

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

College English Language Instructors' Preparation, Effectiveness and Proficiency in Teaching English As Perceived By the Self, Would-Be Teachers and Instructional Leaders: Begae-Medir Teacher Education College in South Gondar Zone In Focus

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Abstract

This study focused on investigating English language instructors' preparation, effectiveness and proficiency in teaching English as perceived by the self, teacher candidates and instructional leaders of Begae-Medir Teacher Education College. For data collection purpose, the researcher selected only one of those ten Teacher Education Colleges found in Amhara National Regional State, namely, Begae-Medir Teacher Education College for the study, but the researcher purposefully selected all the respondents (graduating English language students, English language instructors and three college administrators) from that college because he believed that selecting these respondents from this college was vital for the study. In this study, the researcher also explored the types of training and professional development experiences that English language instructors received from higher education institutions. The study focused on the perceptions of instructional leaders, misunderstandings and less receptivity level among English language instructors and would-be teachers during teaching and learning process in that college. This mixed- approach (qualitative and quantitative methods) included 31 third year English would-be teachers, 8 college English language instructors and three college administrators: one academic dean official, one from instructional leaders, and one English department head. The researcher employed data collection instruments: close-ended and open-ended questionnaires, interview questions, and classroom observation to collect data from the participants mentioned above. With regard to the observation and training types of teaching -learning process during their stay in the college, these English language instructors and would-be teachers were included in relation to teaching and learning English as a second language and non-native English speakers. The sampling technique of the study was purposive. The findings showed that English language instructors were successful in producing competent would-be teachers that can teach English language for primary schools although English language instructors in the college are not satisfied. The result of this study indicated that there was a great misunderstanding, less receptivity level and perceptions among college English language instructors, teacher candidates and instructional leaders. This misunderstanding and less receptivity level among them were that teacher candidates seem to overrate their competencies and their instructors seem to underrate their competencies and English language instructors perceived that they are efficient and competent enough about their preparation, effectiveness and proficiency in teaching English language. Finally, the researcher recommended that all college English language instructors' teacher candidates and administrators have to avoid their misunderstandings and carry out their duties and responsibilities.

Keywords: teacher preparation, effectiveness, proficiency, trainees.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20372/erjssh.2021.0801.07>

Introduction

English language instructors' quality maximally contributes to the quality of students' English language proficiency or competence (Shulman, 1986). The English language instructors' competence, in turn, depends largely on the quality of their preparation, effectiveness and proficiency in teacher education.

The purpose of this study was to examine college level English language instructors' preparation, effectiveness and proficiency in teaching English as perceived by the self, would-be teachers and instructional leaders which is the major problem that affects the relationship among college English language instructors, trainees (would-be teachers) and instructional leaders. In addition to considering English language instructors' preparation, effectiveness and proficiency in teaching English, the researcher wanted to investigate the root cause of misunderstanding and the receptivity level given to English language instructors by trainees (would-be teachers) He also explored the types of training and professional development during pre-service and in-service activities in both higher education institutions and their college life.

There existed only meager studies regarding the receptivity level of would-be teachers, the perceptions of instructional leaders, English language instructors' preparations, effectiveness and the quality of English language instructors in teaching English as perceived by the self, would-be teachers and instructional leaders. There are only few studies conducted on student perceptions about the characteristics of a good language teacher.

Related studies were conducted concerning teacher preparation, quality of teaching and teacher effectiveness. For instance, a foreign study which investigated grades two to six students' views on the quality of teaching using interviews, personal journals and reflective notes as data collection instruments indicated that good teaching incorporates affective characteristics of teachers such as caring, understanding and loving which also included the focus on teacher effectiveness and competencies in classroom behavior and interpersonal skills (Thomas & Montgomery, 1998). The result of the study revealed that teachers lacked both competencies (Vollmer & Creek, 1988). Still another one of the major causes for teachers' paucity may be the unsettled, ever-wobbling and uncertain system of teacher preparation that alters when government changes and the effect of teachers' inadequate competence and ineffectiveness can result in students' low English language proficiency (Mebratu, 2015).

For example, Pre-service teachers' approaches to learning and their teaching preferences: Secondary teacher education program focusing in TEACHER EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT (Research Article) by Dejene, et al., (2018) was intended to explore pre-service teachers' entry characteristics, that is, approaches to learning and their teaching preference when joining teacher education programs. Descriptive survey method was employed. A total of 293 (293) randomly selected secondary pre-service teachers enrolled in two Universities for Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) program have participated in the study. The Revised-Two-Factor Study Questionnaire and Approaches to Teaching Inventory were used for data collection. The study revealed that the pre-service teachers have joined teacher education program with behaviorist orientation, which is not in harmony with the reform in teacher education and development.

The result of the study is assumed to provide insight into students' perceptions and teachers' effectiveness which are vital for success in students' English language competence. The results may be necessary for teachers to meet the expectations, needs, and

interests of students, and this leads teachers to be more effective in teaching English language. So, by stating the research gap and showing those local and external studies mentioned above, this study attempted to explore how CTE instructors view the adequacy and training of their higher education experiences in their preparation both in pedagogy and English language proficiency in their teaching assignment. In addition, by implication, the study examined the types of training and professional development that teachers obtained from higher education institutions to teach in CTE.

Therefore, the researcher of this study attempted to:

1. examine English language instructors' preparation, effectiveness and proficiency, the receptivity level of would-be teachers, and the perceptions of instructional leaders in teaching English language that can be measured by teachers' attitude and teaching quality;
2. explore the types of training and professional development experiences that college English language instructors received from higher education institutions and
3. find out whether or not teachers implement the pedagogic content knowledge and other skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that demand higher order thinking in their actual classrooms. All these three objectives will be entertained in this study in detail.

Literature review

A teacher should possess the qualifications and professional knowledge required. A definitive and absolute definition of these qualifications is neither possible nor desirable, given the transient nature of teaching and the complexity of a teacher's role. However, a provisional list of these qualifications is essential for both the planning of teachers' education programmers and the establishment of the criteria for the recruitment, peer evaluation and self-evaluation of teachers. What is definitive in the recording and definition of these qualifications is the influence of multiple factors, which are referred to as "spheres of influence" (Corrigan & Haberman 1990, Christensen 1996, Imig & Switzer 1996). The contribution of teachers is of primary importance, as they have the experience gained from actual practice and are therefore in a position to evaluate their needs in terms of the qualifications that can facilitate their work and guarantee their effectiveness. The term that has been used over the past few years to render the matter of teachers' qualifications is "competence". In the framework of a broader perception of the term, a holistic approach is adopted (Ingvarson 1998 a & b).

In this study, the qualifications considered essential by teaching professionals to be effective in pedagogical and didactic work are put together based on the results of a national survey carried out in Greece, to which college education teachers of English language contributed. Since the 1920s, the issue of teachers' qualifications, which can guarantee their effectiveness, has been of concern for not only the science of Pedagogy, but also for those in charge of staffing schools with qualified professionals.

With regard to this issue, modern studies have revealed that the way in which a teacher carries out his/her work is determined by the union of his personality traits and acquired knowledge. A "good teacher" should possess a wide range of qualifications, which could, schematically, be classified as follows:

I. Personality traits, attitudes and beliefs

These include personality traits related to the professional role of a teacher, which can be nurtured and developed through initial education and continuous training (Whitty 1996: 89-90). Specifically, studies have shown that one of the merits of this program is giving a chance for those working in other sectors to join teaching at some point in their career (Sharma, 2013). In this case, teacher educators should be responsive to the needs of teacher candidates in developing their competence. So, teacher educators should develop the capacity of teachers. traits such as flexibility in terms of the appearance in front of students, a sense of humor, a sense of fairness, patience, enthusiasm, creativity, care and interest in the students, all contribute to the effectiveness of teachers (Malikow 2005, Harslett et al., 2000).

These also include a teacher's attitudes and beliefs on teaching, learning, his/her role, all of which affect the way s/he chooses, evaluates and comprehends the knowledge acquired, as well as the way s/he benefits from this knowledge in practice. As this very practice is shaped by that knowledge (Feiman-Nemser 1990, Schön 1983, Zeichner & Liston 1996). The attitudes of teachers affect their degree of commitment to their duties, the way they teach and treat their students, as well as how they perceive their professional growth (Chen & Rovegno 2000, Darling- Hammond 2000). Specifically, teachers that have high expectations for their students and insist on promoting learning for all students tend to be more effective (Malikow 2005, McBer 2000). Another factor which contributes to the effectiveness of teachers is a feeling of commitment to the job at hand (Coladarsi 2002) and interest in the personal life of students and their families (Harslett et al. 2000). Lastly, "knowledge of self" and contemplation are worth mentioning, in that they presuppose critical and careful reflection, on the part of the teacher, on her/his actions and self (Turner-Bisset 2001: 110-112).

McBer (2000), from a series of interviews with teachers, identified 16 "professional characteristics", including personality traits and individual attitudes, which she then classified into five groups: a) Professionalism: commitment, confidence, trustworthiness, respect; b) Thinking: analytic and conceptual thinking; c) Expectations: disposal of achievement of high objectives, disposal for permanent comprehension of reality (e.g. the students, the order), and undertaking of initiatives; d) Leadership: flexibility, accountability, passion for learning; e) Relations with other: fertile interaction which involved in the educational process, skills of common work and comprehension.

II. Pedagogical Skills and Knowledge

Didactic and pedagogical skills are not only understood as familiarization with techniques that are then used mechanically, but also as the acquisition of routines which, without a doubt, every teacher needs in order to save time and energy for the more significant aspects of his work; at the same time, they refer to a set of theoretical principles and research data that lead to a variety of techniques and strategies which a teacher chooses and shapes, depending on the circumstances (for the discussion on teacher skills as an element of professional competency, see Beyer 2002: 311, Conczy et al. 1990, Oser et al. 2006: 1-7).

A plethora of related studies shows specific actions by teachers which can be considered factors for their effectiveness. With regard to the teaching approach, it seems that the more effective teachers (McBer 2000, Jasman 2002, Anderson 2004): set realistic objectives, try and give incentives to students for learning, apply various teaching methods,

select participative forms of teaching, test and create didactic material, present information in a clear manner, combine words with pictures, use various teaching aids, maximize teaching time through systematic measures (e.g. planning, reduced disturbances in the classroom), assign work that will stir the interests of the students, monitor and evaluate the progress of students, set evaluation criteria for students and inform the students, and provide feedback to the students. Another decisive factor in effectiveness is a teacher's ability to recognize the diversity of students, to choose the best method possible for each student, and to create incentives for students (Harslett et al., 2000).

Yet another important factor is teachers' cooperation not only with the students, but also with the parents of the students, their colleagues and the community at large (Jasman 2002). Lastly, effectiveness, to a great extent, depends on the way problems in the classroom are managed. Research shows that more effective teachers keep all happenings in the classroom in check, that they are constantly on alert, that they swiftly deal with any problem that may arise and that they adopt various ways of working with students (Everston and Randolph 1999, Wang et al., 1999).

A basic qualification, whatever the case, is the acquisition of an extended body of knowledge which contributes to the way the teacher performs in practice (Birman et al. 2000, Hawley & Valli 1999). Generally, a teacher's training is classified into three fields: subject knowledge, pedagogical and didactic studies, and teaching practice.

However, what still needs to be defined is what should be taught in these educational fields, especially in pedagogical studies. A way to define the contents of "professional knowledge" is to provide answers to the following questions: "What makes up the pedagogical and didactic work of a teacher?" and "What knowledge type and qualifications are needed for a teacher to cope?"

According to Shulman, pedagogical thought and action go through the following stages: a) understanding/ perception; b) modification / transformation; c) teaching; d) evaluation; e) feedback; f) reflection. For a teacher to cope with the above, "professional studies" are required, that is: a) pedagogical content knowledge and b) curriculum studies (Shulman 1986, Shulman 1987: 14-19). Turner-Bisset suggests a course that would instill the necessary qualifications and focus on the following fields (Turner Bisset 1999: 43-48, Turner-Bisset 2001): "substantive knowledge", "syntactic knowledge", beliefs about the subject, knowledge of curriculum, knowledge of contexts, knowledge of self, didactic training, knowledge of learners, knowledge of objectives and learning outcomes, general pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical-didactic amalgam and learning subject. This body of knowledge, that can guarantee teacher's expertise, is determined by existing conditions and contexts, as well as the personal experiences, beliefs and needs of each teacher, a fact that renders apriori definition of this knowledge which is extremely difficult. Nevertheless, there are knowledge fields that constitute a necessary prerequisite for every teacher, or at least for a large part of these knowledge fields, which form the basic part of "professional knowledge" (Meijer et al., 1999, Meijer et al., 2001), and these include:

a) Subject knowledge: the teaching subject does not coincide with the corresponding science; however, teaching a particular subject requires familiarization with scientific knowledge. The way each scientific field is approached and studied is strongly defined by the job and duties defined in the job description. For such a specific comprehension of scientific knowledge as a way of teaching, familiarization with the science and its dimensions is necessary.

Methods

Research Design

This study applies mixed approach; that is, it employs both quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection and analysis. This approach is found appropriate to answer the research questions related to the teachers' perceptions on their preparation and effectiveness for teaching English language and investigate the perceptions of language learners themselves about their teachers. The quantitative part was used with the questionnaire. However, much of the work was done qualitatively using interview and open-ended items of the questionnaire. By undertaking this research inquiry, the researcher attempted to understand teachers' perceptions about their preparation and effectiveness or experiences that benefitted their preparation for working with ELLs by asking the participating teachers to think deeply as they practice reflection, evaluation, and analysis while discussing on their preparatory experiences for teaching EFLs. The researcher tried to get thick descriptions on the issue (Glesne, 2011).

Research site selection

Concerning the study Site, Begae-Medir Teachers' Education College was selected as the study site. This selection process was carried out by drawing lotto for selecting only one out of ten Teacher Education Colleges in Amhara National Regional State, i.e Begae-Medir Teachers' Education College was selected. Fortunately, the College was nearer and easily accessible to the researcher compared to other Teacher Training Colleges such as Debre-Berhan, Debre-Markos, Finote-Selam and Enjibara. Since the colleges were established in almost similar bases, the researcher assumed that Begae-Medir Teachers' Education College could be representative of other colleges in Amhara National Regional State.

Participants

Regarding the participants of the study, eight college English language instructors, 31 trainees or third year English language students and three college administrators or officers (totally 42) were the participants of the study.

Data collection instruments

This study employed questionnaire, interviews and classroom observation to gather data. The instruments are briefly explained below.

Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire focused on their college teachers' preparations and effectiveness in teaching English language and pedagogical competency. The questionnaire used in this study is of two types. The first type was developed for the students and it constituted 33 close-ended items and five open-ended items (totally 38).

The second type of the questionnaire item is the teachers' questionnaire consisting 53 close-ended and seventeen open-ended items (totally 70 in number) and they also required information about the students' self-report concerning the English language instructors' PCK and their students' competence. The questionnaire role was categorized & explained in relation to the three purposes or objectives of the study.

Interview

Eleven semi-structured interview questions related to questionnaire items were prepared to the four of English instructors and they were interviewed. Three college administrators including the head of the English language department were also interviewed.

Similarly, nine interview questions in Amharic (to avoid communication barriers) based on the students' questionnaire were also developed for third year English students and administered to them.

In general, the interview items containing eleven questions were developed to strengthen the data obtained by employing the questionnaire items prepared for English instructors and by adapting the questionnaire items requiring information about both teachers' and students' competencies and application of teaching methods in English language (pedagogical application) because the interview questions were prepared based on the questionnaires after putting the data into the SPSS computer software and calculating the data and showing the result of the analysis of the responses.

The three types of the interview questions for English language instructors, would-be teachers and college officials were similar; they differed only in structure to fit the different participants.

Classroom observation

Date of observation was on 24/4, 2018 and 25/4, 2018 respectively. Two English language instructors having MA and M. Ed degrees were observed two times each while they were teaching in the class. They were randomly selected for the observation process, and a 26-item of categorical checklist (Yes/No) by adapting some of it based on the questionnaire items was developed for the classroom observation process.

As mentioned above, this study attempted to check college English language instructors' knowledge base, teaching practice, and their students' competence in the language and teaching it. Each instrument of data collection and components or items was prepared in a way to get the necessary data to answer the study objectives.

Reliability of the questionnaire

A Cronbach alpha was computed using SPSS Version 20 to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability index ranges from .691 to .923 which are all adequate to accept the questionnaire to collect data (Yalew, 2006, Amharic edition). The questionnaire was developed on a five-point Likert scale that ranged from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree'. The items of the students' questionnaire focused on their challenges in learning, their competence, the receptivity level of teachers and the perceptions of English language instructors and their pedagogical competency. The teachers' questionnaire also required information about their self-report concerning their PCK and their students' competence.

The Cronbach Alpha was computed to check whether or not the questionnaire instrument was reliable. The results of the Cronbach Alpha are summarized in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Reliability statistics of students' questionnaire

No.	Composite items	No. of items	Cronbach alpha

1	Teacher competency on language skills	5	.923
2	Teacher competency in teaching language areas	7	.708
3	Teacher competency in teaching methodology	6	.841
4	Teacher competency in providing supportive information/ advise	6	.695
5	Overall	24	.898
6	Students competency items	9	.691

The reliability index on each of the six sub-scores of teachers' questionnaire is high. It ranges from .718 on Items of Teachers' participation in Professional development activities to .972, and all are adequate to apply the questionnaire for data gathering.

Table2: Reliability statistics of teachers' questionnaire

No.	Composite items	No. of items	Cronbach alpha
1	Perceived degree of preparation of teachers in higher education	5	.829
2	Items on teachers' perceived level of competency in basic areas of language.	5	.951
3	Items on Perceived level of competency in general and subject specific pedagogy.	4	.944
4	Items on Perceived competency of teachers on conducting Classroom teaching practice	8	.969
5	Items On Supporting students develop higher order thinking	6	.856
6	Items on Teachers' participation in Professional development activities	4	.718
	Items on Students' competency as perceived by their teachers	12	.972

Results and Discussion

The data obtained through questionnaire and interviews were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, means and standard deviations) and explanations. The analyses are presented below. Table 3 indicates CTE teachers' competency in the four language skills and grammar as perceived by students.

Table 3: CTE English teachers' competency in four language skills as perceived by students

Descriptive Statistics: frequency (percentage) mean and standard deviation						
Item	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std
1. Grammar	3(9.7)	5(16.1)	14(45.2)	9(29.9)	3.9355	.92864
2. Writing	3(9.7)	6(19.4)	13(41.9)	9(29.9)	3.9032	.94357
3. Reading	3(9.7)	4(12.9)	11(35.5)	13(41.9)	4.0968	.97826
4. Speaking	3(9.7)	4(12.9)	11(35.5)	13(41.9)	4.0968	.97826
5. Listening	5(16.1)	4(12.9)	13(41.9)	9(29.9)	3.8387	1.03591

Key: D= Disagree; U= Undecided; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree

As shown in Table 3, teachers' competency in all the language skills and grammar is high,

the minimum being 3.8387 and the maximum 4.0968 while the expected mean is 2.5. Comparatively, the teachers are highly competent in reading and speaking, while they are less competent in listening. The standard deviations indicate that the respondents had varied responses.

Similarly, seven items were presented for students to examine their perceptions about their instructors' competency with respect to teaching the English language. The means of their perceptions concerning teachers' pedagogical competence are less than the means of their competency in the four language skills and grammar. As table 4 shows below, better ratings are observed with respect to teaching language skills and regular assessment about students' performance. Regarding the rest of items like use of communicative approach, giving enough time for students to exercise language skills ratings given are nearly undecided.

Table 4: Teachers' competence on teaching language 'areas' of English as perceived by students

Descriptive Statistics: frequency (percentage) mean and standard deviation							
Item	SD	D	U	A	SA	Mean	Std
Teacher uses communicative approach	2(6.5)	2(6.5)	10(32.3)	10(32.3)	7(22.6)	3.5806	1.11876
Teachers teach all skills of language	-	1(3.2)	3(9.7)	13(41.9)	14(45.2)	4.2903	.78288
Teachers give enough time to exercise language skills	3(9.7)	3(9.7)	7(22.6)	9(29.0)	9(29.0)	3.5806	1.28515
Teachers regularly assess students language progress	-	2(6.5)	4(12.5)	11(35.5)	14(45.5)	4.1935	.90992
Teachers use varied methods to narrow the gap among students competency	-	6(19.4)	4(12.9)	13(41.9)	8(25.8)	3.7419	1.06357
Teachers re-teach if students do not understand	-	6(19.4)	6(19.4)	13(41.9)	6(19.4)	3.6129	1.02233
Teachers enable students achieve minimum learning competency	1(3.2)	10(32.3)	1(3.2)	10(32.3)	9(29.9)	3.5161	1.31329

Students were asked to express their views on their teachers' competency on language skills, teaching language areas, and methodology as well as providing supportive information/ advice. Regarding the competency of their teachers on basic language skills, students perceive that their teachers seem better in reading and speaking followed by grammar and writing. The least rating is on listening. It seems that listening might be less explicit to the students to judge compared with other skills. In other words, students can notice skills like speaking, reading, writing and grammar easily in the classroom interaction with their teachers. But in the case of listening, it is not easy to identify listening problems or barriers during pre-listening, listening and after listening.

The interview results also indicated the similar findings. Students' responses varied from

'not competent' to 'competent' and even 'more than enough'. There were students who said 'fully' or 'partially competent' although some remarks like 'the problems of not sharing their knowledge' are added. These results were consistent with their responses to the questionnaire items. However, students' perceptions regarding teachers' competence in pedagogical experiences were less than their competency in language skills. The students' interview responses ranged from 'low level' to 'very good competence'. The majority of students' responded either 'average', 'good' or 'satisfactory'. Some of their remarks such as a) teachers do not waste class time, b) they give tutorials, and c) they use student-centered methods were positive. Students had also provided negative remarks that include a) they do not treat students properly, and b) they lack initiatives. Many of their interview responses were consistent with their responses in the questionnaire.

Respondents confirmed that teachers provided adequate supportive information or advised students properly. They witnessed that teachers supported students in developing problem-solving skills, self-confidence and an experience of hard-working. Another issue discussed in the interview with students was the English language teachers' support of students to develop higher order thinking. The response for this question also ranges from "no effort is being made" to "there is much effort from the part of teachers to improve students higher order thinking. Most of the respondents, however witnessed that the teachers had endeavored to help students develop higher order thinking capacity. This result agrees with the students' responses obtained from the questionnaire items. Some of the ways designed to help students develop higher order thinking include classroom activities, organizing clubs aimed to encourage their creativity and confidence.

Students also reflected their views on commitment, cooperation and acceptance of teachers in the interview. Students' responses on teachers' commitment vary from 'yes all have good commitment' to 'no commitment' but 85 per cent of student respondents said that 85 per cent of their teachers have good commitment to teaching. Most students also replied that their English teachers have good acceptance and cooperation by their students and other teachers.

Concerning the colleges' English language teachers' success in producing competent teachers, students gave responses that range from 'yes they are successful' to 'not successful' for various reasons. 85 per cent of students' responses, however, is 'most successful'. Some remarks that affect the success were also pointed out: the use of English language instructors' inappropriate methods and improper treatment of would-be teachers from their side, and lack of giving proper attention to the teaching-learning process on the part of the would-be teachers.

Would-be teachers seem to perceive themselves better regarding their competencies with respect to English language skills and teaching the language at primary schools. Their rating was even greater than what they gave for their instructors. This is a good trend if it is real and supported by other data sources. More specifically, they said that they joined the program based on their preferences and choices. They are showing improvement in the language. They feel they are competent to teach the language at any grade level in primary schools.

To cross-check the students' responses that were given on close-ended items and open-ended questions are summarized below:

1. *Less receptivity level that teacher candidates show on college English language instructors*

The would-be teachers' responses in relation to the perceived less receptivity level that would-be teachers show on college English language instructors range from 'no problem' to 'teachers' improper treatment and students' serious language problems'. The major less receptivity levels include a) teachers' authoritarian behavior and neglecting students' needs, b) English language instructors' less subject-matter competence and English language proficiency, c) lack of modules, d) inadequate time provision for tasks, and e) bad rapport between instructors and would-be teachers.

The responses indicated above are given to answer the research objective 1.

2. *Students' competence on English language teachers.* Students assume that they are competent teacher candidates. They perceive that they have high self-efficacy. They witnessed that College has enabled them to be competent to effectively teach in primary schools.

To triangulate this, interview was given to students to know how they were implementing the knowledge and skills they got in teaching practice or practicum. As their responses indicated, students seemed to overrate themselves because almost all said that they can implement their knowledge and skills in teaching at primary schools easily. They seemed to be ambitious. But their teachers did not confirm this.

Questionnaire and interview items were presented to teachers on perceived degree of preparation in higher education; level of competency in basic areas of language in the general and subject specific pedagogy; on supporting students to develop higher order thinking; on classroom teaching; on teachers' participation in professional development activities as well as on their students' competency.

To examine the degree of preparation of teachers in their higher education experiences, questions representing broad areas or contents like mastery of the language, general and subject area methods, assessments, and professional development issues were presented to teachers. The teachers' responses were not found to be consistent. Most of the teachers responded (in closed-ended items) that they were 'well' or 'very well' prepared in the language as well as in teaching skills in their stay in higher education institutions. However, their responses did not agree with their responses for the open-ended items and interviews which reflected differing views. It seemed that they did not feel satisfied with the comprehensiveness or adequacy of their academic preparation. On the relevance of the contents of higher education experiences to the current teaching assignment, some teachers expressed that it was relevant while some others said it was not relevant. The same response pattern was also observed with respect to preparation of teachers on subject specific methodology of teaching English; the success of higher education institutions in producing competent teachers to teach in CTEIs and on the effectiveness of their higher experiences in producing competent primary school English teachers. Some said that it was satisfactory. Some others said that it was not adequate.

Concerning the perception level of competency of teachers with respect to most English language teachers, 6 teachers out of 8 teachers perceived that they were proficient in the language in writing and reading in general, but they were not certain in some aspects of the language such as grammar, speaking, and listening.

Regarding supporting students to develop higher order thinking such as problem-solving methods, creativity and reflection, more than half of the teachers (5 out of 8) replied that

there was an effort in doing it as required. On helping their students develop their English language proficiency and PCK in teaching English, teachers responded that they did this in different ways of advising students to work hard; by motivating them to be autonomous/independent learners; by telling different tips; by encouraging them to participate in ELIC program, by giving tutorials; and by giving different activities (please see research objective three above).

Five of eight teachers replied that the college had professional development program and provided support relevant to their teaching. But half of them did not participate regularly in it. Regarding the activities teachers participate in professional development, almost all teachers participated in HDP, CPD, TDP, SDU, school placement and in different workshops like USAID, and ELIP but they were refrained to give any remark concerning the relevance of those activities they participated in professional development.

80 per cent of English language instructors had reservations concerning their students' competency in basic language skills, knowledge and exercising general and subject specific teaching methodologies. Two of eight instructors said that 'the would-be graduating students' English language competency was below expected; they were so poor in the language; they lack English language skills; they lack competency and have poor background knowledge. But this was not consistent with the data obtained from students. Students in both the questionnaire and interview perceived that they are competent enough in the language as well as teaching it. It seemed that students ambitiously overestimated their competence. As it is known, it is natural to put oneself in a better position even though actual ability is at low level. But on the average instructors did not exaggerate their competency that much.

Some instructors said that students' lack of interest, shortage of time, teachers' absence and inadequate sharing of PCK were challenges. Besides, students' background knowledge is poor, and they lack proficiency in language; they do not fulfill the minimum requirement to join the college; most students are not willing to learn; students have no previous know-how of the language. So teachers claim that they always begin from the start while teaching.

All college officials interviewed were male and MA holders. One from dean office, the other one from instructional leaders and the third one, the head of English language department were involved in the interview as planned. Such participants served the college for 2-4 years in the current position and they had classroom observation experiences about English language instructors. Interview questions prepared by adapting some of the teachers' questionnaire were presented to them. The responses they gave were summarized thematically as follows.

1. On the proficiency level of the English language teachers in the College

Two respondents seemed to perceive as if they were proficient to the level. They had enough preparation and competency for teaching; they had better competency that fits the college's standard, but one of them was uncertain about his competency. Three of them gave different reflections on teaching performance (practice) of ELTs. One of the respondents confirmed that ELTs were competent enough but the other two did not know or were uncertain. They also said that the college teachers had good motivation/commitment to teach.

2. On teachers' effort to enhance students' higher order thinking in addition to the trainees'

language development

One of them replied that instructors are attempting to develop their students in higher order thinking as much as they could. But the two respondents' view was not consistent to this because they said that they had no information concerning teaching performance of instructors. This view was not consistent with their post or responsibility. They were expected to conduct classroom observation of such teachers in actual teaching at least to fill efficiency score every semester and from classroom observation experiences. College administrators and the English department head were expected to judge instructors' performance; they had to identify the instructors' strengths and weakness.

3. On the professional development programs

The participants responded that the teachers engaged in professional development programs. Respondents answered that there was HDP for all teachers and ELIC for English language department. Regarding teachers' involvement in professional development programs, respondents invariably replied that all of them participated actively according to their needs and level of professional development.

In addition to the questionnaire and interviews, the researcher had employed classroom observation checklist consisting of 26 questions to gather data.

The date of observation was on 24/4, 2011/2019 and 25/4, 2011/2019 respectively. Two qualified teachers were observed. The first one had an MA degree in TEFL and the other one has M.Ed. The lesson topic of the first instructor was about simple past tense and the other instructor was teaching about the problems of listening skills.

The two classes were observed twice in one week. Classes observed were third year linear English units. What has been seen was indicated in table 5 below.

Table 5: Observation of classroom teaching situation of college instructors

No	Teaching performances	Yes	No
1	Presents the topic of the class	2	
2	Presents desired learning to be achieved at the end of the class	2	
3	Displays vocabulary adequate to content and students' level	2	
4	Exhibits adequate level of subject matter mastery	2	
5	Exhibits professional motivation and enthusiasm	2	
6	Maximizes students time and engagement in learning tasks	2	
7	Encourages students' active participation	2	
8	Ensures that students understand the work they are required to do	2	
9	Sets tasks and activities at the level of the students	2	
10	Creates a positive and supportive environment	2	
11	Manages his/her behavior appropriately	2	
12	Manages students' behavior appropriately	2	
13	Skillful in motivating students to learn	1	1
14	Skillful in planning	2	
15	Makes clear explanations	2	

16	Uses variety of didactic resources		2
17	Uses variety of teaching techniques/methods		2
18	Assesses learners' progress continuously	2	
19	Reviews key points as necessary	2	
20	Recommends content-fixing exercises	1	1
21	Skillful in giving feedbacks	2	
22	Indicates or makes bibliographical references		2
23	Uses clear and correct instructional language	1	1
24	Uses adequate tone of voice	1	1
25	Links learning with students experiences and real-life	1	1
26	At the end of the class, the teacher evaluates class, allowing for an integral view of the whole.	2	

Two teachers' class instructions in Begae-Medir Teacher Education College in South Gondar zone were observed using observation checklist prepared for this purpose. The checklist consisted of 26 items dealing with teachers' and students activities in the classroom at different phases of instruction. The one who taught 'simple past tense' was talking a lot, and only attempted to make students participate in the class by giving them exercises. Students were busy in doing the exercises. Then the instructor was encouraging students to answer questions by calling their names one by one. The class was warm and very impressive. This might be because the lesson was not that much challenging. The other instructor grouped students, gave them directions and acted more as a facilitator while teaching listening. He called a student from each group to present what the group prepared. He gave correction on mispronunciations of students. According to the researcher's opinion, the instructor should have said a lot about listening problems.

Anderson and Lynch (1998) stated that oral communication directly involves both listening and speaking; people need to listen to what their interlocutors say and respond. If they are unable to listen effectively, their communication will break down. On a daily basis we work with people who have different opinions, values, beliefs, and needs more than our own. At present, people are drawn closer with the use of technology like face time, video chat and the like. It requires real time face-to-face interaction, which uses listening and speaking skills.

Conclusion

Questions regarding the college ELT's acceptance and competence in their professional activities were presented to students, teachers themselves and college officials. As their responses analyzed above indicate, students seem to perceive their teachers are fair in reading and speaking followed by grammar and writing; but less fair in competency in teaching the English language and teaching subject specific methodology. On the other hand, students perceived that their teachers seem better in giving supportive information or advice to students, in helping students develop problem solving skills, self confidence and a sense of hard-working abilities. This is consistent with their responses to the interviews.

The responses obtained from English language instructors differed from the students' responses. They said they feel proficient in writing and reading but they are not certain in grammar, speaking and listening as well as subject specific methodologies. But 90 per

cent of them perceived themselves as proficient in conducting classroom teaching-learning activities. This is also supported by most of the responses obtained from interviewing teachers and college officials as well as from classroom observation data. Especially, in observing classroom teaching, those two ELTs demonstrated their language, subject matter and methodology mastery as well as establishing good relation with students, managing their class, ensuring students' participation, and assessing teaching-learning processes. To put it in a nutshell:

1. 80 per cent of English language instructors perceived that they do not feel successful because students' academic background at entry level is extremely low. In both questionnaire and interviews, teachers confirmed that their graduating students are at low level in language proficiency or in teaching it at primary schools. But the college officials said that their college teachers are successful in producing competent primary school teachers to teach English language;
2. Most students, like that of the officers, perceive that ELT or the college is successful in producing competent primary school teachers of English Language;
3. English language teachers are more or less successful in producing competent primary school teachers that can teach English language although ELTs at colleges are not certain. Students seem to overrate themselves with respect to their competency and their instructors seem to under rate the students' competency. Some students also disclosed areas of their weaknesses in different aspects of language skills like listening, speaking, reading, writing, and grammar;
4. Teachers help students develop problem-solving skills, but they do not focus on the students' creativity, and exert limited effort in helping students improve their higher order thinking; and
5. Teachers provide adequate classroom activities, organize clubs, employ varied teaching methods, and encourage students to speak in English though much attention is not given.

Recommendations

The researcher recommended that:

1. Begae-Medir Teachers' Education College should consider all the comments suggested by all the respondents participated in this study. For example, pocket money should be released to the trainees on time and course modules should be given as soon as the trainees started learning after entering the college.
2. College English instructors should treat trainees or college students in a good manner while they are taking the training and
3. The trainees, English instructors and college administrators should cooperate each other and accomplish their duties and responsibilities in the college.

Acknowledgments

First of all, the researcher of this study would like to thank the department of English language and literature at the University of Gondar, Ethiopia, for giving him the scholarship opportunity at PhD level. Again, the researcher would like to acknowledge Begae-Medir Teacher Education College for allowing the researcher to collect the necessary data from all the respondents in the college.

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