English as a Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs and Challenges in Mixed-Ability Classrooms

Solomon Woldetensay Shifaw[1*], Berhanu Bogale Haile[2]

[1*](corresponding author) PhD Candidate, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *Solomonethio2013@ gmail.com*
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. *bbogale@gmail.com*

Article info	Abstract
	Students studying English as a foreign language have a wide range of abilities, motivations, needs, and educational backgrounds. Due to such variations, teachers face difficulties in teaching mixed-ability classes. The study sought to examine EFL teachers' beliefs and the challenges of teaching mixed-ability classrooms. A descriptive survey research design, along with mixed-methods approach, was employed to address the research questions. Through availability sampling technique, 44 English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) teachers from three secondary schools were selected and filled out the questionnaires. Four EFL teachers voluntarily participated in the interviews. Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis were utilized to analyze the quantitative and the qualitative data, respectively. The study results revealed that the participants had minimal knowledge of strategies to manage mixed-ability classes. Besides, most participants believed in using a whole-class teaching approach rather than helping weaker students. Regarding materials issues, the participants believed in using textbooks as the only resource to teach mixed-ability classrooms. With varying degrees of seriousness, the instructional challenges facing EFL teachers were teaching and learning, motivation, and interest, followed by materials, classroom management, and participation. The study results imply that English teachers should have access to professional development opportunities in order to improve their pedagogical as well as psychological readiness to teach mixed-ability classrooms.

Keywords: beliefs, EFL teachers, instructional challenges, mixed-ability classrooms |

Introduction

Mixed-ability classrooms are those which include students with a variety of skills, reasons for learning English, needs, interests, educational backgrounds, learning styles, anxiety, and experiences (Bremner, 2008). Among the usual instructional challenges that EFL teachers encounter, in teaching mixed-ability classes (MACs) seems the most serious one. According to the body of research, teachers face challenges since they are not equipped with the skills and strategies necessary to engage with students of different capacities. Xanthou and Pavlou (2010) claimed that teachers do not have access to the training programs necessary to address these difficulties. While attempting to enable all students to learn and flourish, this heterogeneity may put teachers in difficult situations (Ur, 2011). The subject of research has been how teachers should manage MACs (Tomlinson, 2005). However, there is still a lack of focus on training and equipping teachers to accommodate students with varying skills levels in real teaching environments. In this regard, the textbook, for example, does not help teachers differentiate the contents to deal with MACs, as Perera (2010) explained. The majority of English teachers usually try to solve the problem by "teaching the average", which fails to address advanced students while leaving slow learners struggling.

According to Al-Shammakhi and Al-Humaidi (2015) and Reed (2004), teachers do not teach all student levels; instead, they focus on the average student while neglecting the advanced and struggling groups. In addition, Reed (2004) asserts that medium-level instruction demotivates advanced students and makes them lag farther behind, while stronger students are not challenged and become disinterested in learning. Teaching MACs may provide a challenge in terms of understanding the scenario and providing each student with equal attention.

Studies that have been done abroad on the difficulties faced by EFL teachers in MACs (e.g., Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi, 2015; Gustiani, 2019) indicated that teachers face difficulties in classroom management, teaching and learning, materials, participation, and motivation and interest. In particular, Xanthou and Pavlou (2010) noted that it can be difficult for teachers to give students in MACs engaging, stimulating, and demanding materials, or activities. Some students may find lessons, or exercises, too simple, while others may find them challenging (Mirani & Chunawala, 2015). However, numerous studies, including (Xanthou & Pavlou, 2010; Syathroh et al., 2019) have shown that textbooks are prepared at grade level, so they are appropriate for some groups of students and inappropriate for other groups. Additionally, Ur (2011) pointed out that it might be quite difficult to find and choose activities and materials that are appropriate for the students' various degrees of language proficiency in MACs. Besides, large class size and their time-

consuming nature have been identified by Loiacono and Allen (2008) as some of the issues faced by EFL teachers in MACs.

Some of the difficulties faced by English teachers include knowledge of MACs teaching strategies and inadequate training in dealing with students' various levels of language proficiency and learning needs (Kantor, 2011; Loiacono & Allen, 2010; Mathews-Aydinli & Horne, 2006; Morris, 2008). In addition, one of the difficulties faced by MACs has been demonstrated to be the incapability to adapt materials to suit students with varying language proficiency levels.

A belief is a statement that can be maintained consciously, or unconsciously, and it serves as a direction for behavior and thought, which tends to be evaluative in that it is given emotional commitment because a person believes it to be true (Borg, 2001). Similarly, Zheng (2009) emphasizes that knowledge of teachers' beliefs is essential to understanding their methods, pedagogies, and thought processes. Ghaith (2004), on the other hand, explained that teacher' viewpoints are a comprehensive understanding of many elements connected to ideas about education, teaching, curricula, and the teaching profession in general, which influences pedagogical goals.

The scholarly viewpoints mentioned above lead us to the conclusion that EFL teachers' belief systems can influence their pedagogical approaches in teaching MACs. More precisely, their beliefs may have a direct impact on lesson preparation, classroom management, and the choice of instructional materials for students with varying levels of motivation, interest, and language competency. Guerra and Wubbena (2017) clarified the complicated connection between concepts and actions, which supports the aforementioned problem. This is why the researchers of this study want to find out what EFL teachers think about MAC instruction. To the researchers' best knowledge, very few studies were done locally in the area of teaching MACs. Demissie and Gezahagn (2023), for example, investigated the difficulties English language teachers encountered when instructing MACs at a few secondary schools in the southern Ethiopia: Gamo Zone. The study reported that the challenges that EFL teachers faced were teacher, student, and material-related challenges. Similarly, Gedamu and Gezahegn (2022) investigated how English language teachers at Arba Minch Town secondary schools viewed multi-grade teaching methods. Aside from the two previously mentioned studies, the researchers were unable to find any other local studies about the beliefs and difficulties faced by English language teachers when teaching MACs in Ethiopian secondary schools. Especially, studies about MACs have not been conducted in Amhara National Regional State, Dessie City Administration secondary schools context. This seems robust evidence which indicates the issue of MACs is not sufficiently examined in the target area of the study. There seems a knowledge gap, or absence of sufficient empirical evidence, regarding the

issue at hand. This study may contribute to filling such a contextual gap. The researchers felt that it was worthwhile to conduct additional research on MAC instructions to obtain further insights especially within the context of the target area of this study.

In order to help in-service EFL teachers use data-driven remedial strategies when teaching MACs, it is necessary to look into the beliefs teachers hold and the instructional challenges they encounter. Examining the problem of MACs is especially essential because it is an unavoidable occurrence in every EFL setting. Additionally, by providing local teacher education institutions with useful feedback, the study may help them reassess their MAC teaching curricula and raise pre-service trainees' knowledge of the instructional challenges of MACs. Finally, the researchers felt that the results expected from this study would help look into EFL teachers' continuous professional development directions emphasizing MACs instruction. Examining the beliefs and difficulties faced by EFL teachers in secondary schools MACs was the main objective of this study. The following research questions were addressed in the study.

1. What beliefs do secondary school EFL teachers hold about teaching mixed-ability classes?
2. What instructional challenges do secondary school EFL teachers encounter in teaching mixed-ability classes?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Definitions of Mixed-Ability Classes (MACs)

Scholars describe MACs in a variety of ways. Certain definitions associate them with multilevel, or heterogeneous classrooms, when students exhibit distinct differences in achievement and level of language proficiency. Bremner (2008) pointed out that students in MACs have a variety of learning preferences and styles in addition to differing skill levels. MACs are classrooms where students' language proficiency varies. According to Banstola (2023), students in MACs exhibit a range of competency levels in a number of categories, including grammatical understanding, vocabulary size, pronunciation command, fluency and accuracy work, receptive and productive skills, and other areas. Moreover, multilevel classes, or MACs, are classrooms in which students are grouped together based on a wide variety of levels (Mathews-Aydinli & Horne, 2006). Their proficiency in speaking, writing, listening, and reading varies. In a similar vein, Ur (2011) described them as an English class that includes learners who are beginning, intermediate, and advanced as well as learners who vary in terms of age, motivation, and learning styles. Furthermore, MACs, according to Xanthou and Pavlou (2010), are a class of students with high, medium, and low English abilities who offer additional opportunities to study the language because they can support one

another's learning processes. These scholars' perspectives regarding the notion of MACs can be summarized as they are classrooms where students differ from one another in English language proficiency levels due to variations in interest, motivation, learning styles, worldview, experience or background knowledge, etc. Such classrooms may motivate English language teachers to prepare English learning materials or adapt them to accommodate the needs of all learners. Hence, teachers can ensure professional growth through time.

2.2. Challenges of Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes
2.2.1. Challenges in Pedagogy and Learning Materials

Several researchers have examined the difficulties faced by MACs in high schools (e.g., Al-Subaiei, 2017; Londres et al., 2017; Svärd, 2006), which showed that English MACs are important factors for English teachers to take into account. Diverse (mixed-ability) classrooms make it challenging to concentrate on the individual student. On the one hand, concentrating on slow learners can cause fast learners to become disinterested in the material because they can finish the activities sooner and have to wait for the subsequent ones. However, if teachers only pay attention to the quick learners, the slower learners will become confused and demotivated since they won't be able to keep up with the English learning contents.

A study by Hallam et al. (2008) show that EFL teachers find it difficult to modify their teaching strategies and offer educational materials to accommodate students with varying levels of English proficiency. They also mentioned that teaching mixed-ability students is one of the difficulties faced by English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) teacher. In EFL classrooms, the way the English language is taught is influenced by these various learning capacities.

Furthermore, the following scholars have noted certain possible threats to teachers and students. According to Londres et al. (2017), fast learners find it difficult to concentrate on their learning processes when they are in a varied environment. This occurs as a result of their need to divide their attention between helping their slower peers with their learning processes. Faleiros et al. (2009) assert that categorizing students as slow/fast learners, intermediate, advanced, or beginner learners based on their English proficiency levels jeopardizes their social and personal outcomes, especially for the lowest-level learners who are thought to be slow learners or unable to keep up with the curriculum. Additionally, as explained by Barnabas (2011), English teachers must apply a variety of teaching methodologies as there are different proficiencies of language among students in MACs.

2.2.2. Challenges of Accommodating Various Language Proficiency Levels and Learning Needs in MACs

Language teachers in MACs usually face a number of difficulties that eventually lead them to frustration since they are unable to give their students a constructive learning and teaching environment (Boaler, 2008). English teachers must identify mixed-ability classes since students have different strengths and limitations and progress at different rates, Consequently, conventional classroom teachers are under constant pressure to accommodate their varied student needs (Hallam et al.,2008).

The most challenging part of teaching English in MACs is that teachers are expected to assist students at their own learning speed, despite differences in language proficiency levels. When teachers are unable to meet their needs, weaker students remain inactive and do not develop. However, active students often continue to be active. Hedge (2000) asserts that there is invariably a substantial disparity between these two student types, making it impossible to identify any learning improvement. To meet each student's needs, teachers need to employ a range of instructional techniques.

2.2.3. Motivation, Discipline, and Learning Style-Related Challenges

According to Baker and Westrup (2000), the major issue in a class is not simply how many students there are, but also how diverse their ability levels are from one another. She adds that keeping every student's interest in MACs can be difficult. Students may become disinterested, and the teacher may become frustrated, as a result of the teacher's limited time to help weaker students. Furthermore, Kelly (1974) argued that in addition to the aforementioned issues, each student learns in different ways and that because they are typically more readily distracted. The weaker students struggle more to work in noisy environments. Students may become bored easily, MACs appear uncooperative, and this could lead to disturbance in the classroom.

Students may find the chosen materials either too simple or too difficult, and teachers may find that producing the lesson plan and assigning the exercises takes too much time (Hess, 2001). This may cause the teachers to feel unqualified and incapable of managing the class. The fact that teachers are ignorant of the necessity for a fresh strategy to address MACs in an EFL context is a serious issue that we cannot overlook. Ur (2011) summarized a number of difficulties that English language instructors may encounter when teaching in MACs, including issues with discipline, interest, materials, participation, and correction.

2.3. Teachers' Beliefs

Researchers made many attempts to define instructors' beliefs. Teachers employ their beliefs as "conceptions of practice", according to

Freeman (1993), which are concepts and behaviors that help them organize their thoughts and plan out the tasks they will execute and assess. The term "theories for practice" refers to the ways in which teachers' ideas and opinions are represented in their teaching methods. According to Burns (1992), beliefs are the teachers' judgments about what will happen in the classroom based on their presumptions and expectations. Similarly, Johnson (1992) refers to the belief systems that inform teachers' expectations for their students' conduct and decision-making as "theoretical beliefs," or beliefs. That is, beliefs are belief systems that define the range of instructors' opinions of what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behavior in the classroom. Teachers' actions in the classroom are said to be guided by their beliefs, which frequently act as a filter for decisions and judgments made about instructions (Shavelson & Stern, 1981).

The literature review makes it abundantly evident that the approaches teachers choose to teaching MACs may be influenced by their personal opinions. It might also have an impact on their dedication and judgment when it comes to choosing teaching materials, adapting activities, and organizing and carrying out lessons to teach MACs. It might also have an impact on how motivating strategies are used by teachers, how they choose to adapt their lessons to the different language proficiency levels of their students in MACs, and how they evaluate the success of both strong and weak students. Therefore, it gives sense to study the beliefs secondary school EFL teachers have on MACs instructions.

Even though teachers' beliefs and practices are important in education, there seems to be a lack of understanding regarding EFL teachers' perspectives on teaching MACs. This study aims to examine teachers' beliefs on teaching MACs along with the challenges they encounter.

3. Method

The aim of this study was to look into the beliefs that EFL teachers have and the difficulties they encounter when trying to teach MACs in some selected Ethiopian secondary school settings. A descriptive survey research design was used to address the problem of the study. It was thought that this design could help in explaining the beliefs that teachers have and the difficulties they face when attempting to teach MACs in EFL classes. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collected data via interviews and questionnaires that were both quantitative and qualitative.

3.1. Participants

Three public secondary schools in Ethiopia's Amhara National Regional State, South Wollo Zone, and Dessie City Administration served as the study's site. There were a manageable number of EFL teachers in the target

secondary schools. In order to participate in the study, 44 (100%) EFL teachers from grades 9 through 12 were chosen using the availability sampling technique, and they completed questionnaires. Because of this circumstance, the researchers were able to collect comprehensive data from all EFL teachers and gain a thorough understanding of the phenomenon they were studying. Convenience sampling was used to select four EFL teachers for interviews out of all the participants in the target secondary schools according to how willing they are to participate.

Table 1
The Demographic Information of Participants

No.	Characteristics		School-A	School –B	School-C
1	Age	30-40	9	8	7
		41-50	8	7	5
2	Gender	Male	7	12	9
		Female	10	3	3
		Total	17	15	12
3	Teaching Experience	10-20	6	3	2
		21-30	11	12	10
4	Educational Level	BA/BED	5	4	3
		MA in TEFL	12	11	9

Table 1 depicts the participants' age ranged from 30-50 years. Hence, they are all well matured to deliver sufficient data for the study. Their teaching experience ranged from 10-30 years. The data shows they are well experienced in teaching English language. Finally, Education wise, the majority of them hold Master of Arts degree in teaching English as a foreign language .Over all, from the data we can deduce the participants could reflect on their beliefs about and the challenges they are facing in MACs.

3.2. Materials and Instruments

This study employed questionnaires to gather data concerning the participants' beliefs and difficulties encountered when instructing MACs. The questionnaires were pilot tested with the help of data collected from 32 EFL teachers from two secondary schools available in the study site. These schools were excluded from the main study. After pilot data collection and analysis, the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was computed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Accordingly, the Cronbach reliability values for responses obtained from the category of items concerning the participants' beliefs were .80 (classroom management), .82 (materials), and.85 (teaching and learning). Similarly, for the category of items related to challenges of MACs, the Cronbach reliability values were .90 (teaching and learning), .75 (motivation and interest), .87 (materials), 0.89 (classroom management), and .87 (participation). The values signified the responses obtained from the beliefs

and challenges questionnaires were highly associated and had internal consistency. Generally, the Cronbach reliability values reported above showed that the responses that reflected the participants' beliefs and challenges of teaching MACs were reliable.

3.2.1. Questionnaires

To collect quantitative data, questionnaires with two sections were utilized. The first part aimed at collecting data about the teachers' beliefs regarding teaching MACs whereas, the second portion of the questionnaire was important to gather data about the instructional difficulties that the participating EFL teachers face. There were 33 close-ended items on the questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed by the researchers using 5-point Likert scales, where 1 (SD) represents strong disagreement and 2 (A) represents dis agreement, 3 (UD) = undecided, 4 (A) agree, and 5 (SA) = strongly agree. Every item category was adopted from a study by Rahman (2018) and Al-Shammakhi and Al-Humaidi (2015). The categories of items included in the *beliefs* and *difficulties* questionnaire were Materials, Classroom Management, Discipline, Motivation and Interest, Teaching and Learning, and Participation. All of the questionnaire categories were addressed by the associate professor of ELT at Addis Ababa University. Finally, based on the comments supplied the researchers modified the questionnaires by avoiding repeated ideas, linguistically vague items, and jargon. Thus, the content and face validity of the questionnaires were enhanced.

3.2.2. Semi structured Interview

A semi-structured interview guide served as the second data collection tool. Colleagues improved the interview questions through discussions. The interview guide was also updated by an associate professor of English language teaching. This tool was designed to collect additional qualitative data in order to validate the questionnaire results. Data on the participants' beliefs about teaching MACs and the difficulties they frequently face was gathered through the interview. The interviews were recorded on cell phone audio with the consent of the participants. The semi structured interview guide involved the following main questions:

1. Do you believe that you are equipped with the instructional strategies to accommodate students' various characteristics in MACs?
2. Do you feel confident to manage mixed-ability EFL classrooms?
3. Which class do you prefer to teach? A classroom of students who have nearly uniform English language proficiency (streamed classes) or a class of mixed-ability students? Why?

4. Do you believe that it is possible to satisfy the learning requirements of students at all levels (high, moderate & low) through applying different instructional strategies? How?
5. How do you view the advantage of teaching mixed-ability EFL classrooms for teachers' professional growth?
6. What instructional challenges do you encounter while teaching in MACs?

3.3. Procedure

First, the researchers maintained rapport with the school principal, department heads, and EFL teachers in the target secondary schools. With the help of department heads in each school, the researchers explained to the participants the purpose of the study and their responsibilities during the research process. After gaining their consent, forty-four questionnaires were administered to the participants and returned on time. The response rate of the questionnaires was 100%. Department heads participated in dispatching and collecting the questionnaires. Administration of the questionnaires to English teachers in one secondary school took about 55 minutes. The researchers then conducted the interviews setting a schedule depending on the interviewees' permission. Each interview was audio-recorded based on the interviewees consent. The researchers took notes to avoid unexpected data loss during the interview sessions. All of the interview sessions in three secondary schools took 3 hours.

3.4. Data Analysis

The questionnaires were checked for appropriate responses. Then, using data code sheet, the researchers compiled the responses obtained from each category of closed-ended items. The quantitative data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e., percentage, mean and standard deviations. The descriptive data analysis was carried out using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20 software. The data obtained from the *beliefs questionnaire* were analyzed using item-by-item analysis. This technique was helpful to look carefully the results of each item.

The interview data were analyzed using a thematic analysis, which entails categorizing and organizing data thematically based on techniques borrowed from Lewis and Ritchie's (2003) study. Consideration was given to the identification and reporting of themes that appeared in the data. A thorough coding of the data, exposing the experiences, perceptions, and realities that were communicated by the participants was emphasized (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the researchers used a thematic analysis of the interview data to examine in great detail the beliefs about and the difficulties faced by EFL teachers when teaching MACs in secondary schools context.

To maintain inter-coder reliability in thematic analysis of interview data, the researchers first established a coding framework according to the study's research questions. Next, the two researchers coded the interview data individually and identified themes to prevent biases. Then, they compared the coded findings, checked for discrepancies and reached an agreement on themes and interpretations. The researchers made sure if there was consistency between their codes to ensure validity in data analysis.

In general, drawing on Dörnyei (2007) the process of data analysis of this study involved the following inductive analysis stages: Meaning, translation and transcription of voice data, coding of data, and thematic categorization of data followed by a description, interpretation and concluding were made. Therefore, based on Dörnyei (2007) suggestions, the interview data analysis involves the codes, the themes emanated from the codes, and the description and interpretations made based on the themes. Then, the codes and themes were organized in to tables to make them convenient for data analysis and to help readers visualize the interview data clearly.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. Questionnaire Results

As mentioned in the introduction section, this study attempted to scrutinize the participants' beliefs about teaching MACs and the challenges they encounter while teaching in MACs. Therefore, based on the problem of the study, two research questions were framed. In line with the first research question, the results obtained from three categories of items (classroom management, materials and teaching and learning) are presented. Similarly, to respond to the second research question, results obtained from five categories of items (teaching and learning, motivation and interest, materials, classroom management, participation) are presented next.

4.1.1. EFL Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching Mixed-Ability Classrooms

As can be seen from Table 2, regarding the first item, of the participants, 39 (88.6%) agreed with the statement. Whereas, 4 (9%) disagreed. Still, a small proportion of 1 (2.2%) of them neither agree nor disagree. Regarding the second item, 8 (18%) of the respondents agreed with the issue. Conversely, 35(79.5%) of them disagreed whereas 1 (2.2%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Next, about *letting the students work at their own pace,*' most 33 (75%) of them agreed. On the contrary, 6 (13.5%) of them disagreed and 5(11.3%) rated undecided. Hence, the data displayed weaker and stronger students can comfortably do activities taking into account their learning speed. About item No.4 which says *I feel that I usually neglect weaker students in my MAC*. Most of the respondents 32 (72.6%) agreed with the item. Whereas, 7 (15.8 %) of them disagreed and 5(11.3%) rated undecided. Concerning the

fifth item, 37 (84%) expressed their agreement. Whereas, 5 (11.3%), and 2 (4.5 %) of them 'disagreed' and took an 'undecided' position respectively. About the last item, the majority 32 (72.2%) of the respondents express their agreement. On the other hand, 7 (15.8%), and 5 (11.3%) of them rated 'disagree' and 'undecided' for the item respectively.

Table 2

Percentage (%) of Responses on Beliefs about Mixed-Ability Classroom Management (N =44)

Items	Responses									
	SD		DA		UD		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1 Using several strategies in MACs.	1	2.2	3	6.8	1	2.2	22	50	17	38.6
2 Confidence to manage MACs.	25	56.8	10	22.7	1	2.2	4	9	4	9
3 Letting students work at their own pace	2	4.5	4	9	5	11.3	20	45.4	13	29.5
4 Neglecting weaker students in MACs	3	6.8	4	9	5	11.3	17	38.6	15	34
5 Meeting the needs of individual students in MACs	3	6.8	2	4.5	2	4.5	23	52.2	14	31.8
6 Preference to teach the whole class than MACs	4	9	3	6.8	5	11.3	18	40.9	14	31.8

As Table 3 portrays, the great majority 39 (88.6%) of the participants presume that they can adapt activities for high, moderate, and low-level students in MACs though it is tiresome. On the other hand, 3(6.8%) and 2 (4.5%) rated 'undecided' and 'disagreed' respectively. Next, regarding item No.8, the majority 36 (81.7%) of the participants disagreed with the preparation of lesson plans that incorporate leveled activities. Similarly, 4 (9%) of them chose 'agreed' and 'undecided' responses respectively. According to the data gained from item No.9, the majority of the respondents 36 (81.7%) are of the view that using textbooks as the only resource is appropriate to teach MACs. However, 3 (6.8%) and 5(11.3%) of them replied 'disagree' and 'undecided' respectively. As far as item No.10 is concerned, 37 (84%) of the respondents agreed that teaching in MACs enables them to increase their creativity in designing teaching materials. whereas 3(6.8%) and 4 (9%) of them replied disagree and undecided, respectively.

As shown in Table 4, regarding item No. 11, a vast majority of 40 (80.8%) of the respondents believe that they are equipped with different strategies to accommodate students' different characteristics in MACs. Contrariwise, 4 (9%) of them neither agree nor disagree with the point. Concerning item No.12, the majority 34 (77.2%) of the participants reported that they believe in making sure all levels of students (high, moderate, and low)

are always engaged and benefit from the daily lesson in MACs, whereas, 8 (18.1%) of them disagreed with the issue.

Table 3

Percentage (%) of Responses on EFL Teachers' Beliefs about Materials (N=44)

	Items	Responses									
		SD		DA		UD		A		SA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
7	Adapting activities	-	-	2	4.5	3	6.8	25	56.8	14	31.8
8	Preparing lesson plans having leveled-activities	16	36.3	20	45.4	4	9	-	-	4	9
9	Using text books as the only resource	-	-	3	6.8	5	11.3	19	43.1	17	38.6
10	Teaching MACs enhances creativity	3	6.8	4	9	-	-	20	45.4	17	38.6

Table 4

Percentage (%) of Responses on EFL Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching and Learning (N = 44)

	Items	Responses									
		SD		DA		UD		A		SA	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
11	Equipping oneself with different MACs strategies		-	-	-	4	9	25	56.8	15	34
12	Making sure all levels of students are engaged	3	6.8	5	11.3	2	4.5	16	36.3	18	40.9
13	Preference to teach stronger students than MACs	2	4.5	3	6.8	5	11.3	19	43.1	15	34
14	The challenges of teaching MACs can be solved	14	31.8	18	40.9	2	4.5	5	11.3	5	11.3
15	Teaching in MACs ensures professional growth.	4	9	6	13.6	4	9	13	29.5	17	38.6
16	Taking continuous training helps to work well in MACs	7	15.9	-	-	6	13.6	17	38.6	14	31.8

As the data from item No.13 shows, 34 (77.1%) of the respondents believe in teaching a classroom of stronger students who have better English language proficiency than MACs whereas, 5 (11.3%) of them disagreed. Likewise, 5 (11.3%) neither agree nor disagree with the issue. About item No.14, most of the respondents 32 (72.7%) believe in the issue. On the contrary, the data disclosed that 10 (22.6%) of the respondents do not believe that the challenges of teaching MACs can still be successfully solved by applying different teaching strategies. Still, 2(4.5%) took an undecided position on the issue.

Again, concerning item No.15, among the participants, 30 (68.1%) of them believe that beyond its challenges, teaching in MACs helps teachers a lot to ensure professional growth. Again, 10 (22.63%) of them disagreed. Also, 4 (9%) of them replied 'undecided' to the item. Finally, related to item No.16, among the total respondents, the vast majority 31(70.4%) believe in taking continuous training to equip themselves with teaching strategies to work well in their respective MACs. Conversely,7(15.9%) disagreed and 6 (13.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed on the issue.

4.1.2. Instructional Challenges of Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes

This section of the study is devoted to show results obtained from the responses given for the category of items related to the instructional challenges (the second research question) that the participants encountered while teaching English in MACs. The mean score of responses for each category of items were taken in to account to carry out the data analysis.

As the data in Table 5 displays, about instructional challenges of teaching & learning issues in MACs, all of the participants have reported that in their mixed-ability EFL classes, many students are unable to speak in English especially weak (less able) students (Mean = 4.6). Likewise, all of the respondents said that they agreed with the issue (Mean = 4.4). Hence, the data indicated as an instructional challenge, there is a wide gap in language proficiency levels among/ students in their MACs. Concerning the next issue which says *It is hard to design well-planned material for your mixed-ability classrooms,* the data exhibited that the majority of the EFL teachers felt they face challenges in designing well-planned materials for MACs (Mean = 3.9). About the last item the great majority of the respondents agreed that they find it challenging to design balanced lessons that accommodate students of all skill levels (Mean = 4.2).

Table 5

Mean of EFL Teachers' Responses Concerning Teaching and Learning Challenges

	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Many students are unable to speak in English in your MACs.	44	4.66	.48
2	Students in your MACs vary greatly in their degrees of language proficiency.	44	4.44	.51
3	It is hard to design well planned material for your MACs.	44	3.94	.80
4	Creating a balanced lesson that works for students of all skills levels is challenging.	44	4.22	.54

Regarding motivation and interest challenges in Table 6, the participants agreed with the item reads *some students quickly lose interest as they have very low English language proficiency* (Mean =4.4). Meaning, the great

majority of the participant EFL teachers encounter such challenges in MACs. Concerning item No.6, all of the participants agreed with the issue. (Mean = 4.2). Similarly, related to item no.7, the majority of the respondents agreed with the item (Mean = 3.8). From the result of these items, one can argue that when teachers simplify the lessons for weaker (less able) students the learning interest of strong (more able) students decreases. Likewise, weaker (less able) students may develop inferiority complexes leading to demotivation in MACs.

Table 6

Mean of EFL Teachers' Responses to Motivation and Interest Related Challenges

	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
5	In your MACs, some students quickly lose interest	44	4.44	.61
6	Simplifying the lesson for weaker (less able) students decreases the learning interest of strong (more able) students.	44	4.22	.42
7	In your MACs, weaker (less able) students may develop inferiority complexes.	44	3.88	.83

Table 7

Mean of EFL Teachers' Responses to Materials Related Challenges

No	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
8	Annual lesson plans that are fixed make it impossible to create and adapt different kinds of activities.	44	3.61	1.41
9	The text book activities do not suit all levels of students	44	3.66	.97
10	Finding relevant teaching materials for students at diverse language skill levels is challenging.	44	3.38	1.03
11	It is difficult to access authentic materials to teach MACs.	44	3.55	1.04

As the data (Table 7) from item No.8 exhibited, most of the respondents agreed (Mean = 3.6). Similarly, in connection to item No.9, the majority of the participants agreed (Mean = 3.6). Moreover, concerning item No.10, the respondents also agreed (Mean = 3.3). Likewise, regarding item No.11, the majority of the respondents agreed (Mean = 3.5). From the overall data it was found out that concerning the material-related challenges, the majority of participants stated that they are unable to create and modify different activities for both strong and weak students in their MACs because of predefined annual lesson plans. Hence, every student (high, moderate & low) level cannot benefit from the activities in the textbook. Finding relevant instructional materials for various levels of students (high, moderate, and low) and accessing authentic materials to teach MACs are challenging for teachers.

Regarding classroom management-related challenges in Table 8, as the data in Table 8 portrays, most of the participants agreed with the item '*focusing on weak (less able) students in your MACs, strong (more able) students are likely to be neglected or held back* (Mean = 3.7). Similarly, the majority of the participants expressed their disagreement with the issue *it is hard to make all (high, moderate & low) levels of students engaged in the lesson (*Mean = 2.3*).* In addition*, most of them agreed with the statement that read *Due to students' less participation, you prefer to use whole class teaching method than student-centered method (*Mean = 3.3*).* Overall, the vast majority of participants stated that they deal with various issues linked to classroom management. In teaching MACs, when they try to help weaker students, stronger students complain due to the fact that they feel as if the teacher neglected them and being held back. Likewise, students' less participation forced teachers to follow a whole class teaching approach rather than supporting individual students in MACs.

Table 8

Mean of EFL Teachers' Responses to Classroom Management Challenges

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
12	When you focus on weak (less able) students in your MACs, it is conceivable that strong (more able) students will be neglected or held behind.	44	3.72	1.22
13	In your MACs, it is hard to make all levels of students engaged in the lesson.	44	2.38	1.24
14	Due to students' less participation, you prefer to use whole class teaching method than student centered method.	44	3.38	1.09

Regarding MAC students' classroom participation-related challenges, as can be seen from Table 9, the mean scores of responses for items No.15, 16, and 17 were found to be (Mean=2.9, 3.4, and 3.8) respectively. Therefore, the respondents said they disagreed with item No. 15 and agreed with the rest two items. From the results gained from items No.16 and 17, it is possible to understand that teachers face participation challenges. This may be due to weaker students' insufficient understanding of the lesson topic which directly affects their classroom participation. In addition, the results indicated due to fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed, weaker students do not participate in MACs.

Table 9

Mean of EFL Teachers' Responses to Students' Participation Challenges

No.	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
15	More able (strong) students dominate the MACs, so weaker students feel neglected.	44	2.94	1.30
16	Weaker (less able) students' insufficient understanding of the lesson topic may affect their classroom participation.	44	3.44	1.19
17	Due to fear of making mistakes and being ridiculed, weaker students do not participate in MACs.	44	3.88	1.18

4.2. Results of Interview Data

4.2.1. Beliefs About Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes

The beliefs of secondary school EFL teachers toward teaching MACs and the instructional obstacles they face in MACs were the main topics of the interview. The interview's goal was to collect information to support the findings from the questionnaire. Hence, the codes along with the corresponding themes obtained from interview data are organized in Table 10 below. Under the table, the data analysis parallel to each theme and the corresponding results have been presented. P1, P2, P3 and P4 represent the four interviewees (EFL teachers) to maintain anonymity of the participants.

4.2.1.1 Theme 1. Beliefs About Equipping Oneself With Mixed-Ability Classrooms Instructional Strategies. Regarding equipping oneself with MAC instructional strategies, P1, P2, and P4 reported similar insights that they had experience to motivate weaker students to make them participate and attract their attention. They also indicated that by using group & pair work, they try to make students do activities collaboratively. On the contrary, P3 said that he was doubtful concerning the instructional strategies to teach MACs. Vis-à-vis such issue, P3 mentioned that

> (…) I have very limited knowledge of strategies to teach MACs. I believe that I need to support my students according to their language proficiency levels and various characteristics. However, it is impossible to support them as needed due to time constraints. Mostly, I focus on clever students because they do activities quickly and participate actively during presentations. Hence, I could save time.

4.2.1.2. Theme 2. Beliefs about Confidence to Manage Mixed-Ability Classes. Concerning the interviewees' beliefs on the feeling of confidence to manage MACs, all of them reflected they are confident enough to manage MACs. Nonetheless, with a slight difference, P2 reported:

> I try to manage the mixed-ability classrooms by implementing different arrangements for students. For example, I make students do activities

in groups and pairs. After that, I give them time to present the result of their discussion. All levels of students are invited to say something, but strong students dominate the classroom. I intend to follow the stronger students to save class time. Weaker students remain silent and unluckily their learning progress is not significant.

Table 10

Codes and Themes Obtained From Interview Data on EFL Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes

No	Codes	Themes
1	Motivate weaker students (P1,P2,P4) Encourage weaker students to participate (P1,P2,P4) Try to attract the students' attention (P1,P2,P4) Use group and pair work to make students do activities cooperatively (P3) Time constraints (P3) Focusing on stronger students (P3)	Equipping oneself with MACs instructional strategies
2	Arrange students in pairs and groups (P1,P3,P4) Give ample time for presenting discussion results (P1,P3,P4) Stronger students dominate the class (P1,P3,P4) Follow stronger students to save time (P2) Weaker students remain silent (P2) Weaker students do not show learning progress (P2)	Confidence to manage MACs
3	Arrange tutorial lessons for weaker students (P1,P4) Give more emphasis for weaker students (P2,P3) Give less emphasis to students language proficiency levels (P2,P3) Prefer to teach a group of stronger students (P1,P3,P4) Stronger students are highly motivated to learn (P4) Stronger students participate actively (P4) Stronger students do activities within limited time (P4) Stronger students share teachers' burden (P4) Give challenging activities for stronger students (P4)	Neglecting or embracing weaker students (preference to teach MACs or streamed classes)
4	Managing the learning requirements of students at all levels in MACs is challenging. (P1,P2,P4)	Satisfying the learning needs of students with various levels
5	Teaching MACs ensure professional growth (P1,P2,P3,P4) Teachers develop classroom management skills (P1,P2,P3,P4) Teachers develop experience of preparing leveled tasks (P1,P2,P3,P4)	Advantages of teaching MACs for teachers

4.2.1.3. Theme 3. Beliefs about Neglecting or Embracing Weaker Students. Regarding the beliefs teachers hold about neglecting or embracing weaker students, the interview results have shown that P1 and P4 tried to embrace weaker students by arranging tutorial lessons. Similarly, P2 and P3 have reported that they believe in giving more emphasis to stronger students. They do not recognize the language proficiency difference among learners.

About the belief systems EFL teachers hold in connection to their preferences of teaching a class of stronger students or MACs, P1, P3, and P4 stated that they prefer to teach a classroom of stronger students than mixed-ability classes. Conversely, P2 said that he believes in teaching mixed-ability students. In this regard, P4 illuminated:

> I prefer to teach a classroom of stronger students. For example, when we arrange tutorial classes for stronger students, they are motivated to learn. They participate actively by asking and responding to questions. Even students do activities within the given time, so I can finish the lesson on time. I can deliver relatively more difficult lessons as stronger students pay attention to the teachers' explanations and they can understand the lesson quickly.

4.2.1.4. Theme 4. Beliefs About Satisfying the Learning Needs of all Levels of Learners. When we looked at the target secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs about using different instructional strategies to meet the learning needs of students at all levels in MACs, P1, P2, and P4 responded that they do not think it is possible to meet the learning needs of students at all levels. In contrast to others, P3 believes that the learning requirements of students at all skill levels can be satisfied.

4.2.1.5. Theme 5. Beliefs About the Advantage of Teaching MACs for Teachers. Concerning EFL teachers' beliefs of the advantage of teaching MACs for teachers' professional growth, the interview results indicated all of the respondents suppose teaching MACs helps teachers to ensure professional growth. For instance, strengthening this point, P2 clarified that

> Teaching mixed-ability classrooms is advantageous for EFL teachers in many ways. Firstly, teachers can develop classroom management skills since handling mixed-ability class results in pedagogical challenges. They can also develop skills in the area of preparing leveled tasks and activities that suit the learning needs of strong, moderate and weak students. All of the above skills enable EFL teachers to achieve professional growth.

4.2.2. The Challenges of Teaching Mixed-Ability Classes

The following section of the study report focuses on the results of interview data regarding the challenges that the participating EFL teachers encounter while teaching in MACs.

Table 11

Codes and Themes Obtained from Interview Data on Challenges EFL Teachers Encounter in Mixed-ability Classes

N	Codes	Theme
	Students variations in language proficiency levels (P1)	
	Weaker students focus on trivial issues (P1)	
	Weaker students are demotivated (P2)	The instructional
	Weaker students are not interested to do activities in groups and pairs (P2), (P4)	challenges in MACs
	Weaker students develop inferiority complex (P2)	
	Time constraints to assist weaker students (P4)	
	Large class size (P3)	
	Weaker students disturb the class (P3)	

4.2.2.1. Theme 1. The Instructional Challenges of Mixed-Ability Classes. Finally, as regards the instructional challenges that EFL teachers encounter in teaching MACs, as can be seen from Table 11, P1 elucidated "In mixed-ability classrooms, the students have great difference in levels of language proficiency. Secondly, most students focus on trivial activities. So, they procrastinate. They are also demotivated to learn." P2 also said "The first burning issue in teaching mixed-ability EFL classrooms is that students are not motivated and interested to learn and improve their level of English language proficiency. Weaker students are not interested in doing activities in groups and pairs. They developed an inferiority complex.'' Likewise, P3 interestingly explained that

> The students are demotivated to learn. They do not have an interest in improving their language proficiency. The other challenge is time constraints to help students based on their level of language proficiency. Due to the large class size, I cannot manage to help weaker students as required. Weaker students tend to disturb the class as they are not interested in learning due to their weaknesses.

Finally, P4 in his part said that the first challenge to help students learn in mixed-ability classrooms is time constraints. In addition, he explained that most of the students do not have an interest in learning through doing activities cooperatively with the stronger students. Also, weaker students do not use time wisely.

4.3. Discussion

The findings gained from questionnaires and interviews were discussed in light of the previous studies. The first research question was aimed at examining the beliefs that target secondary school EFL teachers had on instructing MACs. Thus, regarding mixed-ability classroom management, the

data obtained through the questionnaire indicated that most of the participants thought they apply diverse strategies to manage MACs. The interview data also revealed similar results.

The questionnaire results revealed that the majority of the participants did not develop confidence to manage MACs. Conversely, according to the interview data, all of the participants believed that they are confident enough to manage MACs. The participants were also of the view that they can facilitate mixed-ability students to do activities at their own pace. Such disparities among the results of interviews and questionnaires might be attributed to either the limited sample size of the study or the methodological shortcomings. This situation can further be refined by applying the classroom lesson observations to come up with better insights in connection to classroom management issues, confidence to manage MACs and keeping the students' pace of learning. This is because the belief that teachers hold can be obviously manifested in their classroom practices.

According to the survey data, the majority of the participants felt that they neglected weaker students in MACs. This finding is also confirmed by the results of the interview. In this regard, scholarly views (e.g., Zheng, 2009), for instance, emphasize in order to understand teachers' cognitive processes, pedagogical techniques, and teaching methodology, it is essential to understand their beliefs. Hence, EFL teachers' beliefs about neglecting weaker students in MACs might directly affect their pedagogical efforts that should be exerted to accommodate the students' differences in language proficiency levels, interest and motivation and learning styles etc. In turn, this situation can negatively influence teachers' professional growth that could be achieved as a result of teaching MACs by embracing both weaker and stronger students.

Besides, the interview results revealed the respondents presume that it is possible to fulfill the needs of individual students in MACs. Regarding this finding, Ghaith (2004) claimed that teachers' perspectives represent a thorough comprehension of numerous elements pertaining to attitudes toward education and teaching, curricula, and the teaching profession in general, all of which have an effect on pedagogical objectives. Such positive attitude toward the possibilities of responding to the needs of individual learners in MACs would result in teachers' willingness to address the various needs of the students by applying appropriate strategies.

The results also show the vast majority of the participants incline toward teaching the whole class rather than giving attention to individual students in MACs. This finding contradicts with the results of a study by Hedge (2002), which revealed that when teachers don't address every student's needs, strong students tend to stay active while weaker students stay passive and do not show positive developments. Such finding may imply that the participants were not committed to help the students in MACs taking in to account their

differences in language proficiency level, motivation and interest, learning styles etc. This can be attributed to teachers' lack of willingness and pedagogical skills to manage MACs. Strengthening this issue, the teacher's unfamiliarity with a new strategy to address the MACs in an EFL context is a significant issue that we must remember, according to Hess (2011).As the participants prefer to follow whole class teaching approach, weaker students may lose opportunity to improve their language proficiency levels in collaboration with peers and by obtaining teachers' assistance.

About the materials-related issues, as the questionnaire data suggested, the great majority of the participants presume that they can adapt activities for high, moderate, and low-level students in their respective MACs though it is tiresome. Contrary to the above finding, the questionnaire data showed that the majority of the respondents do not believe in preparing effective lesson plans that incorporate leveled activities to help high, moderate, and low-level students learn effectively. This finding is supported by Hess (2001), who notes that lesson planning and creating work materials can take an excessive amount of time for teachers and that the planned material is frequently too simple or complex for the pupils. The teacher may feel unqualified and incapable of managing the class. Therefore, these findings may suggest MAC teachers should equip themselves with appropriate skills to adapt materials and plan lessons that can accommodate students' interest, learning pace and level of language proficiency.

The majority of the respondents are of the view that using textbooks as the only resource is appropriate to teach MACs. Furthermore, the data designated the majority of the respondents consider teaching in MACs enables them to increase their creativity in designing teaching materials. The aforementioned findings are supported by a research by Lightbown and Spada (2006), which found that a variety of characteristics, including attitude, motivation, and self-discipline, might vary from student to student. This could make it challenging for teachers to properly plan their lessons so that students of all language skills levels get the necessary learning outcomes.

In connection to the beliefs teachers hold about teaching and learning issues, the survey data showed the respondents believe they are equipped with different strategies to accommodate the students' different characteristics in MACs. The participants reported that they presume to make sure all levels of students (high, moderate, and low) are always engaged and benefit from the daily lesson in MACs. The results revealed that the majority of the respondents believe in teaching a classroom of stronger students who have better English language proficiency than MACs. On the contrary, the data disclosed most of the respondents believe that the challenges of teaching MACs can still be successfully solved by applying different teaching strategies. In addition, the results from both the questionnaire and interview signified that the participants

presume beyond its challenges, teaching in MACs helps teachers a lot to ensure professional growth.

Also, the data demonstrate the majority of the participants believe in taking continuous training to equip themselves with teaching strategies to work well in their respective MACs. This finding goes in line with a study by Butterworth (2010) which revealed that in order to properly handle the difficulties posed by their varied students, MAC teachers must have access to ongoing training. If this could be realized, teachers can develop knowledge and skills of instructional strategies useful to teach MACs.

The next issue was about the instructional challenges that the participants may encounter while teaching in MACs context. Therefore, the quantitative data indicated that the most serious instructional challenges facing EFL teachers were found to be teaching and learning challenges with a mean value of 4.27. The next serious challenge was the motivation and interest challenge (M = 4.13) followed by material related challenge (M = 3.5), the classroom management challenge (M = 3.36) and finally classroom participation challenge (M = 3.1). These results are more or less consistent with the results of a study done by (Al-Shammakhi & Al-Humaidi, 2015) that show teachers have significant difficulties in mixed-ability classrooms, with a mean score of 3.64 out of 5. With a mean score of 3.81, teaching and learning-related issues are the most common ones teachers face. With a high mean of 3.58, motivation challenges are followed by material-related challenges, which have a mean value of 3.51. With a mean score of 3.40, which indicates a modest degree of prevalence, classroom management issues are the least common issues teachers encounter. Concerning these findings, several studies (e.g., Al-Subaiei, 2017; Gustiani, 2019; Zakarneh et al., 2020) confirmed that English language teachers faced teaching and learning, material, classroom management, motivation, and interest-related challenges in MACs. Therefore, the findings imply that regardless of the contextual differences local and EFL teachers overseas encounter more or less similar challenges in MACs. This may suggest the issue requires more attention and ongoing efforts to bring contemporary pedagogical solutions to accommodate the students' differences in MACs in a better way.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Examining secondary school EFL teachers' beliefs about teaching mixed-ability classes and the difficulties they might face was the main goal of this study. The following conclusions were reached in light of the findings obtained from questionnaire and interview data.

Regardless of their positive beliefs to apply different strategies to teach MACs, the data illuminated the participants favored teaching the whole class rather than giving attention to individual students in MACs. These

discrepancies among the findings, in turn, would suggest that most participants believe they are incapable of effectively managing MACs. All in all, the discrepancies among results obtained from material-related questionnaires may indicate the participants do not possess consistent positive stand about selecting, adapting materials, and preparing leveled activities for students in MACs. This situation may deter EFL teachers' instructional endeavors in assisting mixed-ability students in accessing appropriate materials compatible with their level of language proficiency and interests. About the results gained from items of teaching-learning issues, it seems logical to conclude that though the participants said they are equipped with strategies to teach MACs, they prefer to teach a classroom of stronger students than MACs. This result implies that they are not pedagogically and psychologically ready to teach students in MACs. However, they presume that taking continuous training is important to equip themselves with strategies to teach MACs effectively. They also believe that regardless of its challenges, teaching MACs is very crucial to ensure professional growth. These findings may suggest the participants are willing to be involved in continuous training to enhance their pedagogical skills which will help them to host students in MACs and as a result ensure professional growth in the long run.

Regarding the MACs instructional challenges facing EFL teachers were found to be teaching and learning challenges, motivation, and interest, followed by material-related challenges, classroom management challenges, and finally classroom participation challenges with varying degrees of seriousness. Likewise, as the interview results specified, the instructional challenges that EFL teachers encounter were students' procrastination, lack of interest and motivation, inaccessibility of authentic materials, time constraints, lack of teachers' commitment to support weaker students, large class size and lack of family support. The results imply that such challenges can negatively affect the instructional practices of EFL teachers in teaching English in the target secondary schools' mixed-ability classroom contexts.

The results of this study have practical implications for English language teachers. Through continuous training and workshops, the target secondary school EFL teachers should understand the instructional challenges and the contemporary approaches and strategies of teaching MACs. As a result, they can manage and teach such classrooms efficiently. Teachers should develop a positive attitude towards teaching MACs by sharing ideas with colleagues, by peer class observations, mentoring technique, etc. They should also become committed to minimize the instructional challenges of such diversified classrooms. They should plan lessons that incorporate specific tasks that can accommodate various language proficiency levels and abilities of the students. Consequently, this circumstance will guarantee that every student is actively participating in the learning process. Teachers also need to become

aware of adapting materials and activities that suit the diversified learning needs of weaker as well as stronger students in MACs. Therefore, through time they can ensure professional growth. The target secondary schools should cooperatively arrange training programs, and workshops to develop EFL teachers' awareness of the instructional challenges of teaching MACs. Secondary school EFL teachers' continuous professional development programs should give due attention to the dynamics of teaching MACs.

Any study cannot be void of limitations. Further methodological considerations could help to bring new insights regarding MACs and its challenges. Classroom observation may help a lot to investigate the real challenges that teachers face in MACs. Using FGD and an in depth individual interview, more survey data is required to elaborate teachers believes about teaching MACs. This study did not consider what strategies teachers use to overcome the challenges of teaching MACs. Also, the study didn't look in to the students' perceptions of MACs and the challenges they face in MACs. Therefore, interested researchers can conduct a qualitative as well as mixed-methods studies on such gaps to come up with further insights with regard to teaching MACs.

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