.4%, 65.2%, 86.7%, and 86.4% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed combined with the stated recommendations in the table. This means that more than two-thirds of the respondents showed agreement to that these recommendations. Overall, 81% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the stated recommendations that prevent implementing the strategies of active learning. The following bar graph shows the total percentages of the recommendations to overcome the obstacles from the respondents' perspectives.

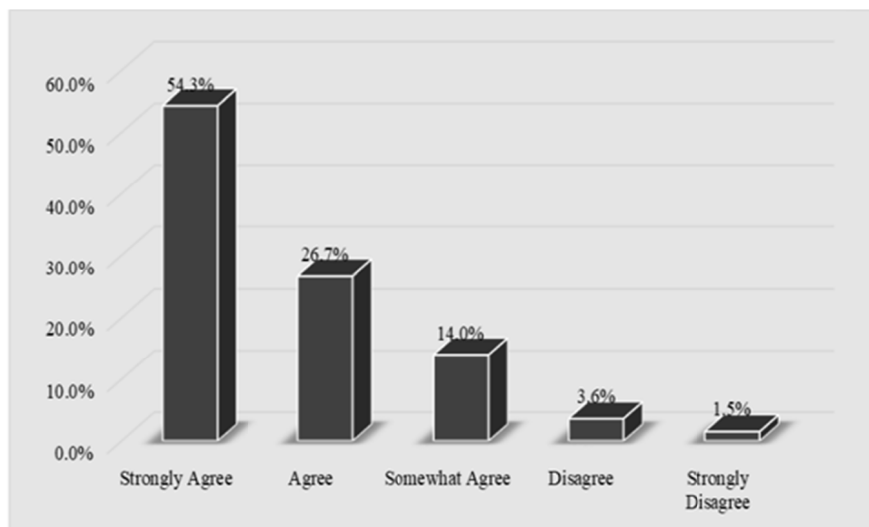


Figure 6. Total responses level toward the statements of Dimension III: Recommendations

Table 14. Means and standard deviations of the statements of dimension III: recommendations

Statements	M	SD	Response level	Order
19. Appreciation of creative teachers helps using active learning strategies	4.52	0.83	Strongly Agree	1
16. Intensive training for teachers on the methods of active learning may simplify it for the teachers	4.38	0.89	Strongly Agree	2
15. The fewer the number of students in a class, the more accessible for teachers to apply active learning	4.33	0.90	Strongly Agree	3
18. The application of active learning requires strict class management rules for the class not to become chaos	4.26	0.95	Strongly Agree	4
17. The language competency of teachers may play an essential role in applying active learning	3.94	1.05	Agree	5
Total	4.29	0.92	Strongly Agree	

Table 14 shows the mean and standard deviation of each recommendation to overcome the obstacles from the respondents' perspective. The overall mean was 4.29, lays in the range (4.20–5.0)—according to a five-point Likert scale. It indicates that the majority of participants strongly agreed with the statements in Table 14.

According to the mean value, the statements were ranked in descending order from the highest mean to the lowest mean. Statement (19), appreciation of creative teacher help using these strategies, ranked in the first order with the highest mean (4.52) and a response level of (Strongly Agree). Next, statement (16) intensive training for teachers on the methods of active learning may simplify its usage for the teachers) ranked the second order with a mean (4.38) and level of response (Strongly Agree), then the statement (15) the fewer the number of students in the classroom, the more accessible for the teacher to apply active learning ranked the third order with a mean of (4.33) and a response level of (Strongly Agree). Then, statement (18) the application of active learning requires strict class management rules for the class not to become chaos, ranked the fourth in order with a mean of (4.26) and level of response (Strongly Agree) followed by active learning ranked the last in the fifth-order with a mean of (3.94) and a level of response (Agree). Based on these findings the present study suggests that the Ministry of Education might adopt an inclusive master plan to reform the schooling system. The ministry might need to listen to the teachers' recommendations so that they become part of the solution to resolve the encountering obstacles.

Q4. Is there is any statistically significant difference in the participants' opinions towards the variable of gender, experience, and training?

To answer this question, the researchers used the independent sample t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the differences in the participants' opinions towards each dimension according to their gender, experience, and training.

Table 15. Differences in the participants' opinions toward the degree of using active learning according to the variables of gender, experience, and training

Factors	Categories	M	SD	Test	Test value	Sig.
Gender	Male	3.30	0.97	t-test	-1.515	0.135
	Female	3.65	0.82			
Experience	<= 5 years	3.87	0.68	ANOVA	1.231	0.306
	6–10 years	3.36	1.04			
	11–15 years	3.73	0.82			
Training	>= 16 years	3.38	0.84	ANOVA	1.736	0.169
	< 12 hours	3.63	0.93			
	< 30 hours	3.59	0.76			
	< 60 hours	2.61	1.03			
	> 60 hours	3.43	0.66			

Table 15 shows the results of the independent sample t-test and ANOVA test for the differences in the participants' opinions towards the degree of using active learning according to the variable of their gender, experience, and training. All the p-values corresponding to the tests of difference related to the variable of gender, experience, and training were (0.135), (0.306), and (0.169) respectively, which were higher than (0.05). These values show that there were no statistically significant differences in the participants' opinions towards the degree of using active learning according to gender, experience, and training. This finding shows that experience showed no statistically significant difference in the teachers' opinions towards the degree of using active learning. This might be attributed to different factors in the educational contexts. For instance, teachers' opinions and real classroom practices might not correspond, but perspectives can be similar. Another interpretation is that younger teachers realized the significance of active learning, so they applied the strategies of active learning believed in it as well as older teachers. The younger teachers might depend on open sources such as the Internet to learn about active learning. Lack of a statistically significant difference according to the variable of experience confirms Saadah and Al-Rushdi's (2017) study that suggested that teachers' experience did not associate necessarily with a high degree of implementation of active learning. However, the lack of statistical difference according to gender contradicted the same study. Saadah and Al-Rushdi's (2017) study found that gender was an influential variable regarding employing active learning. Lack of statistical gender differences in this study could be attributed to the smaller proportion of male participants in the sample compared to females where two-thirds of the sample (n=44); female and only one-third were male (n=22).

Table 16. Differences in participants' opinions towards the obstacles according to gender, experience, and training

Factors	Categories	M	SD	Test	Test value	Sig.
Gender	Male	3.53	0.74	t-test	-0.714	0.478
	Female	3.66	0.68			
Experience	<= 5 years	3.68	0.91	ANOVA	0.112	0.953
	6–10 years	3.60	0.62			
	11–15 years	3.66	0.59			
	>= 16 years	3.55	0.78			
Training	< 12 hours	3.67	0.72	ANOVA	0.584	0.628
	< 30 hours	3.63	0.65			
	< 60 hours	3.21	0.55			
	> 60 hours	3.49	0.85			

Table 16 shows the results of independent samples t-test and ANOVA test for the differences in the participants' opinions towards the obstacles according to gender, experience, and training. All the p-values corresponding to the tests of difference according to gender, experience, and training, were (0.478), (0.953), and (0.628), respectively, which were higher than (0.05). These values suggest that there was no statistically significant difference in the participants' opinions towards the obstacles according to gender, experience, and training. This result indicates that the participants irrespective of their gender, experience and training encountered similar obstacles because the entire sample came from schools in Jeddah city. The lack of statistical gender difference can be attributed to the small sample of males to females where the proportion was about 2 females to 1 male.

Table 17. Differences in the participants' opinions towards their recommendations to overcome the obstacles according to gender, experience, and training

Factors	Categories	M	SD	Test	Test value	Sig.
Gender	Male	4.21	0.79	t-test	-0.655	0.515
	Female	4.32	0.59			
Experience	<= 5 years	4.62	0.50	ANOVA	1.288	0.286
	6–10 years	4.29	0.48			
	11–15 years	4.27	0.71			
	>= 16 years	4.12	0.80			
Training	< 12 hours	4.33	0.61	ANOVA	1.639	0.190
	< 30 hours	4.41	0.67			
	< 60 hours	3.75	0.84			
	> 60 hours	4.00	0.70			

Table 17 shows the results of independent samples t-test and ANOVA test for the differences in the participants' opinions towards the recommendations according to gender, experience, and training. All the p-values corresponding to the tests of difference according to gender, experience, and training, were (0.515), (0.286), and (0.190), respectively, which were higher than (0.05). These values indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the participants' recommendations to overcome the encountered obstacles according to gender, experience, and training. This result shows that the majority of the participants (81%) strongly agreed with the recommendations to overcome the challenges and barriers that hinder the adoption of active learning strategies. The key recommendations that obtained the highest strength of agreement were as follow:

- Appreciation of creative teachers who use these strategies.
- Intensive training for teachers on the methods of active learning may simplify its use for the teachers.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the degree to which EFL high school teachers implement active learning in Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that the level of using active learning was medium. This finding was in line with previously conducted research (Samara & Sawalha, 2018; Al-Motiri, 2017; Saadah & Al-Rushdi, 2017). This finding heeds attention from the Ministry of education to enhance the degree of employing active learning strategies. The utilization of active learning strategies can be optimized once all the factors are favorable. The study, also, revealed a set of challenges that the EFL teachers encountered in applying active learning. The

participants stated that there are large numbers of the students in classrooms; the teachers' language competency hinders their ability, and insufficient appreciation for the teachers who employ active learning strategies. The process of preparing for the active lesson is time-consuming. Active learning is thus not an easy task to accomplish as perceived by the participant teachers in the present study. It requires collaborative efforts from the Ministry of education, supervisors, and school principals to enhance the degree of active learning and to resolve the encountered obstacles. This study found no statistically significant difference attributed to gender, experience, and training regarding the level of employing active learning, obstacles encountered, nor to the recommendations to address the obstacles. The present study recommends that further similar studies need to be conducted on wider geographical areas in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a mixed-method research design to diversify the data collection method including classroom observation.

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