Active Learning in Ethiopia

Implementation in the Pedagogical, Social and Cultural Context of Primary Education

Renée Rijkhoek

April 2016

Supervisor: Dr. Hülya Kosar Altinyelken
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Voor Papa.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

**Acknowledgements**

I want to thank all the people who were involved in the process of writing this thesis. First of all I want to thank the Development Expertise Center (DEC) Ethiopia for their corporation in and facilitation of this research. My special appreciations are for Nura Sirna. For his unconditional effort in the process of this research as a translator, critical friend, guider, protector and most of all as a friend who made the time of data collection a very interesting and pleasant time in Jimma and Bedele. I also want to thank all the involved teachers and principals from the primary schools of Jimma and Bedele which have shared their experiences with active learning so openly. Finally, I want to thank the involved teachers of the TTC Jimma for their time, coffees, lunches, information and humor during the data collection process of this research.

I am very thankful to my supervisor Dr. Hülya Kosar Altinyelken for all her effort and support in the entire process of writing this thesis. Her very professional view on the topic and her experience in doing research in this, sometimes challenging, field was very inspiring to me. Finally, I want to thank her for her always positive attitude.

I am also grateful to my Ethiopian, Belgium, Russian and American friends in Jimma who made my stay in Ethiopia and the process of data collection to an unforgettable and warm time. I want to thank them for taking me out for the necessary mango juices and other unforgettable moments. Last but not least, I want to thank my friends and family for their support in doing this research in Ethiopia.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Abstract

Based on qualitative research, this study seeks to examine how active learning is understood and implemented in Ethiopian primary education, and from the perspective of local actors, to what extent active learning is appropriate for the social- and cultural context of Ethiopia. The research has been carried out in eleven different primary schools and in one TTC in south-west Ethiopia. In this research, primary school teachers (n=48), students (n=4), directors (n=5) and TTC-teachers (n=8) were involved. The research shows that teachers are facing several challenges with the implementation of active learning. Besides practical problems like class size, time and availability of educational materials, also the continuity of training and social and cultural rules, which are deeply rooted in the Ethiopian society, hinder the implementation of active learning. Teachers are very enthusiastic about the implementation of active learning, but due to these challenges it is poorly implemented. This study concludes that not only the challenges are causing the poor implementation. A discrepancy is also observed between what teachers say they implement and what they actually do during the lessons. The ‘gap’ between the enthusiasm of the teachers and the poor implementation could be explained by fact that the program is dependent on funding and therefore teachers picture the reality more positive than they actually find. The second conclusion is that active learning policy is not appropriate in its current form for the Ethiopian primary education. It is based on the social and cultural values of the context where it has been designed, the ‘Western’ countries as TTC-teachers named it. It is based on an ‘extrovert’ individualistic society which contradicts with the Ethiopian where children are raised by the idea that they cannot speak up towards grown-ups and giving feedback or contradicting people is perceived as impolite. A transformation into a more social-cultural sensitive policy is needed whereby local indigenous knowledge is used as starting point.
# 1. Index

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Index</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Aim and Relevance</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Problem Statement</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Social and Scientific Relevance</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Research Question</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Research Outline</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Active Learning and Learner-Centred Education</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Role of the Teachers and Students</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 International Policy and the Social Context of Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.1 The Social Context of Sub-Saharan Africa and the aim of International Organizations</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2 Implementation Challenges</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2.1 Teachers and the Context</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3.2.2 The Importance of the Community in the Implementation Process</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Contextual Background</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Country profile of Ethiopia</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Education in Ethiopia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Short history</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Primary Education Nowadays</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopian Education</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 The Need of Educational Reform and Teacher Training</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Students and Active Learning</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Research location</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5 Development Expertise Centre</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Methodology</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Research Methods</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1 Sample</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Interviews</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2.1 Group 1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2.2</td>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2.3</td>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3</td>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.4</td>
<td>Curriculum analysis</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Epistemological Position and Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Diverse Views on Active Learning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Views on Active Learning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>Importance of Active Learning for Further Developments in Ethiopia</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>Definitions by Teachers and Directors</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.3</td>
<td>Definitions of Active Learning by TTC-teachers</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.4</td>
<td>Definitions by Students</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2</td>
<td>TTC-Teachers</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.3</td>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopian Classrooms</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Implementation Profiles</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1</td>
<td>Strategies of Implementation</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1.1</td>
<td>Implementation after Teacher Training</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1.2</td>
<td>Through Community Involvement</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1.3</td>
<td>Through the Curriculum</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Implementation Challenges</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.1</td>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.2</td>
<td>Class size and Age</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.3</td>
<td>Culture and Background</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.4</td>
<td>Motivation and Knowledge of Teachers</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2.5</td>
<td>Training and Continuity</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Cultural Relevance of Active Learning</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Main Findings</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2.1</td>
<td>Reconsideration of the Active Learning Policy</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

9.2.2 Teacher Training ................................................................. 66
9.2.3 Ownership over the Policy .................................................. 67
9.3 Further Research ..................................................................... 67

10. References ........................................................................... 69

Appendix ..................................................................................... 74

Appendix 1: Interviews ................................................................. 74
Appendix 2: BEQUIP Structured Observation Scheme .................. 82
Appendix 3: Semi-structured observation questions ..................... 84
Appendix 4: Structured curriculum observation form ................... 85
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

2. Introduction

2.1 Aim and Relevance

Anno 2016 education is not a matter of national discourse anymore but a case of global policy transfers. In the past decades, many sub-Saharan countries have been involved in educational reforms from traditional teacher-centred education into learner-centred approaches of education. Different causes were underlying for the transformation; the rise of knowledge based economies in sub-Saharan countries, open markets and globalisation whereby new pedagogical ideas travelled from the Western world towards sub-Saharan Africa (Preece, 2013). The rapid changes of economies still continue and this requires, according to Verspoor (2008), extended knowledge and skills of (future) employees. It requires the ability of practical application of knowledge, rather than memorizing facts as was the case in traditional teaching methods. Therefore, learner-centred approaches of education were and are implemented in the educational systems of sub-Saharan countries (Altinyelken, 2010; Serbessa, 2006).

Chisholm & Leyendecker (2008) and Preece (2013) argue that the implementation of learner-centred approaches in education was with the intention to give these countries prospect on democratisation, liberalisation and economic growth, with an overarching goal to make them more accessible for the world market. Educational approaches originated in the Western world were implemented in sub-Saharan Africa as being the key towards the democratisation and liberalisation by local governments and (Western) aid organisations. In practice this transformation in educational systems has many unintended effects and partly or does not reach the intended purpose of the implementation, because it is not aligned with the local cultures of sub-Sahara Africa (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Preece, 2013).

This also applies in the case of Ethiopia where active learning is implemented to improve the quality of education and to reach a more learner-centred educational system. Teachers experience different challenges which hinder the implementation of it. Lack of knowledge and experience of
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

teachers about active learning, limited training, lack of educational materials, class size and budget are mainly mentioned. However, besides practical challenges, there is also a cultural aspect which has influence on the implementation of active learning. Active learning is based on discussion and interaction between students amongst each other and with teachers to build knowledge constructions. In the Ethiopian culture, from a student perspective, it is impolite to discuss with and talk to grown-ups. This makes the implementation of active learning challenging, because students refuse to participate in lessons. For this reason and due to the practical challenges, teachers often lapse back into traditional teaching methods (Altinyelken, 2010; Preece, 2013; Serbessa, 2006).

Chisholm & Leyendecker (2008) argue in their study about curriculum reform in sub-Saharan Africa after the 1990s that there is a lot more research needed about local responses and extent of receptiveness and acceptance towards the implementation of these global educational policies (p. 203). Moreover, the specific case of Ethiopia is researched by few. This research focuses on the local responses, challenges and, cultural and social receptiveness towards active learning in primary education. It investigates the implementation of active learning and its suitability for the Ethiopian primary education from a bottom-up approach. It focuses not only on teachers and directors of primary schools but also on students, teacher trainers, teacher trainers from NGO’s and other relevant stakeholders.

2.2 Problem Statement

Since the 1990’s learner-centred education travelled the world from developed countries towards developing countries. Active learning is a learner-centred approach of education whereby students are actively involved in the lesson and subject matter. They learn through discussions with the teacher and peers, collaboration and presentations. The aim of active learning is to give students responsibility about their own learning process and, therefore, create flexible, creative and proactive thinkers (Campione, Shapiro & Brown, 1994; Prince, 2004). Numerous researches have been presented on the challenges of the implementation of active learning in sub-Sahara Africa. Preece (2013) and Tabulawa (2003) argue that active learning is often implemented without or with limited
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

research on the context of implementation. This research focuses on the local pedagogic, social and cultural context of Ethiopia where active learning is implemented.

In Ethiopia active learning is widely implemented by many but is understood by few, as Serbessa (2006) argues, despite the (sometimes intensive) training teachers receive. Teachers in Ethiopia are facing fundamental and controversial challenges which are related to deeply rooted cultural and social traditions when they implement active learning, besides different practical problems (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). Tabulawa (2003) argues that implementation problems are caused by a lack of research by those who implement active learning in local contexts of developing countries which are mostly driven by the funding of external organisations. Those challenges can be overcome by research and involvement of local expertise and experience in the designing or reshaping of educational policy. This study tries to research this local expertise and experience to investigate if active learning is a suitable approach for the Ethiopian primary education.

2.3 Social and Scientific Relevance

Active learning and other approaches of learner-centred education have been widely implemented in developing countries to improve educational quality. Educational policies were implemented one on one from the context of a developed country, or Western donor-countries, into the context of a developing country (Altinyelken 2010; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008; Preece 2013). Often the choice of the implemented educational policy is based on the preference of those donor-countries (Steiner-Kahmsi, 2011). Preece (2013) argues that those ‘Global North policies’ disseminate core values of which are rooted in the societies of the donor-countries rather than the values of the countries of implementation. African societies are mostly collective orientated whereas the donor-countries are mostly individually orientated. The latter is reflected in the Ethiopian society but not in the active learning policy. This causes challenges and problems in the implementation process, because of a lack of alignment with the local culture and society (Preece, 2013). The findings of this
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

research are a call for a reconsideration of the active learning policy implemented in Ethiopian primary education and the suitability for the Ethiopian context.

2.4 Research Question

Quality education and policy evolves from the key principles of its own society. If this is not the case, problems and challenges on local contexts occur which could have great influence on the quality of education. This study tries to understand which cultural-, social- and pedagogical key principles contradict with the implemented educational policy of active learning in Ethiopian primary education and why they cause implementation challenges. For this purpose eleven schools on two different places in Ethiopia are researched.

The main question this research seeks to address is:

How is active learning understood and implemented in primary education in Ethiopia; and from the perspectives of local actors, to what extent is it an appropriate pedagogy for the pedagogical-, cultural- and social context of Ethiopia?

To answer this question, five sub-questions are formulated:

1. How do teachers view active learning?
2. How is active learning implemented by teachers in primary schools?
3. Which challenges do teachers experience when implementing active learning?
4. What are the (expected) outcomes of active learning?
5. From the perspective of teachers, what would be a relevant and appropriate approach of active learning in primary education concerning the existing pedagogical-, social and cultural rules in Ethiopia?

2.5 Research Outline

After this introducing chapter about the aim and relevance of the research, Chapter 3 follows with the theoretical framework which explains the meaning of active learning and the how and why of the
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

implementation of it in sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter is followed by Chapter 4 which is a section about the contextual background wherein the research has been carried out. It includes geographical, cultural and economic information, but also an extended description of the educational system of Ethiopia and its challenges. After this, Chapter 5 follows, which explains the methodology as well as the involved participants and other relevant stakeholders. The findings will be presented after this Chapter. It starts with Chapter 6 which gives an overview of the diverse existing views on active learning by the involved participants. Chapter 7 focuses on the outcomes of active learning and Chapter 8 on the implementation practices. Finally, the conclusion is presented in Chapter 9 where findings will be connected with broader theories and issues. Furthermore, the main question is answered, recommendations are made as well as suggestions for further research.
3. Theoretical Framework

The policy of active learning in Ethiopia is originated from different global political, economic and social processes. In this section these processes will be explained along with the policy of active learning. This section starts with the explanation about the active learning pedagogy in proportion with learner-centred approaches on education, followed by the role of the teacher in this approach. After, this section focuses sub-Sahara Africa and the educational policy transfers, the social and cultural contexts and it concludes with the implementation challenges.

3.1 Active Learning and Learner-Centred Education

Learner-centred education, child-centred education, cooperative learning and active learning are based on the ideas of the renowned scientists Vygotsky, Dewey and Piaget. While the approaches are all centred around the learning process of students and use active involvement as a starting point, these approaches are not the same (Van Harmelen, 1998). Learner-centred forms of education originated from the constructivist approach and the cognitive psychology as an alternative to the behaviouristic psychology which was the basis for traditional teacher-centred approaches (Prince, 2004). Active learning in specific is defined by Prince (2004) as followed:

‘Active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing.’ (P.1.)

The question is, why is active involvement and active learning important for learning processes? Active learning is important for making transfer of knowledge from abstract concepts into real life situations. Learning occurs when students are able to build their new acquired knowledge on existing knowledge and when they can translate knowledge to personal or practical situations. It is important to activate students to construct their own knowledge. To achieve this education should for example exist of interactions between students and sources of knowledge, peers and teachers. Knowledge should not be determined to one single topic but should be transferable to other topics and, at the
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

end, real life situations. The purpose of this approach towards learning is to stimulate active exploration, concept building, construction of knowledge and developing meta-cognitive skills, and focuses on understanding rather than memorizing the subject matter (Campione, Shapiro & Brown, 1994; Van Harmelen, 1998; Volman, 2006). One of the overarching goals of this approach is to create critical democratic thinkers. Therefore learner-centred education, and specific active learning, has an inquiry based approach. Active learning stimulates students to constantly assess their thinking and valuing new knowledge. Inquiry based learning lets students approach issues from different sides (Tabulawa, 2003). Additionally, active learning encourages teachers to analyse the educational needs and learning styles of their students. Teachers adjust their teaching methods to this and are able to create more space for the individual learning styles. Therefore, learning is accessible for a broader group of students and with different learning styles (Norman & Spohrer, 1996).

The teacher-centred approach is often perceived as the opposite of learner-centred education and in practice it certainly is. Teacher-centred education is based on the behaviouristic approach of teaching whereby learning is more or less an individual process. The learning process is in the hands of the teacher as an ‘instructional designer’ as Anderson & Dron (2011) (p. 82) state. The behaviouristic approach of education is perceived as effective in situations with limited recourses or any other (educational) materials, as it is mostly the case in remote or poor areas of countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Anderson & Dron, 2011; Embet, 2004; Van Harmelen, 1998).

One of the important criticisms on this approach is that it does not utilize the full capacity of learning of the human brain. It is all about memorizing knowledge instead of making constructions of understanding about certain concepts (Anderson & Dron, 2011; Van Harmelen, 1998). In addition, Serbessa (2006) argues that in practice students are ‘passive recipients of knowledge’ and learning consists without any interaction (p.129).

It is widely believed by educators that children learn more when they are actively involved in the lessons and the subject matter (Prince, 2004). As Dale (1970) states: ‘A weakness of all education is that the verbally stated concepts and principles are not firmly grounded in and based on the rich
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

experience of the learners.’ (p. 101). Dale’s ‘Cone of Experience’ illustrates that learners remember up to 90% of what they do or experience in contrast to the maximum percentage of 50% of what they see and hear with passive learning. This states that by using active learning methods whereby learners are actively involved, teachers can maximize students’ learning process, which is not the case with teacher-centred methods (Dale, 1970; Edukans, 2014). In this process the emphasis is on the interaction between the learner and his environment, like peers or the teacher but also on external resources as internet, books and other materials outside the classroom (Van Harmelen, 1998). The collaborative and cooperative elements of active learning have positive effects on academic achievements, students attitude towards education and meta-cognitive skills, like for example interpersonal skills (Prince, 2004). The teacher brings real-life materials into the classroom to connect knowledge and the subject matter to real-life situations (Campione, Shapiro & Brown, 1994; Van Harmelen, 1998). This ensures that knowledge better roots and improves the recall of it later on (Prince, 2004).

Linton, Farmer & Peterson (2014) argue that active learning only leads to improved student outcomes when it is implemented by an experienced teacher who is knowledgeable about the pedagogical approach of it. According to Smith et al. (2009) effective implementation of active learning needs a certain order. Peer interaction between students must be followed by an instructor-facilitated explanation because of two reasons. One reason is that research has shown that all students of different ability-level benefit from this order of discussion and instruction, rather than using a different order. The second reason is that because of this combination of peer discussion and instructor explanation, a combination is made of student engagement through peer learning, like for example discussion, and instructor feedback. This leads to an increasing engagement of the students

Figure 1 ‘Cone of Experience’ according to Dale (1970) in Edukans (2014)
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

in the learning process (Linton, Farmer & Peterson, 2014; Smith et al., 2011). The conclusion of this might be that the teacher has an important role in the implementation of active learning.

One of overarching goals of active learning is to make students responsible for their own learning process whereby they search for information and knowledge driven by their intrinsic motivation. Active learning is implemented in order to stimulate life-long learning and to establish a flexible application of knowledge in any situation (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2007; Verspoor, 2008).

3.2 Role of the Teachers and Students

In the specific case of active learning teachers should have the role of a facilitator which is an important element. The teacher in the role of facilitator supports students when they are learning and developing skills like having discussions, solving problems, working in groups and working independently. As shown in figure 2 (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2007) this role has many sub-roles. The teacher needs to decide which role is appropriate for the particular situation and the ability of the students. This means that teachers need to have extended knowledge about and experience in the roles (Northern Ireland Curriculum, 2007; Linton, Farmer & Peterson, 2014).

Bransford, Brown & Cocking (2000) argue that these requirements have implications on the work of a teacher. First, teachers have to draw out and work with the pre-existing understandings that their students bring with them into the classroom. Second, teachers must teach some subject matter in depth, providing many examples for the same concept and provide a firm foundation of factual knowledge. Finally, they need to integrate the teaching of meta-cognitive skills into the
curriculum in various subject areas (p. 19-21). Moreover, teachers need to know everything about their students’ learning styles and mediate and adjust the lesson’s content according to it. (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000).

3.3 *International Policy and the Social Context of Sub-Sahara Africa*

Learner-centred education and active learning are the most commonly imported strategies to improve the quality of education in sub-Saharan Africa. Since the 1990s, a reforming of curricula and teacher trainer colleges has been taking place in several developing countries around the globe (Sriprakash, 2009; Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). To understand active learning in its current state in Ethiopia it will be necessary to explore the social context of sub-Saharan Africa and how active learning has been brought there.

3.3.1 *The Social Context of Sub-Sahara Africa and the aim of International Organizations*

Since the 1980s and 1990s globalisation rooted in several sub-Saharan countries. This was also the starting point of social-economic development and educational reform in this part of the world. According to Chisholm & Leyendecker (2008) there are four developments to distinguish which form the basis for reformation of the educational policy in sub-Sahara Africa; globalisation, changed focuses and priorities of international aid, the inclusion sub-Saharan countries in the world order, and the overflow of new ideas about education coming from the Western world (p. 198). In that period many sub-Saharan countries started to open up their markets for international trade, foundations for liberal market economies came up, interest in democratisation and openness towards new educational ideas emerged (Chisholm & Leyendecker; 2008). Governments and international aid organisations, for example, International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and state aid programs, perceived learner-centred education as appropriate to reach liberalisation and democratisation and it became part of the international development agendas (Tabulawa, 2003).
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

The question is, why would active learning be an appropriate approach to reach this? Verspoor (2008) argues that the sub-Saharan economies are increasingly knowledge and skills based, driven by technical developments and part of a global network of trade (p.1). To meet these demands, employees with extended skills, cognitive and non-cognitive knowledge, and the ability to life-long learning are needed. Improved quality and access to education which adopts these requirements is the key to economic development.

From an educational perspective active learning contributes to improved cognitive and non-cognitive skills which become more important in these 21st century economies and societies (Jolles & Keizer, 2015). In the transforming societies and economies of sub-Saharan Africa, other skills are required than solely reproducing knowledge. Practical application and a constant life-long acquirement of knowledge is required and appropriate in those changing economies which is an important reason for the implementation of active learning in sub-Saharan educational systems (Preece, 2013). Regarding this, Jolles (2015) argues that every student has to be able to apply knowledge not only inside the school context but also outside of it. To achieve that, students have to gain experience in how to apply knowledge in practice and be aware of which role their knowledge has in their real-life situations (Volman, 2006). Moreover, active learning methods provoke the development of the non-cognitive skills or, like self-knowledge, motivation, curiosity and reflective skills. Well-developed non-cognitive skills ensures better cognitive results due to improved motivation, the ability to prioritise knowledge and making transfers from concepts into practical knowledge (Jolles & Keizer, 2015). This could lead to a better educated population which is beneficial for economic developments (Verspoor, 2008).

Despite these progressive developments, critical voices occurred from various stakeholders. In some cases implementation programs are carried out by financial support from the West (Tota, 2014). On one hand it creates international pressure to implement the policies, devised by international organizations from the Western countries (Chisholm & Leyendecker, 2008). On the other it creates dependency of developing countries that implement the policy. This inhibits further
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia
devlopment on own insight or initiative of developing countries (Bermingham 2011). Collins & Rhoads (2010) argue that this way of implementing educational policy contributes to ‘asymmetrical’ relations between sub-Saharan countries and the Western world (p. 203). Learner-centred education is seen by different stakeholders as a 'Western' approach to education, suitable for a society that revolves around individual well-being and prestige (Preece, 2013, p. 103). The criticism of these stakeholders (in developing countries) is based on the idea that this approach of education of the Western world is not consistent with some of the social and cultural values of the societies in sub-Saharan Africa, regarding the collective character of the community and society (Altinyelken, 2010; Preece, 2013; Schweisfurth, 2011). International organizations take pedagogies into account of the, in several researches so called, Western countries, as a measure of the quality of education. It is questionable if it really leads to improved quality, whilst the local contexts, like manners of communication and intercourse, working conditions and social norms, are not taken into account during the development of the policy (Bermingham 2011; Tabulawa, 2003). Preece (2013) argues for example that one of the key values in sub-Saharan societies is the collective self-reliance and the centrality of the community. Western educational policies are focussed on individual self-reliance and development of individual well-being and success. In these sub-Saharan contexts, education should contribute to collective self-reliance, but this does not correspond with the objectives of the implementation initiated by international organisations and governments.

3.3.2 Implementation Challenges

3.3.2.1 Teachers and the Context

The implementation of active learning seems difficult in developing countries. To start, teachers are trained to teach according to the 'chalk and talk' approach (Preece, 2013). This means that teachers are used to a teacher-centred approach of education. Students are expected to listen passively and with hardly an opportunity for further interaction between peers or with the teacher. To change this approach intensive training is needed. The actual situation in many sub-Saharan-countries is that the
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

teachers are required to implement active learning after very limited training of poor quality. They simply do not know how to implement and how to cope with active learning. As a result elements of active learning are implemented but teachers do not know what they are doing exactly and why they are doing it (Serbessa, 2006).

In addition, Tabulawa (1997) argues that when the implementation of certain pedagogies fails in developing countries, the educational context in relation to past values and experiences must be analysed to examine the causes which are underlying the failure. When these values are incongruent with for example active learning values, it is hard for teachers to adopt the values of new pedagogies or they even reject to implement it. Moreover, this is also applicable for students. They might reject to participate in the way it is required, because they are not used to it and it does not correspond with their cultural and social background. Not only is this the case for teachers, but for local directors and policy makers as well (Tabulawa, 1997; Serbessa, 2006). Not only social and cultural issues occur when implementing the active learning policy, practical problems also need to be taken into account like class size, lack of teaching materials, age differences and teacher capacity (Schweisfurth, 2011; UNICEF, 2012; EFA, 2014).

3.3.2.2 The Importance of the Community in the Implementation Process

As mentioned earlier, community-life is very important in many sub-Saharan societies. Local contexts can have many mutual differences regarding traditions and priorities within a country. Therefore educational policy should be suitable for the local contexts. The common value in local educational discourses in many sub-Saharan countries is that community needs to have a higher priority than individual needs. Knowledge serves as a common good which is distributed along the community members hence everyone benefits from it. Therefore knowledge should be useful for the whole community and not only for one individual which is the case with Western approaches of education (Preece, 2013; Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2008; Unterhalter, 2012;).

For the diffusion of active learning this means that the involvement of the community has a very important function to overcome implementation challenges. It has a positive influence on
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

student results, their motivation and attitude towards education. More specific, in an educational context with limited available resources, community involvement ensures learning materials and financial resources. Schools and communities are dependent on each other. The school, in its turn, ensures educated community members and new knowledge (Miller-Gransvauw & Yoder, 2002; Rose, 2003;).

Pannah (2003) argues in the research of Said & Ahmad (2015) that community involvement is important for a shared ownership of the implemented policy which can lead to a successful implementation of new pedagogies which is better adapted to the needs. This is important in consultation of the research of Preece (2013) who argues that education in sub-Saharan Africa should serve the development of the community and not the individual prestige of a learner. Home, school and community are inextricably linked in different ways (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Said & Ahmad, 2015). This means that the needs, values and behaviours of local communities should be intertwined and involved in the implementation of new policy, like Tabulawa (2003) argues.
4. Contextual Background

The research has been carried out in Ethiopia, which is located in the horn of Africa as figure 3 shows. This section gives an overview of the country of Ethiopia, its population, political system, its position with respect to other countries in the world, the research locations, the history of education, the implementation of active learning and finally it gives some brief information about this research.

4.1 Country profile of Ethiopia

Ethiopia, previously known as Abyssinia, is a landlocked country in the horn of Africa and borders Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan (CIA Factbook, 2014). The capital is Addis Ababa and the country is divided in eight regions: Afar, Amhara, Benishangul – Gumuz, Harari, Oromia, Somali, State Of Southern Nations (SNNP) and Tigray. Eritrea has been a province of Ethiopia between 1961 and 1993 but became independent after the Eritrean war of independence which ended in 1991 (Briggs, 2012). Ethiopia has a population of 96 million inhabitants and a population growth of 2.9%. This makes Ethiopia the second most populated country in sub-Sahara Africa (World Bank, 2015). As figure 4 shows, 44.2% of the total population is aged between 0 and 14 years old and half of the population is younger than 18 years old. This brings pressure on primary education, because of the high numbers of children that follow.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

education or that has to be educated. Of the total population, 17.2% lives in the cities (CIA Factbook, 2014; UNICEF Statistics, 2013). Thereby Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world (DHS, 2011). The official language is Amharic but Oromifa (Oromo), which is the language of the largest province Oromia, is also widely spoken (Briggs, 2012). The main religions in Ethiopia are Ethiopian Orthodox (43.5%), Muslim (33.9%) and Protestant-Christian (18.5%). The rest of the population adhere a traditional religion (2.7%) or is Catholic (0.7%) (CIA Factbook, 2014). There are about 80 ethnic groups in the country.

In contrast to the majority of the other sub-Saharan countries, Ethiopia does not have an extended colonial past. It has been briefly occupied by Italy between 1936 and 1941. Nowadays Ethiopia is a republic under the rule of prime minister Desalegn and since 1991 the ruling party ‘Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front’ (EPRDF) (World Bank, 2015).

In the UNDP’s Human Development Index, Ethiopia is ranked 174 out of 187 countries. This means that 39% of the population lives below the poverty line, the Gross National Income per capita is $1,500 (Netherlands: $47,400) and the unemployment of youth between 15 and 24 years old is 24.9% is. The average life expectancy is 63.6 years (CIA Factbook, 2014; UNDP, 2014). The child labour rate between the age of 5 and 14 is 53%. Ethiopia’s economy is based on agriculture (47.7%) and coffee is the major export product. 61% of the total population of Ethiopia is illiterate and the average years of schooling is 2.4 years (CIA Factbook, 2014; UNDP, 2014).

4.2 Education in Ethiopia

4.2.1 Short history

In the past the Ethiopian education was highly influenced by Church Education and is an important basis for educated people nowadays. Clerics were being employed as teachers to children in wealthy households. Ethiopia’s past emperor, Haile Selassie, ended this system to establish a more modernized system to combat with the educational systems of the rest of the world (Girma, 2012; Serbessa, 2006). Haile Selassie was the last emperor of Ethiopia. He ruled the country from
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

1930 up to 1936 and between 1941 and 1974. Selassie had a great international diplomatic respect and he fought against colonialism (Briggs, 2012).

After Selassie the era of the communist Derg regime dawned in 1974. With Derg, Selassie’s line of rationalization of education in Ethiopia continued. However, Derg emphasized science and reason as the starting point of education but there was no room for free thinking and exploration. The Marxist point of view served as the starting point of each course (Girma, 2012).

In 1991 the EPRDF became the ruling party which meant a change in the Ethiopian educational system. The government and the ministry of Education at that time attracted external funds to invest in the quality of education. The investment in the quality of education was part of the ‘Educational Sector Strategy’ policy in 1994. The number of TTC increased and a shift was introduced from teacher-centred to more active involvement of the students in lessons but it was complex. In this EPRDF-era the World Bank started to invest in Ethiopian education (Tekeste, 2006; World Bank, 2015).

Nowadays the profession of teacher is not highly valued. Also the entrance criteria for the TTC’s are low. Previously the course for becoming a teacher was one year, whereas it is 3 years nowadays. After graduating teachers receive a diploma. The government, in cooperation with NGO’s, are investing in TTC’s for improvement of the quality of education (Van der Meer, 2014).

4.2.2 Primary Education Nowadays

In its current state the Ethiopian primary education consists of eight years. In the lower classes, grade 1 up till 4, the teacher is teaching all subjects whereas in the upper classes, grade 5 up till 8, students are taught by specialized teachers. After primary school, students proceed to secondary education as figure 5 shows. After this they graduate with a certification or continue to grade 11 and 12 in preparation for higher education (AIR, 2012; CSA et al., 2012).

The average pupil-teacher ratio is 50 in primary education (AIR, 2012; CSA et al., 2012). Since 1984, the language of instruction in grade 1 up till 4 is the national and the regional language, Amharic and one of the local languages. Officially between grade 5 and 8 (depending on the region)
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

the language of instruction has change to English (AIR, 2012). In practice, the instruction language is
the national or the local language or both (Browes, 2014).

There are two sorts of schools
to distinguish, the government schools
and the non-government schools,
which are mostly private schools. The
most common are the government
schools which are, as the name
suggests, owned by the government.
In general private schools charge
higher school fees and is, due to that,
only accessible for children of more
affluent families. The non-government
schools include public school, religious schools and international schools. The public schools are
founded and operated by the local population and are dependent on student fees. Another sub-
category are the church schools which are owned by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (CSA et al,
2012).

Throughout primary education boys are more represented than girls, specifically in rural
areas. In the bigger cities more girls are involved in education (UNICEF, 2012). According to Embet
(2004) this minority of girls has different reasons. One reason could be that in the Ethiopian society it
is more common for girls to help in the household and taking care of the livestock and the crops.
Girls who are involved in education tend to come from either more wealthy families. A second
reason could be that, especially in rural areas, the low literacy-rate amongst parents leads to the fact
that children go to school less often. Education has a lower priority to those societies. The same
applies to children from labour families in urban areas. Generally the rule applies that the further in
the educational process, the fewer girls are participating in education. The majority of the girls stop

Figure 5 Educational system of Ethiopia (Tessema, 2012)
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

t heir educational career after primary education. Off course, there is a difference visible between rural- and urban areas (Embet, 2004; UNICEF, 2012).

Another challenge for female students is discrimination. Not all schools are always welcoming to girls. The majority of teachers are male and this has the implication that boys are more often participating in the classroom than girls, because they are prejudiced towards the roles of men and female. Boys often have more access to learning facilities than girls due to this prejudice (Embet, 2004). UNICEF (2012) claims that nowadays there is an increasing amount of girls involved in education.

4.3 Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopian Education

This sub-section focuses on through which ways active learning is implemented in Ethiopian primary education. It starts with why educational reform was needed and what this implied for the school, the curriculum and for teachers in Ethiopia. It is followed by the role of students in the implementation of active learning.

4.3.1 The Need of Educational Reform and Teacher Training

The government of Ethiopia has determined that the quality of education must be improved because of its low level of quality and the difference between the cognitive level of students when they leave primary school and the requisite cognitive level at the end of primary education. In order to achieve this, money is invested in education and implementation of interactive learning methods. Meanwhile, active learning is a widely known concept in education in Ethiopia, but in reality it is understood by few. According to some studies, in practice, teachers do not know how to use, apply and implement it. The implementation of active learning is mandatory by the Ethiopian government, but the problem is that they only provide limited and insufficient trainings. This makes the implementation a complex process (Serbessa, 2006).

In addition, Coe (2005) in Chisholm & Leyendecker (2008) states that at school level various international, national and local discourses coexist within the same school. Due to the absence of a
uniform policy, traditional education may persist. UNICEF (2012) claims that there is also a noticeable difference in the degree of implementation of active learning methods between urban and rural areas in Ethiopia. In rural areas, active learning is less often implemented due to the limited resources.

Progress has been seen in the accessibility to primary education in Ethiopia. The most powerful way to improve the quality of education is investing in teachers and student teachers. The majority of the teachers in Ethiopia teaches the traditional teacher-centred way as they were taught in their schools, mostly church schools, and at the teacher training colleges (Serbessa, 2006). The improvement of quality education means a shift from the teacher-centred approach to the learner-centred approach, but still traditional, cultural, and social values are deeply rooted in the daily education of Ethiopia. Traditional beliefs serve and have served as the cultural frame in modern teaching and learning in Ethiopia. Student teachers at Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) hardly gain knowledge related to active learning. TTCs claim that they educate student teachers in active learning methods and learner-centred education but in practice these institutes have little understanding about what these terms actually mean. The concept of active learning is therefore understood in many different ways and, as a result, is practiced in many different ways. The challenge for the current older and younger generations of teachers in Ethiopia is to shift from the approach they have been thought at TTC into the approach of active learning. The difficulty is to transfer theoretical knowledge about active learning into practice. These factors make that the implementation of active learning is a complex process in the Ethiopian primary education (Edukans, 2014, Hoeksma & Sieswerda, 2010; Serbessa, 2006;). This is also an endorsed and recognized problem in other sub-Saharan countries according to Rogan & Grayson (2003), who argue that the complexity of implementing a new curriculum is caused by the teachers’ own background, training level and knowledge about education. These factors are directly related to the extent in which teachers are accepting and implementing a new policy. This partially explains the difficulties of implementing active learning in Ethiopia.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

The current situation in Ethiopian education regarding the improvement of teacher skills is that the government distributes guidelines about active learning throughout schools. Besides, they are providing teachers certificate and diploma programs. This has not resulted in the broad implementation of active learning methods in education (Hoeksma & Sieswerda, 2010). In addition, a quarter of the teachers who are working in primary education are even under qualified for carrying out their jobs (UNICEF, 2012).

4.3.2 Students and Active Learning

The other important group which is involved in the implementation of active learning in Ethiopia are the students themselves. For students too, the learner-centred approach is sometimes challenging and does not correspond with their social and cultural background. This is caused by different family traditions and values. One of the core family values in what parents teach their children is obedience and politeness towards adults. Children are being taught that they accomplish tasks assigned by adults without any resistance. This results in avoidance of any form of interaction with the teacher, because it is perceived by students as rude. This contradicts with one of the goals that active learning stands for, namely promoting interaction between students and the teacher (Prince, 2004; Serbessa, 2006).

Active learning stimulates self-initiated generating of knowledge and skills for searching external information in order to develop the learning process. The student is stimulated to use resources of knowledge rather than just consult the teacher and the textbook for information (Prince, 2004). In Ethiopian context, this is assumed to be the failure of the teacher in carrying out his task as an educator which inhibits students of taking own initiatives in order to develop knowledge and skills (Serbessa, 2006).

All these socio-cultural factors show that the current educational practice may not be the ideal situation for implementing active learning. Serbessa (2006) argues that the resistance is changing and acceptance is slowly taking root but active learning does not seem the suitable pedagogical approach in the Ethiopian cultural educational context. That is exactly what this research tries to investigate.
4.4 **Research location**

This research involved 11 primary schools in Jimma and Bedele which are cities located in the west part of Ethiopia. Both cities are located in the Oromia region, which is the largest province of Ethiopia (see figure 6) with a population of 27 million inhabitants where the majority is Muslim. The common language therefore, coexisting with Amharic, is Oromifa. For primary education this implicates two shifts, a morning shift which is in Amharic and an afternoon shift which is in Oromo or vice versa. Students can choose which shift they attend, depending on their mother tongue.

Six of the involved primary schools are located in Jimma, which is the largest town in west Ethiopia with approximately 175,000 inhabitants. The Oromomifa language is most commonly spoken besides Amharic. Coffee is the main export product of Jimma and this coffee is also known as the best coffee from Ethiopian grounds (Briggs, 2012).

The other five schools are located in the more rural city called Bedele on the road to the border with South Sudan. Bedele is about 120 kilometers north west of Jimma and can be approached in 5 to 6 hours from this place. Bedele has about 19,000 inhabitants and is considerably smaller than Jimma. Bedele is known by the brewery of the beer brand ‘Bedele’ which is owned by the Dutch company ‘Heineken’. Heineken is an important employer for the population of Bedele.

All involved schools are community based government schools which means that students are almost all from the same community. The majority of students are from ‘poor’ families as the involved directors argued. This is explicable since government schools are better affordable for those families. The numbers of students of each school is not noted in this research. The teachers’ origin was from all over the country, because in Ethiopia the government choses the place of work for teachers. All schools in Jimma are under supervision of regional educational office of Jimma and in

![Figure 6 Oromia province](image)
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Bedele they are under the supervision of the regional office of Bedele. Also the TTC is involved in this research which is located in Jimma and inhabits students from the region of Jimma.

4.5 Development Expertise Centre

The Development Expertise Center (DEC) supported this research and functioned as a gatekeeper. DEC is situated in Addis Ababa but the organization has different offices spread out over the country, also in Jimma and Bedele. All the involved schools were contact-schools of DEC. DEC is an Ethiopian NGO, established in 2007 and is founded by the Dutch NGO Edukans. DEC operates in different parts of the country in order to establish local development through several educational projects from ‘grassroots level’ in corporation with the Edukans foundation. One of the educational projects are teacher training programs in order to implement active learning. This is done with cooperation of Edukans and the University of Amsterdam as part of the BEQUIP program which stands for Basic Education Quality Improvement Program. This program focuses on capacity building for teachers and on TTCs to create ownership for the policy of active learning and the sustainability of it (Annual Abstract, 2013; Edukans, 2014; Hoeksma & Sieswerda, 2010).
5. Methodology

5.1 Research Methods

This section focuses on how this qualitative research has been carried out and which research methods are used. It starts with a brief outline about the sample, followed by an explanation of the interviews, classroom observations and the curriculum analysis. This section concludes with how the data is analyzed, the epistemological considerations and, finally, the limitations of this research.

5.1.1 Sample

The aim of this interpretative research was to get a better understanding of how active learning is understood and implemented in Ethiopian primary education. It also tries to get a better understanding to what extent active learning is a suitable approach in the social, cultural and pedagogical context of the primary education in the country. These concepts are intertwined and therefore not independently measured. To investigate this, the research is done by involving a great variety of people (N=117): primary school teachers and directors, TTC-teachers, NGO-employees, students and other relevant people. The used data collection methods were in-depth interviews (n=40), group interviews (n=11), classroom observations (n=42) and curriculum and document analysis (n=2). All involved primary schools and the TTC were DEC-contact schools and were recruited through DEC. These data collection methods will be explained in this section.

Table 1: Total number of resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Total number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview - unstructured</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>11 (33 participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observations</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>2 (curriculum English and BEQUIP school data)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2 Interviews

During the interviews, a differentiation is made between key teachers and non-key teachers. Key teachers have received one or more trainings about active learning from DEC in cooperation with the Edukans foundation as part of the BEQUIP-program. Therefore they are followed by DEC several times a year to monitor their progression and to give (peer) feedback about their teaching. These key teachers have the task to train their peer teachers who have not received training at the schools where they are employed. The knowledge of the non-key teachers about active learning is derived from classroom observations, peer trainings, information they got from key teachers and information provided by the government about active learning.

The most important source of data in this research were the semi-structured in-depth interviews with primary school teachers, directors or vice directors and TTC-teachers. Additionally the group interviews with primary school teachers and students, as part of the BEQUIP-program, were used as background data. Finally, information gathered from other relevant stakeholders was used. The interviews stopped when theoretical saturation was reached and no new information was derived from it. After conducting all the interviews, the data is divided in three groups based on the relevance of the information for this research.

5.1.2.1 Group 1

To group 1 belong all interviewed primary school teachers, directors or vice directors and all involved TTC-teachers in Jimma and Bedele (see table 2). The respondents were employed at 9 different primary schools and 1 TTC. This group is named ‘group 1’ because the data gathered out of the interviews served as the most important data source in this research. Primary school teachers were involved because of their direct involvement with the implementation of active learning. The TTC-teachers were interviewed to get a better understanding of how active learning is implemented in primary schools and which challenges teachers are facing.

All participants were interviewed by the same researcher in comparable situations. The interviews of this group were conducted in separate rooms or classrooms at the schools where they
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

were employed and were one-on-one interviews in attendance of the translator. The majority of participants had a poor English speaking level, therefore all interviewees were asked whether they agree with the presence of a translator. All of the primary school teachers used this possibility, the TTC-teachers were interviewed without a translator as their level of English was sufficient. The translated interviews were from Oromifa or Amharic into English, depending on the preference of the participant. All participants were asked whether they agreed with the recording of the interviews for the purpose of transcribing. The minority of the primary school teachers and directors agreed in contrast to the TTC-teachers. The reason for refusing of using a voice recorder was anxiety and shyness. The duration of all interviews varied from 15 up to 60 minutes.

The last category belonging to this group are Edukans volunteers and employees who were involved in the implementation of active learning in Ethiopia. The information derived from these interviews was used to get a better understanding about how the cooperation with the primary schools started and what the role of Edukans was. The second reason was to get insight whether or not there was a difference in the intentions of the implementation by Edukans and the perceptions of the implemented policy by the teachers. For this purpose two volunteers who worked in Ethiopia and one educational specialist who worked for Edukans in Netherlands were interviewed. They were interviewed in Dutch at their homes or workplace. The interviews took between 30 and 45 minutes.

Tabel 2: Group 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Translator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured Interviews</td>
<td>Primary school teachers</td>
<td>Female: 10 Male: 5  15 Key teacher: 11</td>
<td>Yes (majority)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directors and Board-members</td>
<td>Female: 1 Male: 4  5</td>
<td>Yes (majority)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TTC-teachers</td>
<td>Female: 0 Male: 8  8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edukans-members</td>
<td>Female: 2 Male 1  3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female: 11 Male: 17 31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.1.2.2  Group 2

To group 2 belong all interviews conducted during the one-week visit of the University of Amsterdam-researchers in the context of the BEQUIP-program. The data of these interviews is used as background information in support of the information gathered out of the group 1-interviews, because they were conducted with a different purpose and were not carried out by the researcher. The aim of this one-week visit and the research was to investigate the transfer between key teachers and non-key teachers. For that purpose, there were focused group interviews conducted by two experienced researchers and employees at the same time of the University of Amsterdam. The groups consisted of only key teachers or a mixture of key teachers and non-key teachers. The minimum number of participants in these interviews was one and the maximum was 4. The duration of the interviews was about 30 minutes each and were conducted in separate rooms at the school compound. The total number of participants was 33 in 11 group interviews, all of them were primary school teachers, who were employed on five of the contact schools of DEC. These were the same schools as the involved schools in this research. Some of the participants of group 1 were also interviewed in group 2. All of the interviews were at least attended by the two researches from the University of Amsterdam and a TTC-teacher who served as a translator at the same time. On some occasions there was a second TTC-teacher present.

Students were also part of group two. Four students were interviewed with the aim to investigate how they like active learning and the lessons of their teachers, which were all involved in the interviews of this group. They were interviewed in absence of their teachers in comparable conditions on the school compound. The students were interviewed in pairs of two, attended one of the upper classes and were chosen by their teachers. This was probably a beneficial choice of the teachers themselves and has been taken into consideration in this research. Three boys and one girl were involved. They all came from educated families where at least one of the parents had a good job.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Table 3: Group 2 Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Key Teachers</th>
<th>Non-key Teachers</th>
<th>Not Specified</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Translator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Group 2 Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Translator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group interview</td>
<td>Female: 1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.2.3 Group 3

To the last group of participant belong all relevant stakeholders who were approached during the fieldwork. They all agreed to use their information in this research. This group consisted of four male participants. Two of them were sociologist at that time. One was employed at a regional educational office in west-Ethiopia and one was an employee of an NGO in Jimma which is focused on primary education. All information was obtained in the form of an informal conversation about education in Ethiopia or about the society. It had not the structure of an interview.

5.1.3 Classroom observations

Classroom observations took place between February and March 2015 in ten different schools in 43 different lessons (see table 5). Nine of these schools were the same as the schools where the interviewed participants of group 1 were employed. The aim of the observations was to get an understanding about how active learning is carried out, implemented, perceived and understood by the key teachers and how students behaved and reacted during these lessons. Non-key teachers were observed to get an idea about how key teachers used to teach before they participate in the BEQUIP-program, how active learning is understood and what the differences were between the key teachers and the non-key teachers. In the same time the behaviour of students was observed.
The observations were carried out in a structured, semi-structured and unstructured way. These three types of observations were chosen to cover as many events as possible during the lessons. The unstructured observations were used as the core source of information, the structured and the semi-structured observations were used as background information. For the structured observations a BEQUIP-observation scheme was used and for the semi-structured observation a self-composed question list was used. For the unstructured observations only notes were taken. The observations were carried out whilst sitting at the back of the classroom focusing on teacher and student behaviour while applying active learning methods, seating arrangements of the students, interaction with the teacher and the students and amongst students, (peer-)interaction, the extent to which students spoke out loud in the class and the content of it, mass-answering, working together, usage of textbooks and presence of external educational materials. The translator was present during all observation but was carrying out his job as researcher in the same time.

Eight of the observed teachers were also interviewed. The reasons why more teachers could not be interviewed and observed were the different shifts in which they were working, holiday, absence and limited time. The latter was specifically the case in Bedele. All observations were conducted in the same class visits as the end line observations for the BEQUIP-program which were carried out by an educational specialist of DEC and their duration varied by 20 minutes up to one hour. The reason no more time is spent in the classrooms is the same reason as previously mentioned, holidays and limited time. Observations could not be conducted without a native speaker translator because all lessons were in local languages. A translator was necessary to get a minimal idea of what was happening in the classrooms. For this reason the observations were conducted together with the BEQUIP-observations. There was not chosen for a full translation of the classroom events because of the limited time and capacity of the translator which was a DEC employee and researcher at the same time. The second reason was that this put more attention on what sort of non-verbal and verbal events were happening.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Table 5: Classroom observations: Implementation of Active Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Key teacher</th>
<th>Non-key teacher</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jimma</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Female: 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedele</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Female: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Male: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1.4 Curriculum analysis

The final source of information in this research was curriculum analysis conducted in one subject, English. Unfortunately, all curriculum materials were in Amharic or Oromo. For that reason the only possibility was to analyse the student books for English. The aim of the analysis was to investigate to what extent active learning is supported by the curriculum. Structured and semi-structured analysis is conducted by a self-made analysis scheme. There was no teachers guide available. The student books were composed by the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia. The books of the lower classes were composed by the Ministry of Education of Ethiopia in cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development-fund (US AID). The books for grade 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 were analysed according to the same scheme. Of every grade-year two randomly chosen chapters were analysed. At the end 12 chapters were analysed.

The structured analysis was carried out by a self-made observation form. The unstructured observation focused on whether the exercise interaction between students was supported, whether there was made use of meaningful examples for the students in the exercises and texts, if the exercises were not too abstract and had a variation and how they varied.

5.2 Data Analysis

All data is transcribed and coded according to the qualitative content analysis-method by using Atlas.ti, which is a software program for analysing qualitative data (Bryman, 2012). All the data was read and coded based on the topics of the research questions and themes derived from the theoretical framework and the interviews. Coding is done according to the process described by
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Strauss & Corbin (1990 in Bryman, 2012). The first step was open coding to categorize the data, followed by the axial coding whereby the codes were linked to each other and to contexts, for example cultural and social situations where the participant lived and worked in. Finally, the data was coded selectively whereby the categories were linked to the research questions, the ‘core category’ (Bryman, 2012). The mentioned groups were analysed in the same order, first group 1 and so on. Codes as ‘view on active learning’, ‘implementation’, ‘challenges’, ‘outcomes’, ‘implementation’, ‘role of the community, management, curriculum or NGO’, ‘training’, ‘role of cultural background of the teacher’, ‘role of cultural background of the student’ and ‘further developments of Ethiopia’ are an example of the used codes. Also non-verbal signals and interactions, for example between participants, between researcher or translator and the participants, were used in the process of analysis to get an idea about the reliability of the given information.

5.3 Epistemological Position and Ethical Considerations

Social researchers must be aware of their influence on the gathered data. During this research, I was aware that it was not possible to collect totally objective data and the influence of my presence on what I observed in the classrooms. During the data-collection process and the process of constructing theory, I was aware of my origin, social- and cultural background, position and many other factors that I could not change which have had an influence on my interpretation of the data. Therefore I allotted myself a subtle realism view, which means that I was aware of my presence in the interviews and observations and this influenced the social reality at that moment and probably before I was there. I had a role in the social reality that made my presence a part of the research (G. Moerman, college: ‘What is actually important?’ 4th of November 2013).

All participants were informed about the aim of the research, their rights to withdraw at any moment they chose, the anonymity and confidentiality of the information they gave during the interviews and my independent position as a researcher. I stressed twice in each interview that I was
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

not on behalf of the University of Amsterdam and neither on that of the Edukans foundation, so that
they could express their ideas without any fear. So did the translator.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Several limitation can be mentioned regarding this research. One of the limitations is that the
research was conducted at eleven primary schools in Ethiopia. The results deriving from this study
cannot be generalised for the Ethiopian primary education as a whole. It is aimed that this research
gives an insight in the implementation of active learning on micro level, the primary school. For a
broader generalization more schools in different regions had to be involved.

Another limitation of this research is the language. Almost all participants who were
interviewed on primary schools had a poor level of English and a translator was always necessary.
The researcher had to trust the translations of the translator. Despite the translator being very
dedicated and reliable, it was uncontrollable whether the translation was correctly interpreted or
not.

For the observations this meant that the translator had to translate the events happening in
the classroom. It was impossible to cover everything. Therefore only the headlines were translated
and eventually significant details. The advantage was that the researcher could also focus on non-
verbal expressions without hearing the content of it. A disadvantage is that the content of the lesson
could not always be understood in alignment of active learning. The latter is not seen as a limitation
actually.

Time was sometimes a limitation in this research. Part of the data-collection period was
during the holidays or after. Some students and teachers extended their holidays with one or two
weeks when the observations were planned. The implication was that sometimes a quarter of the
students was present or even less. Because the observations took place during the BEQUIP-
observations, other observations were difficult to plan without a translator. This did not diminish the
aim of the research.
Finally, the research was carried out in a turbulent time in anticipation of the governmental elections. The researcher was told by different resources that this might affect the results. The researcher had to withdraw from asking any political related questions because of the position or possible anxiety of the participants. The limitation of this factor was that some participants were afraid to answer critical questions about the policy of active learning. Especially when there was no translator present. This might have had influence on the objectivity of the data.

The presence of a translator who was an employee of DEC was not a problem at all. All participants had a very good relationship with him and had known him for years already. They could share anything with him and felt free to express any critical remarks with him.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

6. Diverse Views on Active Learning

6.1 Views on Active Learning

This section explains how several interviewed stakeholders view active learning and what it means for further developments in Ethiopia. Primary school teachers, directors, TTC-teachers and students are interviewed to provide an overview of how active learning is viewed.

6.1.1 Importance of Active Learning for Further Developments in Ethiopia

Almost all interviewees had favourable views on active learning. It stimulates the development of self-confidence, self-esteem, expression skills, critical thinking, working together, independent learning and thinking, critical thinking and assertiveness which are important future skills, as teachers argue. Active learning is very important for further developments in Ethiopia, because it assures quality education, whereby education is not abstract anymore but becomes concrete and reachable for all types of learners, as participants argue:

‘Without AL there is no learning at all. We don’t prefer to go back to the lecture method of teaching.’ (TTC-teacher, male)

Active learning ensures practical application of (non-)cognitive knowledge in real-life situations which is useful for their future jobs. It leads to well qualified critical manpower which is beneficial for the prosperity of the country in many ways, according to TTC-teachers.

Some interviewees mention that active learning requires knowledge of international scientific theories and researches. This is beneficial for the knowledge and skills of teachers. Ethiopia needs to learn from other countries regarding the development of education in international prospective. They speculated about the future contribution of Ethiopia on this scientific knowledge.

6.1.2 Definitions by Teachers and Directors

The views on active learning by key teachers and directors did not differ. Both groups consider active learning as a student-centred teaching method which involves students actively in the lessons. It is an interactive way of learning and teaching through group discussions which aims to stimulate learning
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

together. Teachers state that the implementation of active learning promotes student learning, because learners learn by peer- and group discussions and by conversations with teachers. ‘Multi-dimensional learning’, as one of the directors call it, occurs especially when students are mixed on ability-level. Multi-dimensional in this context means that students do not only use the teacher as a resource, which is the case with teacher-centred education, but by using different resources like peers, books, parents or the internet. Slow learners profit from advanced learning- and discussion skills of the fast learners and vice versa.

Moreover, teachers view active learning as a less abstract way of learning compared to teacher-centred education. Teachers use concrete materials to support the content of the lessons, like real flowers, measurement instruments and pictures. Students are ‘experiencing’ what they learn and it makes learning more easy, because it appeals to their imagination. As one of the teachers states:

‘Learners are digging out of this method.’ (Teacher grade 3, female)

The teacher refers to the consideration that active learning offers a variety of possibilities of learning for all kinds of learning styles. It leads to higher learning efficiency because teachers, as they state, build knowledge on existing knowledge.

Regarding non-cognitive knowledge, key-teachers and directors define active learning as a way of teaching that makes learners more independent of the teachers. Students have to search for knowledge by themselves which makes it their own responsibility to search for and internalize the required knowledge and skills for the task or exam. This responsibility makes students independent thinkers, according to the interviewed group.

Non-key teachers define active learning mainly as a way of teaching whereby students are working together as a group for the purpose of learning from each other, which differs from the views of key teachers and directors. They view active learning less as a multi-dimensional way of learning but more as target to reach in each lesson. The interviews show that they have limited knowledge about how to implement active learning and why they have to implement it. Therefore,
they are not able to underpin their views on active learning, other than finding it ‘good’ and ‘important’, as they name it. In other words, they do not know the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of active learning. Classroom observations, which were part of the data collection process, confirm that they have limited knowledge about what they are implementing. They explain that the teacher-centred approach is easier, less time consuming and they have more knowledge about it. Therefore the teacher-centred method works better for them.

Non-key teachers receive trainings about active learning from key teachers. This is, according to the interviewed TTC-teachers, of a lower level then the DEC-trainings without examples or practical exercises. Which is logical because key teachers are not trained to be educational trainers for peers. To reach this, key teachers should be equipped with training skills for their peers.

6.1.3 Definitions of Active Learning by TTC-teachers

TTC-teachers view active learning as a teaching technique to engage students in the lessons, subject matter and education. The role of the teacher is being a facilitator in the learning process and the creator of conditions which excite and challenge students to learn and to be interested in the subject matter. As one of the TTC-teachers state:

‘Active learning encourages students to use all their sentences to learn and to get involved in their own learning processes.’ (TTC-teacher, male)

Active learning is the way to make students independent critical thinkers with practical and well developed learning skills. This group also mentions that active learning makes students responsible for their own learning process and it makes them less shy, which is endorsed by primary school teachers as well. They get used to discussing, presenting and collaborating, which make students more assertive. This all is viewed as quality education by TTC-teachers. Though, active learning means a mind-set to switch from a teacher-centred technique to a student-centred teaching method.

According to the TTC-teachers one of the major misconceptions about active learning by primary school teachers is that active learning always has to be active. They perceive that every lesson has to contain at least a working-together-section and a group-discussions-section, whilst
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

active learning also means working active individually. Students need to be engaged in the content by providing interesting education which adapts to their interests and learning styles, no matter if they work together or individually, according to TTC-teachers.

6.1.4 Definitions by Students

In the interviews, students mainly explained their experiences with active learning. They like the interactive way of teaching, especially the use of different educational materials and strategies (e.g. worksheets, concrete materials), group discussions, participation in the lessons and the interaction with the teacher. This helps them to get a better understanding of the subject matter. Observations show that some students do like active learning, because they participate and have fun carrying out the assignments together.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

7. Outcomes

This section focuses on the (personal) outcomes of the implementation of active learning of teachers, directors, TTC-teachers and students. Key teachers feel better skilled and motivated whereas non-key teachers do not. The latter state that active learning brought inequality within the team. Furthermore the outcomes of students raised compared to groups who do not implement active learning. TTC-teachers add that students are capable to applicate knowledge in practice.

7.1.1 Teachers

All interviewed key teachers state that one of the most important personal outcomes is the feeling of being better skilled after the trainings and the implementation of active learning. They have more knowledge about the learning styles and feel capable to differentiate by using the educational needs of students. Due to these personal outcomes, teachers feel more committed and motivated. Directors also experience a more motivated and committed team. This applies more to key teachers than to non-key teachers. Non-key teachers do not experience these benefits. Their work became more time consuming and difficult, according to them.

Furthermore, teachers confirm that the results of their students raised over the past years and students are more on-task after implementing active learning, which is confirmed by research of the Edukans foundation (2015). This is due to different implications of the pedagogy, according to the teachers. First, students like active learning, because they like to experience what they are learning. Second, there is interaction within heterogeneous groups. Students from different levels exchange information and learn from each other. According to some teachers, this encourages the ‘low-level learners’ to be interested in learning and it is less abstract, which is more suitable for their learning style. This increases the results of the low-level learners and the gap between them and the higher-level students becomes smaller.

According to teachers, active learning contributes to the expression and discussion skills of students. Students learn to express their ideas and discuss them plenary and in groups. Related is the
increasing confidence which students develop as a result of active learning. Teachers, directors and TTC-teachers value this as important future skills because it makes them independent. They learn to solve problems and issues by themselves without or with limited help of teachers or others.

According to the directors there is a feasible difference visible in these skills between the group of students from teachers who are implementing active learning and those who are not. Those students are more independent and better capable to explain and express their feelings and knowledge.

Observations show that in lessons of key teachers students have to present their work plenary. Although it is mostly not spontaneous, students were capable to express themselves clearly. In a few cases some of them even raised their hand spontaneously, because they wanted to present their work. In those lessons, students were working independently on group assignments and solved questions amongst each other without or with limited consultation of the teacher. This is in contrast to lessons of non-key teachers and some observed key teachers where there is rarely interaction.

7.1.2 TTC-Teachers

TTC-teachers add that an important outcome of active learning is the practical application of knowledge. Previously, students only received (abstract) knowledge that they did not know how to apply in real life situations. Active learning ensures that students know, for example, how to measure a meter and why it is important for them to master this knowledge. Furthermore, TTC-teachers state that active learning makes students independent, because they can generate and search for their own resources to develop their knowledge.

7.1.3 Directors

The outcomes mentioned by directors correspond with what teachers state. They add that they have seen a decrease in drop-out rates of students. This is, according to them, related to increased school results of students. When students perform well, parents tend to let their children attend school. If not, students often drop-out and start working.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

One of the directors states that before the implementation of active learning, they were the worst performing school in the city. After implementing active learning and intensive schooling of their students to let them catch up with the required level, they became the best performing school in the city. He stated that this is one of the outcomes of the implementation of active learning. It is not clear if this is really due to active learning since they had a change of board and started with schooling on Saturdays. Furthermore, the community established a pedagogical centre for the students of this school with a library and computers with internet access. This could also be an explanation of the increased performance.
8. Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopian Classrooms

8.1 Implementation Profiles

This section focuses on the implementation of active learning inside and outside the classroom. Furthermore, implementation challenges are explained and this chapter concludes with the cultural relevance of active learning for Ethiopia. Remarkable in this section are the discrepancies between what the teachers elaborate on how they implement active learning and what is seen of it in practice. Teachers are able to perfectly explain how to implement active learning but in practice, they are not capable to translate their lessons into active learning.

8.1.1 Strategies of Implementation

This sub-section is classified by the used implementation strategies, starting with how teachers are trained and implement active learning based on these trainings, followed by community and finally through the curriculum.

8.1.1.1 Implementation after Teacher Training

Teachers and directors received trainings whereafter they implemented active learning in their classroom practices. Active learning was introduced at the participating schools by a collaboration between Edukans and DEC as part of the BEQUIP-program. DEC started with the training of a selected group of (TTC-)teachers and directors. Teachers were trained on how to implement active learning inside and outside the classroom, for example about how to apply work forms, how teaching tools can be used, learning styles, teaching styles, differences between traditional teaching methods and active learning, and the usage of lesson plans. Teachers were and are still being trained by experts of DEC and Edukans. After the trainings of DEC, a follow-up program takes place twice a year, after which teachers receive feedback from DEC. Also the Ethiopian government is providing trainings on active learning. According to the interviewed teachers, those trainings are only
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

theoretical without any practical examples. During the interviews and observations a variety of activities derived from the DEC-trainings were noticed.

To start with, teachers prepared their lessons according to the lesson-plan-format they received during the DEC-trainings. The lesson plans were structured, started with an introduction, instruction, working independently or in groups, group discussion and evaluation. Differentiation in ability levels was included in the format whereby teachers had to prepare their lessons in three levels. To reach differentiation in the lessons, teachers have divided their students into three ability groups at the beginning of the school year. On the basis of these lesson plans teachers chose work forms and they apply and design work sheets for each ability group. The observations and interviews have shown that teachers at least try to hold on to the lesson plans. In practice the majority of the observed instructions did not contain any differentiation on ability level. Teachers gave a one-way instruction which means that they talk and the students listen without any interaction. However, the observations have shown a few exceptions of (only) key teachers who involved students in their instructions. They asked questions of higher order and let students respond or let them give examples:

Teacher: ‘Who can give me an example when I use subtractions?’
Student: ‘When I go to the market and buy oranges.’
Teacher: ‘Very good. How do you use them?’
Student: ‘When I pay too much Birr. I need to get back the money and I subtract.’

(Teacher: Male, key teacher, grade 8, student: female)

Teachers prepared different kinds of educational materials. Most common were worksheets, pictures, questions, games and texts (in the study books) but also small stones which served as counting-tool for additions and subtractions. Teachers are trained in how to implement this in the context of active learning. In practice, worksheets were most commonly used. According to the teachers worksheets are easy to prepare and to implement, due to the limited access to educational materials. It is an effective tool to let students be on task when they work in groups and to adjust exercises to the ability level of students. By using this, each student is involved, as teachers state.
Observations have shown that certainly not all students were on task while working on worksheets. This is also confirmed by the interviewed students. They state that in practice the same students always carry out the exercise, whilst the others are just passively listening and copy the answers from peers. There is a discrepancy between what teachers think they reach and what is actually reached; a few are doing the exercise.

To make a connection between the lessons and real life-situations, pictures, drawings, maps and other concrete materials are used, as teachers state. It is implemented to make lessons less abstract and to satisfy the educational needs of the students. In practice the observations and interviews show that teachers were not accustomed to teach using concrete materials. Instead, a one-way lecture occurred. The only existing interaction was when the teacher (key teacher) asked a question and students answer in chorus:

- The teacher shows a flower to the students
- Teacher: ‘A flower has leaves and a pistil. Repeat’
- Students: ‘A flower has leaves and a pistil.’
- Teacher: ‘Again.’
  - ‘A flower has leaves and a pistil.’
  - ‘A flower has leaves and a pistil.’
  - ‘A flower has leaves and a pistil.’

*(Teacher: Male, key teacher, grade 7)*

The flower, in this example, was not used as educational tool to let the students learn by experiencing, which was one of the objectives of the lesson. It was a visual example of a flower but in the end, students did probably not know what the leaves and the pistil look like.

This kind of situations occurred several times during the observations. One of the TTC-teachers explained that teachers often lapse into their old habits of teaching the teacher-centred way. They know that these kinds of lessons do not contain active learning, but at the same time they do not know how to change the instruction into it. The observations show that a few teachers did actually knew how to translate these sorts of situations into active learning. For example, they showed a butterfly in the sub-groups in the class while the rest of
The students were carrying out an exercise about this topic. The teacher explained, asked critical questions in sub-groups and let the students ask questions. Afterwards the students made drawings of the butterfly based on what they have observed.

One of the TTC-teacher explained that this rarely occurs. The majority of the teachers only know how to implement active learning by implementing worksheets or when they use an exact example of the lesson which was carried out during the trainings. The students remain in their passive roles, unless the teachers think they are active. Due to a lack of knowledge and experience, teachers lapse back into their old habits of teaching in a teacher-centred way, as TTC-teachers state. One of the TTC-teachers described the ability of teachers to implement active learning by the following metaphor:

‘It is like learning how to drive a bicycle but you didn’t practice how to cycle. It doesn’t mean that you can drive a bicycle because you are only told how to do it.’

(TTC-teacher, male)

Teachers practice and are followed up by DEC but still the observations show that teachers find it difficult to translate their lessons into active learning lessons.

Besides the practical implementations, teachers also learn how to create a safe learning environment. Methods like clapping and giving compliments are used often. According to teachers, confident students feel more free to participate in the lessons. The observations also demonstrated that the teachers put a lot of effort in encouraging students and creating a safe learning environment by giving compliments and making students feel that they can make mistakes without fear. This idea is shared by almost all interviewed teachers.

Finally, the observations and interviews confirmed that teachers work with heterogeneous ability groups. Each group exists of six students with different ability levels. This makes, according to teachers, the transferal of knowledge between different ability levels easier. The interviews with students and the observations have shown that in practice
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

the fast learners are carrying out the exercises and the slow learners copy the answers. So, in practice there barely is a transfer of learning.

Furthermore, working individually (on a worksheet or assignment) is rarely observed during the observations. Students were almost always working together or in groups. They were only working individually when writing texts from the board into their books.

Also the training of the management has an important role in the implementation of active learning in the way of motivating teachers, providing educational materials and creating opportunities to participate in trainings. However, it is the intention of DEC and Edukans that key teachers train non-key teachers in carrying out active learning, interviews show that the majority of the managements of the involved schools do not or rarely organize such trainings.

Finally, in some cases active learning was implemented, or at least patches of it, by a few key teachers. The interviewed Edukans volunteers all confirmed that active learning is often implemented as being a target to reach in each lesson instead of a tool to improve the quality of education. They mean that active learning is often implemented by teachers because they have to unless it might not be suitable for the subject matter. In those cases teacher are driven to implement it by what is expected and not by what is suitable. Teachers are too focused on the implementation of active learning and miss the focus on why they are implementing it. According to this group a different mindset is needed in a way that teachers first focus on why they are implementing it.

8.1.1.2 Through Community Involvement

When implementing active learning, teachers and directors also involve the community by organizing meetings with parents. The schools choose influential community members who are informed about teaching methods and other school plans. This is crucial for the participation of the students in the lessons, according to the participants. If parents do not support the school plans, neither do students. Some of the involved teachers maintain written conversations with parents in the writing books of the students about the performance and behaviour of students. At their turn the community supports the schools with educational materials. Active learning requires a lot of
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

materials and financial resources, which cannot be afforded by schools themselves. Almost all teachers argue that involvement of the community is indispensable for teaching and the implementation of active learning. It is like a “symbiotic relation”: one cannot exist without the other. The community ensures (financial) recourses and other requirement, whilst the school ensures quality education for the children. In one case, the community has built a pedagogic centre with a library, computer centre and a place where activities and meetings are organized. Teachers, directors and TTC-teachers stated that for this reason it is important to include community involvement into the active learning policy.

8.1.1.3 Through the Curriculum

Another important stakeholder in the implementation of active learning is the curriculum. Due to the language barrier, only the study books for English are analysed. It shows that the English curriculum supports active learning actively by different exercises. Most common is to let students discuss with each other to provoke interaction, as picture 1 shows. Besides, the curriculum tries to make the exercises more attractive for students to provide little games (picture 2). Finally, it uses meaningful examples to activate knowledge and interest of the students (picture 3).
Teachers state that the curriculum has an important role in the implementation, because teachers guides give practical examples on how to make lessons active. They state that this is necessary for them to have concrete examples of ‘how’ and ‘what’. Also TTC-teachers state that this is needed, because, especially non key-teachers, will not implement active learning anyway due to their lack of knowledge. Not all curricula support active learning according to TTC-teachers. In those cases the teacher has to translate it into active learning activities themselves.

8.2 Implementation Challenges

The main challenges teachers face while implementing active learning are the shortage of materials and the limited access to resources like (scientific) literature and practical guides about the implementation of active learning, but also teachers guides. Furthermore class size, age difference, culture, motivation and knowledge and continuity causes problems with the implementation of active learning. Especially the cultural background is hard to cope with for teachers. As mentioned in the section on the theoretical framework, children in Ethiopia are not used to speaking up to grown-ups. This hinders the implementation, because it is based on interaction and active involvement.

8.2.1 Materials

Limited access to teaching materials is the most often mentioned challenge teachers face. It hinders them to implement active learning. It varies from stationary, like pens and writing books to lab materials for subjects as physics and chemistry. Mostly mentioned is the lack of books and teacher-guides. Teachers need teacher-guides to translate the curriculum into active learning. Directors mention that the lack of materials is mostly caused by a shortage of budget. TTC-teachers confirm that the limited access to materials is a problem in primary education. Observations confirm that the lack of materials applies for all schools but especially for those schools who are not actively involving the community. A few schools have nothing more than classrooms, a blackboard, a few desks and an office. No teaching materials are available. In those cases, the implementation of active learning is difficult and challenging. Teachers try to solve the problem by using self-made drawings, but in some
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

cases theses are far from reality. A TTC-teacher explained what the limited access to materials means in his lessons:

‘When I am explaining about mixing colours, for example primary colours, I need to show the mixing process and which colour derives. This is impossible without the needed materials like paint. How can students experience this?’

(TTC-Teacher, male)

The shortage of student books is a second challenge for teachers. The observations confirm that in none of the observed lessons all students had a student book. In most cases students had to share two books between six or eight students. Teachers and TTC-teachers state that due to this students are easily distracted which make them off-task. Besides, it is challenging for students to do their homework when they do not have books. The result is that they lag behind which has many implications till they drop-out.

Finally, lack of available seats for students is discussed by all participants as an important challenge. Some students are sitting on the ground or too many sharing a desk, which distracts them from doing their work. In addition, active learning promotes the use of different learning and teaching methods, which implies different seating arrangements for pair or group work. However, the current seating arrangement does not allow for such flexibility. In many classrooms, students are observed crammed together at uncomfortable desks.

Some of the involved schools try to fight this challenge by investing in a close relationship with the community. Observations confirmed that schools which maintain a close relationship with the community do not or to a lesser extent suffer from lack of materials. The community provides extra learning materials, seating arrangements or even school buildings or computers. Directors confirmed that the community is essential to fill the financial gap schools have.

8.2.2 Class size and Age

Class size is also an often discussed challenge by participants. The numbers of students in one classroom varies between 36 and 100. Large classes arise due to transfers of teachers whereby two
or more classes need to put together. Teachers state that they find it difficult to follow the students in these situations. They cannot move around and give feedback on the work. Observations show that teachers struggle with it, however a few teachers manage to follow the students anyway, despite the class size. They reserve more time in their lesson-plans to walk around and to give feedback. This only happens in classrooms where all students sit behind desks. Teachers mentioned that it is impossible to form groups, present group assignments or discuss. Observations confirmed that in huge classes, the majority of the students are off-task and it gets chaotic when they are working together. In those cases a teacher-centred approach is more effective, according to the teachers.

A second problem is the age and level difference between students. Some students have had preschool where they have learned the basics of counting and reading and have a lead on the rest who started their school career in grade one. Teachers have to deal with a difference in schooling level and history. Teachers mention that students who attended preschool are faster bored and distracted from work. Besides, there are children and adolescents in one classrooms. It is difficult to make education relevant for both age groups. Observations have shown that in practice adolescents know more about certain topics and need another education style then the youngsters. The result is that they get bored and demotivated.

Also students confirm that level and age hinder the implementation of active learning. Especially students from poor families do not have continuity in going to school due to a lack of financial resources or the priority of schooling by their parents. Those students fall behind and cannot come along with their peer students. The result is that they do not participate in group exercises and copy exercises from peer students. Often, they have a negative attitude towards active learning. This is considered as irritating for those who want to participate in the lessons.

Again schools which closely involve the community have extra financial resources to realize additional lessons for those students who fall behind or suffer from a knowledge gap. Observations
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

confirm that those schools have a better average student performance and a lower drop-out rate compared to schools who do not have such relationships with the community.

8.2.3 Culture and Background

The most complicated challenge teachers face is the attitude of students, parents and communities towards education and active learning, caused by their background and culture. To start with, there is a difference between the acceptance of education of students who come from rural areas and those from the cities. Students from rural areas, mostly poor, are less open to active learning. They are raised in a more traditional environment and are accustomed to and prefer traditional education, and refuse to participate actively in the lessons. This is an important challenge for teachers, because cultural background holds students back from participating. Students have learned at home that it is impolite to talk to grown-ups. When a child talks and argues to or with a grown-up, they are taken as ‘stupid’ and is perceived as impolite. Active learning is built on the opposite; interaction with teachers and students. This causes friction and teachers struggle with it because students are afraid to respond. TTC-teacher state that the implemented active learning policy is not aligned with the Ethiopian culture. They explain that the Ethiopian culture is an introvert society and active learning is an approach for extrovert societies:

‘...it (active learning) should be sometimes be more aligned to the culture. We are a very inward society, we are not an outward society. So we should design an active learning method that should Africans, because Africans are a very collective society. They are afraid to speak when many people are around. This is from the early childhood their experiences.

Our active learning methods should consider this.’

(TTC-teacher, male)

As one of the TTC-teachers stated, active learning is derived from a different culture. It is, according to him, impossible to implement it in another society without framing it to the culture. More research is needed before the implementation of such pedagogies as active learning.

Also students argue that they notice a difference in attitude towards active learning between students. Some students are struggling with the interactive elements of active learning. They are not
used to discuss with grown-ups or have low self-confidence whereby they do not participate at all. They are shy due to their earlier mentioned traditions.

A second related challenge is the difference in how boys and girls are raised. Boys are more willing to participate than girls. Girls behave more shy and hesitant. TTC-teachers explained that girls are not expected to be schooled and have to work at home and be obedient to men. This causes that girls behave different than boys inside the classroom. The enrolment of girls in education rises but they are still in the minority. This is, according to a sociologist, a sign that the society is changing and also the attitude towards education. This offers opportunities for the acceptance of active learning in the future. TTC-teachers confirmed this but there is still a long way to go towards acceptance and openness on learner-centred teaching methods.

8.2.4 Motivation and Knowledge of Teachers

Related to the previous paragraph, is the extent to which teachers feel comfortable to receive feedback on their teaching. Part of the trainings and follow ups is receiving feedback from peer-teachers or experts of DEC. Teachers state that they do not feel comfortable with giving and receiving feedback. This affects their motivation and willingness to allow peer-teachers into their lessons which is a key-principle of the DEC-trainings. Teachers relate this to their societal rules. They are not used to giving and receiving feedback and consider it as impolite to be critical about someone’s actions. TTC-teachers and also teachers, when asked off the record, confirm that observations and feedback-moments between teachers rarely take place because they do not feel comfortable doing this.

The second factor which influences the motivation of teachers is inadequate trainings. The trainings are sufficient for a considerable minority to implement active learning. The majority experience a lack of knowledge about or experience with implementing active learning and often they lapse back into traditional teaching methods. Teachers argued that they received trainings twice a year but this is insufficient. Teachers state they need more training to get a real understanding of how active learning should be implemented.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Also the difference in trained teachers is an influencing factor. Key teachers are supported to attend trainings while non-key teachers are not due to a lack of budget. This causes inequality within the team. One of the non-key teachers argued that they are perceived as less capable by the board and key teachers. Due to the absence of (peer-) training for non-key teachers, the knowledge gap within the teachers increases. This has a very demotivating effect on the implementation of active learning as some teachers argued.

Moreover, active learning is time consuming, especially the preparations of the lessons. Teachers in Ethiopia only get paid for the actual time they are teaching and not the additional time they spend to prepare. Some of the interviewed teachers are demotivated because they invest a lot of free time in the preparation of their lessons. Some teachers have additional jobs and do not have enough time to prepare their lessons properly.

8.2.5 Training and Continuity

Elaborating on the previous section, teachers perceive the continuity of active learning as one of the major challenges. It is challenging that active learning is not broadly implemented throughout the school, because not all teachers have the knowledge and skills to implement it. This is confusing for students. In one lesson they have to participate and to be involved in active learning and in the following lessons they have to sit and listen. It is also challenging for teachers, because they have to invest a lot of effort and time in the participation of students. TTC-teachers also confirm that this is a problem.

To conclude with, one of the other challenges key teachers face is that all training tools and materials are in English. Some of the participants do not even speak English. It is difficult to improve their knowledge through learning material which are not in their language.

8.3 Cultural Relevance of Active Learning

In general, participants argue that active learning is relevant in the Ethiopian context providing that it will be aligned with the Ethiopian culture. For example, different TTC-teachers mentioned that this is
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

caused by the fact that the policy originally was developed in ‘Western societies’, as they named it, where community life has a less important role and children are used to having discussions with teachers and grown-ups. Moreover, as earlier stated, the community involvement which is very important in Ethiopia is not represented in the active learning policy. The active learning policy which is implemented in its current form is not suitable for the Ethiopian context.

To solve this problem there are two important changes needed. First, the Ethiopian society needs to change and that process has already started. Communities, parents and teachers have to teach the children to be critical human beings and to develop self-confidence as TTC-teachers argued. In the end this is a parents’ responsibility. To effectuate this, parents need to change their views on nurturing. As a result, this can only be changed by societal impact, views and rules, and in the end, through education.

On the side of the policy of active learning one very important change is needed. The active learning policy has to be aligned with the Ethiopian culture. One of the participants mentioned that it is impossible to implement policy from one culture to another without research on the cultural differences. Research carried out in advance could forestall implementation problems at the moment of implementation, as this participant argued. He mentioned that every implementation starts with a context research and analysis. Research on the cultural differences after the implementation is not ideal but can ensure changes in the policy. Changes which are more aligned with the Ethiopian context, culture and society. The main problem is, he addressed, that Ethiopia is a ‘collective’ but inward society, while the active learning policy is based on an outward individual society. This causes fundamental contradictions. In addition, Ethiopia is a vast country with many sub-cultures. Even within the different parts of the country research is needed, because there is a significant difference between areas. Cities are mostly more developed than rural areas.

Is it a relevant approach? The majority says ‘yes’ because it brings change and improvement of education. It brings new insights and rethinking of the educational policy (and society). Is it suitable? The next paragraph will answer that question.
9. Conclusion

Conspicuous in this research is that there are three major challenges which have a hindering effect on the implementation of active learning; practical limitations, limited knowledge and insufficient training, and cultural rules. Additionally, there are discrepancies between what teachers say they do and what is observed in practice. This has been researched through unstructured interviews with teachers, directors, TTC-teachers and through observations. This shows that active learning in its current form is not aligned with the Ethiopian cultural and social context. Besides, teachers show a lack of ownership over the policy. This concluding section explains these findings and link them with broader theories. The main research question will be answered, recommendation will be made and suggestions for further research will be given.

9.1 Main Findings

The research shows that there are different factors which make the implementation of active learning challenging. Most frequently mentioned is the shortage of educational materials, for example the presence of student books and teacher guides. Active learning requires concrete materials to make the subject matter meaningful to the students and create the opportunity to connect the subject matter with real-life situations. This is often caused by a lack of budget of the schools. The result is that students are off task, because the subject matter is too abstract or teachers lapse back into the teacher centred approach. Not only budget is a challenge, as class size is also often mentioned. It is impossible to follow students, form groups, conduct discussions, differentiate or give presentations with high numbers of students. The problem of class size and the limitation of available materials occur in different sub-Saharan countries and in developing countries outside this area. In several studies this is mentioned as a limitation that has an important negative influence on the implementation of qualitative good education (Altinyelken, 2010; Schweisfurth, 2011; Sriprakash, 2010; Vavrus, 2009). Both these mentioned studies took place in other sub-Saharan
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

countries and this research shows that the reduction of class size and the access to educational materials are one of the conditions to deliver quality education.

Besides these practical challenges, continuity and training also hinder the implementation of active learning. Not all teachers are well trained in implementing active learning. Key teachers have received training but non-key teachers did not. This causes inequality within the teaching teams which has a negative influence on the motivation of non-key teachers. Also the lack of continuity and adequacy of the trainings hinder the implementation of active learning. Within one school, a few teachers implement active learning, or parts of it, and the majority does not. This is confusing for students which results in not participating in the lessons or even rejection of active learning. Finally, active learning is time consuming because teachers need to prepare their lessons carefully in advance. Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) argue that teachers in many other sub-Saharan countries only get paid for the time they are teaching and not for the preparation of lessons. Teachers have to find additional jobs and this has an undermining effect on the motivation. The same applies for the difference in capacity between key teachers and non-key teachers. This difference ensures lower job expectations of non-key teachers which has also an undermining effect on their motivation to implement active learning. Regarding key teachers, their limited knowledge about active learning ensures a lack of support, ownership and motivation to implement active learning in the way it is intended in the policy (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

Finally, social and cultural rules have a considerable influence on the implementation of active learning. To start with, students are not always willing to participate in the lessons and to interact with the teacher because they are raised by the idea that talking to a grown up is impolite which Serbessa (2006) confirms. Active learning is originated in Western societies with a more individualistic approach on education, whereas in Ethiopia it is more collective as TTC-teachers argued and different studies endorse (Preece, 2013; Serbessa, 2006). This research shows that educational policy, like active learning, should evolve from the culture of the country of implementation. In its current form, active learning is not aligned with the Ethiopian culture and
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

society, because it requires interaction between student and teacher which is considered by the participants as not suitable for the Ethiopian context. One of the problems teachers face is that students are hesitant to participate in the lessons due to cultural rules. Policy makers need to be aware of local circumstances and contextual factors, like culture, social rules or practical limitation, that might influence the implementation. The involvement of local expertise can be helpful to get a better understanding of the complexity of certain educational contexts. One on one implementation of active learning from one culture into another does not work, nor for the Ethiopian context which is confirmed by different studies (Bermingham, 2011; Preece, 2013; Tabulawa, 2003).

Conspicuous in this research is that there is a discrepancy noticed between what teachers say they do and what is observed in practice. Teachers and other participants were able to tell how they view active learning and how they implement it. They were able to describe how active learning should be implemented, the ideal situation. The practice differed considerably from how teachers described their lessons. A few key teachers were able to realize active learning through differentiation, well-facilitated discussions, working together-sessions and translate the subject matter into real-life situations. In practice the majority of both key teachers and non-key teachers often lapse back into mass-answering and a teacher-centred methods. Generally, the majority has very limited and only theoretical knowledge about active learning and does not know how to translate it into practice, which is also argued by Serbessa (2006).

The question that arises is how is it possible that practices differ considerably from what participants say they do? The answer to this question can be sought in the environmental, social and cultural circumstances. Teachers have limited knowledge about active learning and how to implement it. Practice shows that they have too little practical experience to implement it in a qualitative good way. The combination of these two elements, the lack of teaching materials and the sometimes high number of students make that teachers lose motivation and/or lapse back into their deeply ingrained traditional teaching methods as Tabulawa (1997) and Serbessa (2006) argue.
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

Second, the difference between what teachers say they do and what they actually implement can be explained by social desirable answers they probably have given during the research. For the implementation of active learning, which is part of the BEQUIP-program, the participants are highly dependent on funding. As a researcher I was and am connected to the University of Amsterdam which is, together with Edukans, supporting the implementation of active learning in the researched schools. Unless I emphasised my independent position time after time, teachers could probably not see me as an independent researcher. Moreover, I travelled with a staff member of DEC. Despite the trustful relationship he had with many teachers, his presence could have had an influence on how participants responded to my, sometimes critical, questions. In addition on this explanation, the positive outcomes of the implementation of active learning mentioned by teachers could also be questionable, since it is poorly implemented. It could be that participants were talking about the perceived ideal outcomes or about the outcomes they learned active learning could have, provided that it is well implemented.

Third, the answer can be sought on the global level of educational policy transfer. Steiner-Kahmsi (2011) argues in different case studies that most educational systems are dependent on loans or funds from external aid organisations. Specifically certain educational strategies, like active learning, can only be implemented by funding and are only made available if certain conditions, agendas and timeframes of the funders are met. Those implemented educational strategies are often the preferences of funders and originate from their ‘home’ countries which is confirmed by different studies (Edwards Jr., 2012; Steiner-Kahmsi, 2011; Tota, 2014). The same applies for the conclusion of this research. The involved schools are depended on the funds, expertise and training they receive from DEC and Edukans to make active learning possible. This is a factor which cannot be left out of consideration and might explain why there is a discrepancy between what teachers describe they do and what is actually visible in practice. They do not want to lose funding by being too critical about the implementation of active learning. Some participants were able to express critical notes,
especially TTC-teachers which was of great value for a reliable research. Teachers, though, were rarely critical.

The participants were generally able to describe what active learning means and pretend ownership over the policy. The discrepancy between what they say they do and what is observed in practice shows a lack of ownership over the active learning policy by teachers. The differences are caused by a lack of knowledge and experience but also by (practical) issues of the local context which hinders the implementation process. As long as the local conditions, experiences and expertise are not taken into account in the designing and implementation process of educational policy and as long the funders agenda is leading in the implementation process, ownership is hard to realize and discrepancies will exist as Higgins & Rwanyange (2010) argue. These are all arguments which address the conclusion of this research that active learning in its current form, is not suitable for the Ethiopian context. More time and effort is needed to transform the policy into a suitable approach.

9.2 Recommendations

The first recommendation which addresses the conclusion of this research is given by Tabulawa (2003) who argues that as long as active learning is implemented as a proved universalized approach on education, local indigenous pedagogies and knowledge are marginalized and the ‘potential’ of these pedagogies are not researched yet (p. 22). The first step that has to be taken is recognizing local indigenous approaches on education or at least take them into account with the development and implementation of educational pedagogies originated from the Western world. It should be investigated if these approaches of education complement each other in a way. Education is a matter of specific contexts from the past and the present. The next sub-sections are recommendations for the researched context in Jimma and Bedele.

9.2.1 Reconsideration of the Active Learning Policy

The research shows that social and cultural rules, and practical limitations are one of the challenges which hinders the implementation of active learning on the researched schools. To overcome this, a
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

reconsideration of the already implemented policy is needed whereby these challenges are closely examined and serve as starting point. It seems that this has not, or at least minimal, been taken into consideration when the implementation process of active learning started in Jimma and Bedele. The research shows that TTC-teachers were able to express critical notes and underpin them with broader issues regarding the Ethiopian society. It is recommendable to involve this group as ‘experts of local primary education’ as also Tabulawa (2003) suggests. They master the indigenous approaches on education and could connect them with the principles of active learning and broader theories.

9.2.2 Teacher Training

Regarding teacher training three recommendations will be made. The first is, building on the previous recommendation, that the teacher training should also focus on how teachers should cope with on one hand progressive pedagogies and on the other hand the cultural and social rules which causes the implementation challenges as is suggested by Preece (2013) and Tabulawa (1997). The research shows that teachers struggle with their position between the progressive active learning pedagogy and students who refuse to participate in the lessons due to (traditional) social rules. Training could contribute to how teachers make bridges between these contradicting factors.

The second recommendation regards the training of non-key teachers which are carried out by key teachers. The research shows that these trainings are insufficient and are very occasionally taking place. Moreover, part of the key teachers have even not enough knowledge and capacity to implement active learning their selves. It is recommendable to train all teachers in the researched schools to provide quality training for all. It would also have a positive effect on the continuity for students and to prevent inequality within the schools. This has possibly positive effects on job expectations, commitment and motivation of non-key teachers as Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) suggest.

The discrepancy between what teachers tell they do and what they actually carry out is caused by the fact that they have limited knowledge about how active learning should be
implemented. The majority of the teacher were able to describe the ideal situation. This means that more training is needed on how to translate the theory into class practices.

Besides, some of the interviewees pointed that the level of English is low of majority of the teachers whereby they do partly understand the content of the training materials. It would be is necessary to translate training materials into the local languages wherefore they could understand the full content.

9.2.3 Ownership over the Policy

Investment in ownership of the policy by teachers is necessary. This can be reached by involving teachers in designing and implementation processes of the active learning policy to make them feel owner of what they implement in the classrooms as Higgins & Rwanyange (2010) argue. Therefore, it is recommendable to involve a few of the teachers who are able to implement active learning in a successful way as ‘experts of practice’. They know the practice and have undergone the process of making active learning to a success with all the challenges they faced.

Moreover, active learning requires time for preparation which is included in the tasks of the involved teachers but is not included in their salary. They only get paid for the actual time of teaching. Since teachers need more preparation time, this is not appropriate anymore. Moreover, it has an impact on their motivation and commitment to implement active learning in a successful way. To ensure the quality of the implementation of active learning, extension of paid working hours is needed.

9.3 Further Research

- It would be interesting to research the role and attitude of parents and communities towards active learning in combination with their social and cultural rules. This group has an important influence on the implementation process but is not researched for the purpose of this research. It would be interesting to verify whether the conclusions which are made in
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

this research about how children are raised are correct and what the impact is on the implementation of active learning.

- Teachers mentioned that one of the outcomes of active learning is the improvement of future skills of students. Active learning provokes practical application of knowledge and expression skills. It would be interesting to research if active learning in Ethiopia really contributes to the development of these skills. This research shows how it is valued, but is it of value in an inward society as Ethiopia? Is there room for an extrovert people in an ‘introvert’ society, as one of the TTC-teachers named it, and what will be the impact of it? Is active learning of value for the Ethiopian society?
10. References


The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia


The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia


The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia


The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia


Appendix

Appendix 1: Interviews

Teachers

1. Background questions

Educational level?

Age?

1. For how long are you teaching in primary education?

2. Which grade are you teaching?

3. What is the number of students you teach in your class?

2. Perceptions on active learning

4. What is active learning for you? How would you define it?

5. In what ways do you think it can improve student learning?

6. What outcomes did you expect in advance?

(7. Do you think the school management supports active learning as well?)

(8. Do you think other teachers will also be supportive of active learning?)

- Are all teachers using it?

3. Classroom practices/implementation

9. Can you describe me an usual lesson? How do you teach? How are the lessons ordered?

10. Which materials are you using in your lessons?

11. Are the students divided in groups? If yes, based on what are they formed?

12. Do the curricular materials address the needs of the students?
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

13. How do you practice active learning? What do you do differently?

- What is your role as a teacher?
- What is the role of the students? (Listening and noting or responding to questions and participation?)

→ Communication, behavior, difference boys and girls etc.

14. How do you encourage participation of students in the lessons? Do you find it important?

15. How would you describe the reaction of students on active learning? Do you think they like it? Why would they?

- Are they hazardous to speak out loud or collaborate with classmates, or do they communicate freely in the classes and with their classmates?

16. What outcomes do you notice as result of active learning?

17. Are learning materials available/affordable for all students?

18. What does the implementation of active learning mean for future developments in Ethiopia?

- Do students learn more? Do student participate more?

4. Training

19. What kind of training did you receive before implementing it in your classes?

- How many days? Format and so on?

20. Were you pleased with the training?

21. Were there things that missed during the training?

22. After the training, did you feel that you were prepared to implement it?
23. When you started with using active learning, did you feel comfortable with it?

24. Is/was active learning corresponding with the way you prefer to teach?

25. Are you feeling now better skilled when you use active learning?

26. Do you think you have sufficient knowledge to carry out active learning (after the trainings)?

5. Suggestions:

27. If you were asked to improve active learning, how would you do it? What aspects of it would you change?

28. In Uganda AL is not always suitable for the cultural pedagogical context where children live in (due to how they are raised etc.) Do you encounter similar problems in Ethiopia? What is a more cultural relevant policy in de Ethiopian pedagogical context?

29. If you could change anything in active learning or in the policy. What would it be?
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

**Management**

**1. Background:**

1. What is your educational background and work experience as a director/teacher?
2. For how long have you been working in this function (at this school)?
3. Could you tell me something about the background of the students at this school (in general)?
4. How did you get involved in this project of active learning?

**2. Perceptions**

5. How would you define active learning?
6. Do you think active learning helps the teachers with being a better skilled teacher?

**3. Implementaiton**

7. How do you support the implementation of active learning?
8. What is your role in stimulating the use/implementation of active learning?
9. How do you ensure that teacher have sufficient knowledge/skills for carrying out active learning? Are there trainings provided?
10. Which challenges/obstacles do teachers encounter with implementing active learning?
11. Who is providing learning materials/recourses for carrying out active learning?

  - Are they sufficient?
12. What are the further needs of this school in carrying out active learning?
13. What does the implementation of active learning mean for future developments in Ethiopia?
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

3. Training

14. What kind of training did you receive before implementing it in your classes?
15. Were you pleased with the training?
16. Were there things that missed during the training?
17. After the training, did the teachers feel prepared to implement it?

5. Outcomes

18. What outcomes/results do you notice resulting from active learning (for students)?
19. Do you think active learning improves the quality of education/learning?

6. Suggestions

20. If you were asked to improve active learning, how would you do it? What aspects of it would you change?
21. In Uganda AL is not always suitable for the cultural pedagogical context where children live in (due to how they are raised etc.) Do you encounter similar problems in Ethiopia? What is a more cultural relevant policy in de Ethiopian pedagogical context?
22. If you could change anything in active learning or in the policy. What would it be?
23. What does active learning mean for further (educational) developments in Ethiopia?
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

**NGO**

1. **General information**
   1. What is your function/role within this organization?
   2. For how long you have been working here?

2. **Why active learning**
   3. Why (DEC) is interested in active learning?
   4. Why do you think active learning is important?
   5. What purpose is expected to reach with active learning in education?
      - In what ways do you think it can improve learning?
   6. What obstacles/challenges could be encountered by teachers in carrying out active learning?

3. **How they implement**
   8. What is and has been the role of this organization by implementing active learning on primary schools?
   7. Do you think all teachers are implementing active learning?
   8. Which challenges/obstacles in general are envisioned by the implementation of active learning? (By schools, NGO’s, government, etc.)

9. What was the situation at schools before active learning was implemented?
10. What is the role of the government in implementing active learning?
11. What is the role of international organizations by implementing active learning?
The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

4. Support teachers and schools

12. How does the organization ensure that active learning is well implemented everywhere?

13. Who is providing resources/materials for carrying out active learning?

14. How does this organization ensure teachers and the management have sufficient knowledge and skills for carrying out active learning?
   - Are trainings provided?

15. How do you train teachers and support schools?

16. Do you think such training is sufficient?

5. Outcomes

17. What outcomes do see as a result of active learning?

6. Background

18. What are the general values with which children are raised here in Ethiopia? How should they behave, act, talk, and behave towards adults. What is important?

19. In Uganda they experience that AL is not always suitable for the cultural pedagogical context where children live in (due to how they are raised etc.) Do you encounter similar problems in Ethiopia?

20. Does active learning a suitable approach of teaching if you take the Ethiopian pedagogical and cultural context in mind?

7. Suggestions

21. If you could change anything in active learning or in the policy. What would it be?
22. What does active learning mean for further (educational) developments in Ethiopia?
De observatieschema’s zijn afkomstig uit van der Meer (2014). De schema’s zijn gebruikt in het kader van het BEQIP-project ter evaluatie van de implementatie van actief leren op teacher trainer colleges in Ethiopië.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher activities</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Very good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lesson planning</td>
<td>No lesson plans</td>
<td>Objective stated but no clear link with activities and methods</td>
<td>Objective stated and clear. Link with activities methods and evaluation</td>
<td>Objective clear, SMART. Activities, methods &amp; evaluation carried out according to lesson plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Attention drawn to real life practice</td>
<td>No connection with life of students</td>
<td>Occasionally connection</td>
<td>Frequent connection</td>
<td>Frequent and appropriate connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Subject matter /content</td>
<td>Frequent mistakes are observed</td>
<td>Occasionally mistakes are made</td>
<td>In general subjects are introduced properly</td>
<td>Teacher shows mastery of subject matter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Questioning and answering</td>
<td>Teacher (almost) only asks closed questions (yes –no) (true –false)</td>
<td>Teacher occasionally asks open questions (how ..., why...)</td>
<td>Teacher frequently asks open questions (how ..., why...)</td>
<td>Teacher asks open questions (how ..., why...) allowing students to think and explore subject.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Assessing students’ work in the classroom</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Observed occasionally using 1 method</td>
<td>Observed occasionally using different methods.</td>
<td>Observed frequently using different methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Encouraging learners’ confidence</td>
<td>Discouraging</td>
<td>No specific attention observed towards encouraging or discouraging</td>
<td>Occasionally encouraging students, no discouraging</td>
<td>Encouraging students on a regular basis, at individual and group level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Classroom management</td>
<td>Poor organization</td>
<td>insufficient logical mgt of student tasks (e.g.: group work without group)</td>
<td>Organization facilitates on task behavior at individual and group</td>
<td>Responsibility for learning is delegated to students. Well organized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Implementation of Active Learning in Ethiopia

| 8. Concept building | Very abstract | Some concrete examples | In general subjects and concepts are introduced in a concrete way | Concept building done systematically; e.g.: from concrete to abstract/familiar to unfamiliar |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Student activity</strong></th>
<th><strong>Weak</strong></th>
<th><strong>Moderate</strong></th>
<th><strong>Good</strong></th>
<th><strong>Very Good</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Variety of learning activities.</td>
<td>No variation.</td>
<td>1 or 2 learning activities (besides listening and mass-answering)</td>
<td>3 or 4 learning activities (besides listening and mass-answering)</td>
<td>More than 4 learning activities (besides listening and mass-answering)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning activities are linked</td>
<td>No connection to objective</td>
<td>Weak connection to objective</td>
<td>Moderate connection to objective</td>
<td>Good connection to objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Student textbook ratio (check availability)</td>
<td>0 –25 %</td>
<td>26 –50 %</td>
<td>51 –75%</td>
<td>75 –100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Active use of textbooks</td>
<td>no usage textbooks</td>
<td>Occasional use</td>
<td>Frequent use</td>
<td>Full use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students work actively with educational materials</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Observed occasionally (for 5 minutes)</td>
<td>Observed frequently (for 5 to 10 minutes)</td>
<td>Actively for more than 10 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Educational resources (textbooks / educational materials) linked to objective.</td>
<td>No connection to objective</td>
<td>Weak connection to objective</td>
<td>Moderate connection to objective</td>
<td>Good connection to objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Participation during 'work in groups'</td>
<td>Only a few students participate</td>
<td>There is discussion but only some are doing the work</td>
<td>Most of the learners are actively involved</td>
<td>All learners are actively involved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3: Semi-structured observation questions

1. Hoe betrekt de leerkracht de leerlingen in de les?
2. Hoe beantwoorden leerlingen vragen met betrekking tot de lesstof? Spontaan/uit het hoofd geleerd
3. Is er een verschil in wie een beurt krijgt? Overwegend jongens/overwegend meisjes /geen verschil
4. Hoe is de klas ingedeeld? Homogeen/heterogeen → O.b.v. niveau/geslacht/leeftijd
5. Worden leerlingen gevraagd naar persoonlijke mening/ideeën of wordt gevraagd naar wat zij geleerd hebben?
6. Hoe communiceren leerlingen met de leerkracht? Gelijkwaardig/ongelijkwaardig
7. Hoe communiceert de leerkracht met de leerlingen? Gelijkwaardig/ongelijkwaardig
8. Wordt samenwerking/overleg met andere leerlingen aangemoedigd?
9. Worden leerlingen aangemoedigd tot samenwerken?
10. Hoe vaak stellen leerlingen spontaan vragen aan de leerkracht?
11. Wat is de aard van de vraag? (verheldering/opmerking/correctie/aanvulling)
12. Steken leerlingen spontaan hun hand op als ze een antwoord weten of geeft de leerkracht beurten?
13. Stellen de leerlingen klassikaal vragen?
14. Hoe benaderen leerlingen de leerkracht?
15. Hoe gedragen andere leerlingen zich wanneer een andere leerling klassikaal praat? 19. Hoeveel leerlingen telt de klas?
16. Wat is de sfeer in de klas? (relaxed/autoritair/chaotisch/gestructureerd)
17. Welke leermiddelen zijn er in de klas aanwezig?
18. Welke leermiddelen hebben de leerlingen zelf tot hun beschikking?
### Appendix 4: Structured curriculum observation form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weak</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betekenisvol – Connectie met real life situations? Is de methode ontworpen voor de specifieke context van Ethiopië?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimuleren samenwerken peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimuleren actief individueel werk – wordt de individuele leerling uitgedaagd actief te werken?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimuleren interactie leerkracht</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimuleren klassikale interactie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wordt de student uitgedaagd om kritisch te denken</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoe worden concepten uitgelegd?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zijn de oefeningen uitdagend voor de doelgroep?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflectief vermogen van studenten wordt gestimuleerd</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentatie skills en/of discussie skills van studenten worden ontwikkeld</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Studenten worden uitgedaagd alternatieve informatiebronnen te raadplegen naast het boek

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3 of meer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Studenten worden</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>uitgedaagd alternatieve</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>informatiebronnen te raadplegen naast het boek</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abstract – concreet**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Hoe wordt de stof geconcretiseerd voor de leerling?

Is er spraken van enkel tekst of wordt dit afgewisseld met afbeeldingen?

Zijn er voornamelijk open of gesloten vragen?

Hoe is het hoofdstuk ingedeeld? Is er spraken van een (logische) indeling?

Is er afwisseling tussen de lessen binnen het hoofdstuk?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Worden de doelen van het hoofdstuk duidelijk gemaakt aan de leerling?

Komt de inhoud van het hoofdstuk overeen met de het onderwerp?

Welke verschillende soort oefeningen zijn te onderscheiden in het hoofdstuk? (invul, schrijf, lees, etc.)