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## EVALUATING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE TEACHING PERFORMANCE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND THE TRAINING THEY RECEIVED

ОЦІНЮВАННЯ СПІВВІДНОШЕННЯ МІЖ ПІДГОТОВКОЮ ВЧИТЕЛІВ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ ПОЧАТКОВОЇ ШКОЛИ ТА ОТРИМАНОЮ ПІДГОТОВКОЮ

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**Melese Mengesha BESHAN<sup>1</sup>, & Alemu Hailu ANSHU<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Department of English Language and Literature, Wollo University, Ethiopia.

✉ E-Mail: [melese.mengesha@aau.edu.et](mailto:melese.mengesha@aau.edu.et)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9724-4022>



<sup>2</sup> Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

✉ E-Mail: [alemuhailu2011@gmail.com](mailto:alemuhailu2011@gmail.com)

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0041-1095>

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching is a profession that requires its practitioners to be trained and certified. The training may take the form of pre-service or in-service. The teachers who pass through either of these modes of training are also required to possess ample and reasonable knowledge and skills of the subject matter they teach. In addition, the training that

Викладання – професія, яка вимагає, щоб її виконували педагоги, які пройшли професійну сертифіковану підготовку. Підготовка може бути попередньою, для майбутніх учителів у виші або вже для працюючих учителів без відриву від роботи. Учителя, які проходять будь-яку з цих форм підготовки, мають володіти достатніми знаннями та навичками з предмету, який вони викладають. Крім того, підготовка, яку вони

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they take should focus on shaping their attitudes towards the teaching profession so that they can adapt, improve or change the reality they find in schools. In addition, they are expected to possess ample experiences of teaching.

**Purpose.** This explanatory study explored the relationship between the training that teacher trainees received at Kemissie College of Teachers Education in Ethiopia and their teaching practice at primary schools.

**Methodology.** The researchers collected the data for the study from pre-service teachers of the college using a questionnaire, interview, document analysis and classroom observations. A mixed approach was employed to collect and analyze the data.

The **results** show that some of the courses contribute less to helping the trainees develop the required competence to teach the subject. There are also neglected but relevant courses. In addition, the practicum program is not being run as it is intended to be run. The relationship between the training that the teachers received and the teaching practice at primary schools is not strong. Therefore, it is recommended that more relevant courses and contents should be given emphasis. The practicum program should also acquaint trainees with the reality at primary schools in order to attain the intended purpose of the program. Supervisors and mentors should also guide the trainees and help them progress in their profession.

**Conclusion.** This study found that the teacher training curriculum focuses on subject area knowledge, professional skills and teaching practices. These components are essential and helpful to train competent primary school teachers. The participants in the study revealed that some of the courses that they attended have contributed positively to their effective teaching of English at primary schools.

**Keywords:** received training, teaching practice, content knowledge, pedagogical skills.

проходять, має бути зосереджена на формуванні їхнього ставлення до професії, до якої вони приєднуються, щоб вони могли адаптуватися, покращувати чи змінювати реальність у школах. Крім того, очікується, що вони володіють сучасним досвідом викладання.

**Мета.** Це дослідження вивчає взаємозв'язок між підготовкою, яку вчителі-стажери пройшли в Кеміссійському педагогічному коледжі, та їхньою педагогічною практикою в початкових класах школи.

**Методологія.** Автори зібрали дані для дослідження від майбутніх вчителів початкової школи в коледжі за допомогою анкетування, інтерв'ю, аналізу документів та спостережень. Для збору та аналізу даних використовувався змішаний підхід.

**Результати** показують, що деякі з дисциплін менше сприяють розвитку компетенцій майбутніх учителів, які необхідні для викладання предмету. Є й невдалі, але актуальні дисципліни. Крім того, іноді програма практикуму виконується не так, як планується. Зв'язок між професійною підготовкою, яку пройшли майбутні вчителі, та педагогічною практикою в початковій школі не є міцним. Тому рекомендується приділяти більшу увагу релевантним дисциплінам і їх змісту. Крім того, програма практикуму має ознайомити майбутніх учителів з реальністю в початковій школі для досягнення мети програми. Керівники та наставники також мають скеровувати майбутніх учителів і допомагати їм просуватися у своїй професії.

**Висновок.** У цьому дослідженні встановлено, що навчальна програма підготовки майбутніх вчителів зосереджена на знаннях предметної галузі, професійних навичках і педагогічній практиці. Ці компоненти є важливими та допомагають в цілому отримати компетентних учителів для початкової школи. Учасники дослідження виявили, що більшість дисциплін, які вони відвідали, позитивно сприяли їхньому ефективному викладанню мови в початковій школі.

**Ключові слова:** отримана підготовка, педагогічна практика, зміст знань, педагогічна майстерність.

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers, who are the backbone of quality education, are responsible for enhancing the indispensable skills and positive outlook of their students towards the discipline that they study. However, the findings of many researchers indicate that teacher education colleges are performing a mediocre job and are not keeping up with the 21<sup>st</sup>-century because of the lack of a bridge between theory and practice (Abrham et al., 2022; Berry,

2008; Cuane, 2022; Hui & Grossman, 2008). If teachers are not equipped with the required competence, the quality of education will be affected severely. This requires us to evaluate and revise teacher training methods.

Currently, there are common understandings across different education systems on the nature of second/foreign language teacher education (SLTE) to the extent that it should include skills, knowledge of learners, learning, and the learning context. In addition, a curriculum can attain its aims when the body responsible for undertaking it acknowledges the expectations of those who are, to a large extent, directly influenced by its implementation.

The latest models in SLTE, which are proposed by Day (2008), indicate that student factors are part of, and interdependent with, the teaching-learning process. Rotaru (2014) asserts that teacher training should move to and be boosted with more contemporary and effective perspectives, such as intercultural, pedagogical, technological and content-related competences. Such a dynamic and progressive nature of the instructional process has forced different countries, including Ethiopia, to carry out various remarkable structural and curricular reforms.

Most of these changes include reforming trainee recruitment methods, the course content, the modalities of implementing, controlling and evaluating the programs, and the institutional conditions that impede or facilitate the teaching-learning process (MoE, 2013). In addition, efforts have been made to improve the quality of education by revising the curricula and increasing the budgeting scheme for education. Despite these reforms, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has identified that there is still a huge gap in attaining its educational goals because of a lack of capacity. Such problems are faced since decisions regarding education are made without considering the needs of the teachers and the schools that are directly influenced by the decisions (Assefa et al, 2021).

Several studies hint that the involvement of poorly prepared teachers in teaching the English language at primary school plays a part in the deterioration of quality education in the country. The findings of Temesgen (2017), for example, indicate that the poor performance of primary school ELT teachers is the result of a lack of sufficient understanding of the ELT methods offered during their training. The experimental study conducted by Mulatu et al. (2017) adds that English language teachers exhibited poor performance even after taking additional training. Therefore, it is our concern to explore trainees' reflections on the training they received and its relation to the practice of English language teaching in primary schools.

In addition to these studies, we conducted observations during micro-teaching sessions in university classrooms in order to gather information about the teaching performance of primary school English language teachers who attend their summer program. As a result, most teachers were struggling to teach the language. These observations, therefore, inspired us to examine the alignment of the training that primary school English language teachers receive with their actual teaching performance.

Furthermore, the available local studies reveal that the primary focus of English language teacher education is on methodology and the language proficiency of the teachers, the teachers' competence, the content of teacher training programs, and political influences on teacher education, policies and curricula. Hence, it is rare to find a

study devoted to investigating the relationship between the training received in teacher education institutions and the actual teaching practice at primary schools.

Moreover, complaints from teacher educators at various colleges about the competence of English language teachers provoked our curiosity to investigate the issue. As a result, this study aimed to:

1. assess the perceptions of English language teacher trainees towards the training received from Kemissie College of Teachers Education;
2. examine the actual teaching practices of the English language teachers in primary schools;
3. determine the relationship between the received training and the English language teaching practice at primary schools.

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

Teacher training intends to equip teachers with subject matter knowledge and pedagogical strategies to better help their students learn. Such training focuses on the pedagogical expertise and subject matter knowledge of teacher educators, the process of equipping trainee teachers with the required knowledge and skills, the appropriateness of the contents of the training curricula and the involvement of the trainees in practice with appropriate supervision and reflection.

Teacher educators are expected to lead and guide trainees so that they can become intellectually and professionally mature. This is highly dependent on their competence to shape trainees with the full understanding of different tenets of the profession. In this regard, Merawi (2020, p.95) claims that “86.9% of primary school teachers in Amhara Region are not widely utilizing appropriate learner-centered approaches in their classrooms.”

On the other hand, trainees need resources which fit the intended graduate and professional profiles. Such inputs should enable them to integrate their skills and knowledge with the actual teaching context. Therefore, teaching practices are among the most important academic elements in teacher education (Tindowen et al, 2019, p. 280). Le and Tran (2021) further state that the teacher educators’ commitment to invest their knowledge in trainees facilitates the transferability of the acquired knowledge and skills into actual teaching practice. In addition, such efforts can bring changes and developments in trainees’ behaviors and insights.

Teacher training requires focusing on the principles of language acquisition and learning, pedagogical aspects of the profession and the effectiveness of candidates in identifying problems and providing community services. In relation to this, Rao (2019) contends that the contents of a teacher training curriculum should balance such issues. This is because “... there is difference among teacher training institutions regarding the approaches towards the education and training of teachers” Beshah and Anshu (2024, p 2).

The effort of incorporating the required contents in a training program and executing it with the aid of appropriate inputs can help to provide schools with competent teachers. Hence, teachers also need pedagogical and interpersonal competence and attitudinal change that will enable them accomplish their responsibilities in order to achieve effective outcomes in academic and non-academic contexts. The necessity of

knowledge, skills and attitudinal change towards the profession suggests a holistic view of teacher training. The effort of engaging teachers in various courses indicates that interrelated issues make teachers more effective.

The effort of engaging trainees in complex but interrelated issues enables them to acquire the required knowledge and skills and enhance their teaching (Absolor, 2021). Primary school students' understanding of concepts in relation to the subjects that they learn is highly influenced by their teachers' comprehensive and adaptable understanding of the subject they teach. This is essential because the "learning outcomes from many primary school children have not yet reached the minimum expected standards" (Mulualem, 2023, p.21).

As a result, teacher education programs should be revisited and evaluated. The evaluation should target the necessary language proficiency for the trainees and ensure they reach the required level. Any language teacher education program should include not only what Chomsky calls linguistic competence, but also communicative competence because the ultimate goal of designing such a program is to impart competence and communication skills. Language teacher education should prioritize developing both linguistic competence and communicative competence in trainee teachers. The ultimate goal of such programs is to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills to foster communicative competence in their own students.

In order to achieve this objective, the teacher education curriculum in Ethiopia incorporates courses and contents which focus on the major language skills, linguistics and literature. However, emphasizing such courses and contents alone is not enough because the trainees need the skill of teaching the language, ranging from planning and designing a lesson to implementing authentic/continuous assessment (Dawit, 2023). In addition, they need experiential knowledge which can mainly be developed through teaching practices.

Consequently, the teacher training programs of the country includes a series of teaching practices in primary schools to provide trainees with opportunities to put pedagogical theories and skills into practice. Teachers are also characterized by their personal and social skills, which enable them to communicate with different stakeholders such as colleagues, students' parents and other school communities. In a related toke, Beshah and Anshu (2024) assert, the Ethiopian "...teacher education program includes some courses which focus on interpersonal skills of teachers [which] focus on attitudes, moral and ethics, and professional identity".

Since the primary school English language curriculum in Ethiopia requires teachers to make the teaching and learning process meaningful and engaging in functional skills, teacher training should enable teachers to construct new schema that better align with the actual teaching practice at primary schools and to handle the suggested methodology in the curriculum (Assefa, 2021; Komorowska, 2022).

This refers to the training that teachers receive on how the contents of the curriculum for primary schools can be delivered to students to make sense of or master the content. Apolonio (2021) adds that when teachers apply what is suggested in a curriculum, the students' knowledge and skills will be enhanced. The teacher education programs should also help the trainees to be familiar with the curriculum of the primary schools.

This enables them to understand the challenges that they may face during their actual teaching practice. The pre-service teachers, therefore, should be trained in a way that helps their primary school students improve their English language literacy. In the Ethiopian context, teacher education institutions are mandated to provide quality, relevant and goal-oriented experience to trainees. As quality teacher education is a key factor in providing quality education for students, the curriculum of the program is anticipated to ensure that the quality of training meets the pressing demands of learners and society in general.

## **METHODOLOGY**

To investigate the relationship between English language teacher training and the teaching performance of the teachers, a descriptive research design was used. The study was carried out in the four available primary schools of Kemissie town: Sadasa, Repie, Zero Hulet and Haromsa primary schools. The study focused on the 23 English language teachers at the schools with the aim of correlating the training they received from teacher training colleges and their teaching performance. These teachers responded to the questionnaire, and participated in the interviews. The interview was conducted with those who were willing to be observed during their actual teaching.

The study used three instruments of data collection: questionnaire, interview and observation. The questionnaire was administered to the teachers with the aim of gathering information about the effectiveness of the received training and actual teaching performance. The questionnaire items are presented on a five-point scale (VH = very high; H= high; NS = I am not sure; L= low; and VL = very low, and VA = very adequate; A = adequate; I = inadequate; and VI = very inadequate). The items are valid and reliable since they are used by various researchers such as Eret (2013) and Absolor (2021).

In addition, the questions and checklists were submitted to our colleagues for their comments. Next, observations were conducted to gather information about the actual teaching performance of the teachers in the primary school classrooms. We observed the classes of six randomly selected teachers with the help of checklists. The purpose of carrying out the observations was to assess the teachers' actual performance of teaching English language and the effect of the received training on their actual teaching performance. The observational data were reliable as they helped to crosscheck/validate the participants' responses in the questionnaire.

Then, the interview was conducted with the six teachers whose classes were observed. This interview was intended to discover whether the training program is effective enough to prepare them for their teaching positions in primary schools. In other words, the question was asked to discover their views regarding the transferability of what they had learned on the training program to their actual teaching in primary schools.

After securing the consent of the participants, we used a digital recorder (OLYMPUS Digital Voice Recorder VN-713PC) to record the interview and the teaching practices of the teachers. The recordings were also supported by our personal notes.

The data collected from the teachers who completed the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while the data collected using interview and observations were transcribed, coded and analyzed using content analysis.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**– The adequacy of the received training and the teaching performance of participants**

This section presents the correlation between the adequacy of the received training and the teaching performance in teaching English language at primary schools.

**Table 1**

*The received training and respondents' teaching performance in terms of fundamental aspects of language*

The training gives sufficient emphasis to:	Adequacy of received training				x̄
	VA	A	I	VI	
the relationship among the major language skills;	5 (21.7%)	3 (13%)	9 (39%)	1 (4.3%)	3.1
functions of language and registers of language (e.g., social versus academic language) in English;	8 (35%)	2 (8.7%)	8 (35%)	3 (13%)	3.2
the structure of English language;	6 (26%)	7 (30.4%)	7 (30.4%)	2 (8.7%)	3.3
the nature of language and basic concepts of language systems	5 (21.7%)	13 (56.5%)	3 (13%)	2 (8.7%)	3.7
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>3.3</b>
The teacher is able to:	Teaching performance				x̄
	VH	H	L	VL	
use the interrelatedness of the language skills to develop students' English language proficiency;	0 (0%)	4 (17.4%)	11 (48%)	3 (13%)	2.4
apply knowledge of the functions and registers of language to develop instructional materials, deliver instruction, and promote students' English language proficiency;	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	13 (56.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.7
model instruction in the structure of English language;	2 (8.7%)	6 (26%)	14 (60.9%)	1 (4.3%)	2.7
use knowledge of the nature of language and basic language concepts to facilitate student learning in the classroom.	4 (17.4%)	0 (0%)	17 (74%)	1 (4.3%)	2.5
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.6</b>

The data above show that most respondents feel that they received adequate training about the structure of English language and basic concepts of the language system. This is evidenced by the mean scores of each of these items (3.3 and 3.7 respectively), which are equal to/above the grand mean (3.3). Hence, the participants feel that the training has given them opportunities to acquire knowledge about grammar and basic concepts of the language system. However, they feel that the training does not give adequate emphasis to the interrelationship between the major language skills, and the training gives inadequate emphasis to functions and register in English.

With regard to the teaching performance of the participants, the data indicates that the teachers performed poorly in integrating and teaching language skills to their pupils because the mean result for this item (2.4) is below the grand mean (2.6). In addition, the mean result regarding the teachers' performance in the basic concepts of the language system, such as phonology, morphology, syntax (2.5) is below the grand mean which indicates that the teachers have lower competence in this regard.

The Spearman rho correlation analysis conducted indicated a significant positive correlation between the received training and the teachers' teaching performance,  $r(23)=0.424$ ,  $p=0.044$ . This moderated correlation indicates that the received training under fundamental aspects is positively correlated with the teaching performance of the teachers in the primary school classroom. For a two-tailed test, the p-value is less than 0.05 (common threshold) suggesting that the correlation is statistically significant.

**Table 2**

*The received training and respondents' teaching performance in terms of language acquisition*

The training gives sufficient emphasis to:	Adequacy of received training				$\bar{x}$
	VA	A	I	VI	
theories, concepts, and research related to first / foreign language;	4 (17.4%)	3 (13%)	10 (43.5%)	1 (4.3%)	2.7
knowledge of transferring language skills from L1 to English language;	7 (30.4%)	2 (8.7%)	9 (39%)	2 (8.7%)	2.4
understanding of difficulties of learning second/foreign language	8 (35%)	6 (26%)	7 (30.4%)	2 (8.7%)	2.6
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.6</b>
The teacher is able to:	Teaching performance				$\bar{x}$
	VH	H	L	VL	
apply theories, concepts, and research related to first/second language to support students' learning;	2 (8.7%)	4 (17.4%)	12 (52.2%)	2 (8.7%)	2.5
help students transfer language skills from L1 to foreign language	0 (0%)	3 (13%)	13 (56.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.5
apply effective strategies for helping student overcome difficulties in learning English language	1 (4.3%)	5 (22%)	14 (61%)	1 (4.3%)	3.0
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.7</b>

The grand mean (2.7) for the adequacy of the received training in Table 2 indicates that most of the teachers had adequate training on methods of language acquisition. Table 2 shows that the training focused on developing the teachers' knowledge regarding the principles of first/foreign language learning and acquisition (mean = 4.3), and understanding the difficulties that students face during learning second/foreign language (mean = 3.1). However, the teachers' teaching performance indicates that they are deficient in interpreting this knowledge in the classroom while teaching English to primary school students because the mean results (1.8 and 2.5 respectively) on these issues are below the grand mean (3.7).

Table 2 indicates that the primary school English language teachers have received adequate training on theories, concepts and research related to first/foreign language, and difficulties in learning second/foreign language. However, their teaching performance in terms of applying the learned theories and concepts is below the grand mean (2.7), indicating that there is discrepancy between the knowledge of the teachers and the actual teaching practice that they exhibited in the classroom.

On the other hand, the teachers reflected that they did not get adequate training regarding transferring language skills from the L1 to foreign language learning; as a result, they faced difficulties when teaching at primary schools. Therefore, the training on transferring knowledge to teach a foreign language was inadequate; the teachers were struggling to apply the theories that they gained from the training.

The Spearman rho correlation analysis shows that there is no significant correlation between the received training and the teaching performance of the teachers ( $r=0.157$ ,  $p=0.474$ ). This indicates that the received training in terms of language acquisition is not related with the teaching performance of the teachers in the actual classrooms. This is validated by the p-value, which is greater than 0.05, and statistically insignificant.

**Table 3**

*The received training and teachers' teaching performance in terms of the foundations of EFL education*

The training gives sufficient emphasis to:	Adequacy of received training				$\bar{x}$
	VA	A	I	VI	
the historical, theoretical, and policy foundations of English education;	3 (13%)	9 (39%)	8 (34.8%)	2 (8.7%)	3.1
the classroom English skills of teachers;	6 (26%)	0 (0%)	11 (48%)	4 (17.4%)	2.7
knowledge of goals of learning English	4 (17.4%)	6 (26%)	9 (39%)	1 (4.3%)	3.1
knowledge of presenting language items to children	0 (0%)	10 (43.5%)	7 (30.4%)	5 (21.7%)	3.0
skill of handling diversified classroom population	0 (0%)	5 (21.7%)	12 (52.2%)	3 (13%)	2.4
skill of motivating students to use English and avoid L1	4 (17.4%)	6 (26%)	10 (43.5%)	3 (13%)	2.9
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.9</b>
The teacher is able to:	Teaching performance				$\bar{x}$
	VH	H	L	VL	
apply the historical, theoretical, and policy foundations of English education;	0 (0%)	5 (21.7%)	13 (56.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.5
use classroom English properly to help students learn the language;	1 (4.3%)	3 (13%)	15 (56.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.4
help students achieve the intended English language learning goals;	1 (4.3%)	6 (26%)	13 (56.5%)	1 (4.3%)	2.7

present language items to children properly;	0 (0%)	2 (8.7%)	17 (74%)	3 (13%)	2.1
create an effective multicultural learning environment that addresses the affective, linguistic, and students' cognitive needs;	0 (0%)	4 (17.4%)	16 (69.5%)	0 (0%)	2.5
motivate students to use English and avoid L1.	1 (4.3%)	13 (56.5%)	7 (30.4%)	0 (0%)	3.3
<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.6</b>

The data in Table 3 show that the training in developing classroom English skills and handling diversified classrooms was not adequate (mean results of 2.7 and 2.4 respectively). This training did not address these issues adequately as these results are below the grand mean (2.9).

However, they received adequate training in the historical, theoretical, and policy foundations of English education, how to teach English to children, and strategies of motivating students to use English language, with the mean results of 3.1, 3.1, 3.0 and 2.9 respectively.

With regard to their teaching performance, the teachers performed well in helping students achieve the goal of learning the English language and motivating their students to use it, rather than their L1, in the classroom, with the mean results of 2.7 and 3.3 respectively.

However, the teachers performed inadequately in applying the theoretical foundations of foreign language learning, using classroom English properly, presenting language items considering the level of the children, and handling diversified classrooms, with mean results of 2.5, 2.4, 2.1 and 2.5 respectively. The teachers performed poorly in these aspects because the mean results are below the grand mean.

The Spearman rho correlational analysis revealed that there is a positive correlation between the received training and the teaching performance of the teachers,  $r = 0.165$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . This result indicates that the magnitude of the relationship is almost weak, and the relationship is not significant since the p-value is 0.453. Hence, the received training did not help teachers perform well in terms of the foundations of language education.

**Table 4**

*The received training and respondents' teaching performance in terms of methods of language instruction*

The training gives sufficient emphasis to:	Adequacy of received training				x <sup>-</sup>
	VA	A	I	VI	
designing and presenting teaching activities;	2 (8.7%)	4 (17.4%)	10 (43.5%)	3 (13%)	2.7
adapting teaching activities to individual needs (talented & disabilities);	0 (0%)	2 (8.7%)	14 (61%)	3 (13%)	2.2

classroom management skills and creating positive learning environment;	4 (17.4%)	7 (30.4%)	9 (39%)	3 (13%)	3.0
fostering independent and collaborative learning to develop students' communicative skills.	3 (13%)	1 (4.3%)	13 (56.5%)	4 (4%)	2.4
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.6</b>
<b>Teaching performance</b>					
The teacher is able to:	<b>VH</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>VL</b>	<b>x<sup>-</sup></b>
design teaching activities for students;	2 (8.7%)	5 (22%)	12 (52.2%)	2 (8.7%)	2.7
present teaching activities considering individual needs;	0 (0%)	3 (13%)	16 (69.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.3
apply principles of effective classroom management;	0 (0%)	6 (26%)	15 (65%)	1 (4.3%)	2.5
use strategies that foster independent and collaborative learning.	1 (4.3%)	0 (0%)	18 (78.3%)	3 (13%)	2.0
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.4</b>

Table 4 indicates that the majority of the respondents felt that the training had been adequate in addressing designing teaching activities, and managing classrooms and creating positive learning environment, with mean results of 2.7 and 3.0 respectively.

However, the teachers stated that the training was inadequate in helping them adapt teaching activities to address individual need, and foster independent and collaborative learning to develop students' communicative skills, with mean results of 2.2 and 2.4 respectively. With regard to their teaching performance, the mean result of designing teaching activities, and applying principles of effective classroom management yielded higher mean results (2.7 and 2.5 respectively).

On the other hand, the teachers' performance in presenting the lesson considering individual needs and using strategies that foster independent and collaborative learning yielded lower mean results (2.3 and 2.0 respectively) as compared with the grand mean (2.4). This result indicates that the received training in most of these aspects was inadequate to help the teachers adapt teaching activities to address individual needs and foster independent and collaborative learning.

The study also shows that there is a weak negative relationship between the received training and teaching performance in terms of methods of language instruction ( $r = -0.120$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). The p-value of 0.584 indicates that the correlation is statistically insignificant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, there is evidence to conclude that there is no significant relationship between the adequacy of the received training and the teaching performance of the teachers.

**Table 5**

*The received training and respondents' teaching performance in terms of assessment*

The training gives sufficient emphasis to:	Adequacy of received training				
	VA	A	I	VI	$\bar{x}$
designing and administering assessments	2 (8.7%)	11 (48%)	9 (39%)	1 (4.3%)	3.2
the skill of using continuous assessment	1 (4.3%)	5 (22%)	12 (52.2%)	3 (13%)	2.5
the skill of giving corrective feedback to students	0 (0%)	8 (35%)	10 (43.5%)	2 (8.7%)	2.7
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.8</b>
The teacher is able to:	Teaching performance				
	VH	H	L	VL	$\bar{x}$
apply the knowledge of designing and administering assessments;	0 (0%)	4 (17.4%)	10 (43.5%)	9 (39%)	2.0
apply continuous assessments in the classroom;	1 (4.3%)	3 (13%)	16 (69.5%)	1 (4.3%)	2.3
provide corrective and constructive feedback to students;	3 (13%)	5 (22%)	12 (52.2%)	3 (13%)	2.7
<b>Grand mean</b>					<b>2.4</b>

As depicted in Table 5, the teachers received adequate training about designing and administering assessment, with a mean result of 3.2, which is above the grand mean (2.8). However, the training in developing their skills to utilize continuous assessment, and the skills of giving corrective feedback to students was not adequate since the mean results of these issues are 2.5 and 2.7 respectively. The teachers performed well in providing corrective feedback, with a mean result of 2.7, and lower in terms of applying their knowledge to design and administer assessments, and applying continuous assessment in their classrooms with mean results of 2.0 and 2.3 respectively.

Therefore, the teachers' performance in applying their knowledge and skills to design continuous assessment was insufficient. This suggests that the training program lacked essential content related to basic concepts, issues, and practices of assessment design, development, interpretation of results, and increasing awareness among trainees regarding the use of continuous assessment.

The results of the Spearman's rho correlation ( $r=0.033$ ,  $p=0.883$ ) indicates that there is a positive weak relationship between the adequacy of the received training regarding the items listed under the assessment techniques category and the teachers' actual performance. With regard to its significance, however, the correlation is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant relationship between the participant teachers' teaching performance and the received training

– **The appropriacy of the teacher training curriculum**

The participant teachers were asked to state their view of the effectiveness of the program. There was a general consensus that some contents could have been moved into the bachelor's degree program level to avoid repetition. Teacher-3 said, "Some of

the contents should be moved to first-degree program,” particularly the contents related to theories of language learning and acquisition since they are advanced areas. Rather than targeting the purpose of primary school English, such courses contain advanced content.

Teachers wanted more courses on writing skills and teaching major language skills, as well as additional focus on phonetics, morphology, and syntax to enhance understanding of linguistic components. This was also reported by Makamure (2020, p. 984) who found that the theoretical contents of some of the college-based courses are divorced from actual experiences at schools.

With regard to the courses, Teacher-5 contended that there are very relevant courses that are closely related to primary school teaching. He mentioned Child Development and Support, Classroom English, English Language Teaching Methods as important components of the curriculum. However, the teachers needed more courses on phonetics, morphology and syntax, which would help them to be informed about some aspects of the linguistic components of the curriculum. Besides, it would help them to teach pronunciation to their pupils at the outset of their school age. The participant also added that except for some courses, most of the semesters were occupied by theoretical courses.

The teachers also regarded the teaching practice as the most important component of the training program. According to Clark et al. (2014), teaching experiences help teachers to ‘master’ the task and increase their efficacy. Teacher-3 contended the importance of the teaching practice: “teaching practices are the backbone of the program. ...the teaching practices guide me in developing myself. However, such activities should give due attention to reflections.”

Teacher-1 also stated that teaching practices are tough because they accompany various tasks such as giving feedback, recording their progress, and talking about their strengths and weaknesses without discouraging them. However, some of the supervisors on the training course are reluctant to read their portfolios and give the teachers regular corrective feedback. With regard to the important roles of teaching practice, Teacher-1 stated, “Observing the mentors’ classrooms helps me to see what is happening in other teachers’ classes and see how they should shape my teaching. I will be introduced to metalanguage, error correction and the opening and closing of a lesson.”

With regard to its effectiveness in preparing prospective teachers for their teaching positions in primary schools, Teacher-3 stated that the effect of the training is not major while the other two (Teacher-2 and Teacher-4) revealed that the training has contributed a little to their teaching at primary schools.

Teacher-6 said that he has reduced his talking time in the classroom majorly as a result of the training. As a result, there is a balance between teacher talking time and student talking time in his classroom. On the other hand, Teacher-1 further stated

*Part of the training was student-centered. ...we were exchanging important points. However, it would have been more effective if we had exchanged our experiences. This would have helped us to fetch lessons from the experiences of others. The*

*training sessions were devoted to cover the theoretical contents of the courses rather than discussing the reality of teaching English at primary schools.*

This assertion implies that the training would be more fruitful if it was composed of more experience-sharing and sessions focusing on the practical problems of the education system of the country. Similar results were also reported by Makamure (2020). Peer and trainer feedback would help teachers know their strengths and weaknesses so that they are able to improve themselves for the upcoming sessions and tasks.

The responses of Teacher-1 and Teacher-5 show that most of the gains (such as skills and strategies) from the training are transferable. For instance, classroom management and lesson planning skills could be transferred to their actual teaching. However, the observations revealed that some of the teachers were struggling to monitor the noise of the students, and deal with misbehaviors during their actual teaching. This finding agrees with the findings of Gan (2013) Coskun (2013) and Yusof et al. (2014).

These researchers revealed that the pre-service teachers experienced disparity between the training they received regarding classroom management and the reality at schools. This result was also affirmed by Ulla (2016), who stated that one of the challenges that his participant teachers faced during their teaching practice was classroom management.

The overall reflection of the participant teachers indicates that they are satisfied with the theoretical aspects of the training and some practical aspects such as classroom management and lesson planning. However, the majority (Teacher-2, Teacher-3, Teacher-5 and Teacher-6) reflected that there was a shortage of sessions on how to integrate and teach language skills. These teachers also reported that the feedback they received was not satisfying, as it focused more on criticism than on being corrective. Furthermore, Teacher-1 and Teacher-4 are greatly in need of the skills of applying different assessment methods.

Hence, the results indicate that there is a mismatch in some cases between the need in the primary schools and the benefits teachers gained from the training. In a more appealing sense, the teachers raised some critical issues: "...the training could be more helpful if it was designed based on the lack of our primary schools and teachers. It is business as usual. Some of the trainers seem burnt out. The contents of the modules of some courses are junks. The way some of the trainers present their lessons is traditional (Teacher-4)

The teachers also evaluated themselves as highly capable of teaching their subject with confidence by using the required level of competence after completing the training. However, the following selected reflection from one of the teachers during the interview indicates the teachers' lived experiences on this matter:

*I do not think I have added something new to what I already have regarding teaching skills. I am teaching just like my former teachers used to teach. Then I am not guiding my students as needed. For instance, one day after I taught the students and asked them to complete a task, most of them failed to do so. ...I do not have words to tell you how I felt when I found that my expectation was not realized.*

In relation to this, Darling-Hammond (2009) asserted that teachers should understand that there are three concerns of engaging in teacher training. Firstly, the participants perceive that their experiences as students do not play a significant role in becoming

effective teachers. Secondly, in order to assist teachers in becoming more effective, they must not only learn to "think like teachers," but also apply what they have learned. Thirdly, there is "the complexity problem" (p. 359): typically, teachers are juggling multiple academic and social goals requiring trade-offs from moment to moment and day to day (15) while working with many pupils at once.

The responses of the teachers we interviewed imply that despite the training they received, they faced challenges during teaching because of the dissimilarity between college-based theoretical training and actual teaching practice at primary schools. The following comment of Teacher-1 implies that the contents of some courses need to be updated:

*We do not have sufficient practical sessions on the major language skills. However, they appear as part of the exams in some courses. Some contents appear in the syllabus but you do not learn them. The exams of some courses included practical issues which we do not exercise in the classroom. Some exam items are also unrelated to the day-to-day life of the students. For instance, you may be asked to talk about post office issues that are not currently used by most people. Most people in Kemissie do not know even where the post office is located in the town.*

A similar finding was also reported by Yin (2019, p. 4), indicating that the tasks are not considerate of the students' actual day-to-day activities. Nowadays, visiting a post office to send a letter has become an obsolete aspect of life. This gap between the course designed for the training and the real classroom context was created because of the discrepancy between the discourse of the policy and the actual teaching practice.

#### – **The teaching performance of the teacher**

The teachers involved in teaching English language to primary school are expected to use simple and understandable language because children at this level need explanations and illustration of the use of different sentence patterns. However, our observations revealed that most of the teachers were reading out from the textbooks as well as their notebooks while teaching the language. Significantly, this was not supported by tangible illustrations that exemplify the use of the language items so that the students could understand them clearly.

The classroom situation also lacked practice of the focused language item. The teachers were observed rushing to cover the contents that they planned instead of pitching the activities to the level of the children. This further indicates the teachers' failure to address most of the students in their classrooms. Their limited explanations were also accompanied by their Amharic equivalence. The teachers' deficiencies in English appeared to compel them to use Amharic for much of their class time.

This suggests that the teachers' inability to elaborate the language functions to students' levels of comprehension and to subsequently motivate them to try out the language patterns that are crucial to enhance their English language learning might have little or no impact on developing the children's English. The relatively routinized classroom commands such as 'stand up', 'sit down', 'don't disturb', 'keep silent' or 'raise your hands' were frequently used. The following extract illustrates this claim. (Where t the teacher and student spoke in Amharic, their words have been translated into English by the researcher and presented here in bold italic.)

**Teacher:** that indicating plural forms. 'have given' present perfect tense use what? Have/has using before the given verbs. the next one. **what does here say?** What do you think the sentence in Amharic? 'We have given Oromo names to our children.'

**Student: People call their children using Oromo names (ሰዎች ለልጆቻቸው የአሮሞ ስም ያወጣሉ።)**

**Teacher: This indicates they use Oromo names, isn't it? (የአሮሞ ስም እንደሰጡ ነው አደለ የሚገልጽልን?)** 'We have given Oromo names to our children.' The next sentence. Read it. One student raised your hand and read the example.

**Student:** 'People have consistently shown this praiseworthy behavior almost everywhere on the earth.'

**Teacher: What does that indicate to those who live? (ለሚኖሩት አጠቃላይ ምንድነው?)** To give **prioritize (prizwirthi). It is indicating how they thank.** (ምስጋናቸውን ማቅረባቸው ነው እየገለጸልን ያለው።) the third one. Read it.

With regard to the use of classroom English, the observed teachers were not using as much classroom English as they are expected to in their classes. The teachers' limited use of classroom English was often accompanied by grammar and pronunciation errors, which further indicates that they have a low-level command of the language. The teachers' deficiencies in the English language might have created an inability to communicate effectively with most of the students in the class. The following extract shows the classroom scenario:

T: So this is we **are going to yesterday** we are to learns about. Today, we are to learns about synonyms **(/sainonims/)** and antonyms

[A student was also pronouncing the word "synonym" while responding to questions as the teacher pronounced it.]

T: Okay. Antonyms? Who can try antonyms? Yes!?

S: Antonym is positive words.

T: Antonym is positive words. **[the teacher approved the answer as if the student had correctly defined it].**

In another class that we observed, the teacher followed a similar procedure to present a lesson about parts of the body. Though the names of body parts found in the students' textbook and the language patterns are expected to be presented using Total Physical Response method, the teacher failed to use the method as required. It was the teacher who was a dominant figure in the classroom. This also illustrates ignoring the development of children's ability to use the language for communication.

Much of the interaction was in Amharic and some of it in ungrammatical English (e.g., Last period ehh...we was ...discussed...; Who can show me your eyes?) The teacher also urged the students to complete the activities without giving them an opportunity to ask a question. The interaction between the teacher and the students was primarily conducted in Amharic, not in English. However, this result negates the finding of Chamoro and Paz (2017) because these researchers found that the student teachers were observed utilizing a learner-centered approach while delivering their lessons after taking short-term training.

Most of the teachers were heard saying 'silent,' 'keep quiet' repeatedly. In the classrooms of some teachers, it was observed that some students were fighting at the back while the teachers were writing on the blackboard. One of the grade 3 teachers wrote the following words on the blackboard and required the students to tell him the meaning in Amharic.

*black sack sock lock tick sick*

Some students were encouraged to say the meanings in Amharic pointing to each word. The teacher was also found translating the word 'tick' as 'ወፍራም' (thick), which signals the teacher's weak English.

The above activity was designed to help children improve their reading and writing skills through promoting their phonological knowledge. Teachers are expected to help students understand the correct sounds that individual letters and /or group of letters represent, for example, by segmenting words into onsets. Skilled reading at threshold levels is determined by mainly the children's phonemic and quick word recognition skills. Therefore, teachers' skills in helping students develop these knowledge and skills are crucial for students reading fluency.

The classroom data also provide evidence that most of the observed teachers used sentences that do not agree in number such as 'There are one cup in the picture '. Some of the observed teachers were also heard saying 'Yesterday we learning about animals.' The observed teachers' level of proficiency did not seem to allow them to use the language for instructional purposes. The grammatical and pronunciation errors teachers made in English, even when they used limited classroom English, also demonstrate their weakness in the language. All of these observations indicate that the majority of the observed English teachers seem to have a weak command of the language.

The classroom observation data also indicate that learners were generally noisy and unruly, talking loudly to each other in Amharic for much of the time and demonstrating little interest in using English to carry out the tasks. Due to the transmission model teachers dominantly used, children often became restive and inattentive to what the teachers said and did. Most of the observed teachers frequently attempted to regain control over the class by giving orders and advice in English and in Amharic (e.g., keep silent! Sit down! Get back to your seats. Didn't I say 'keep silent'?).

Few of the observed teachers and some classroom monitors (big students) often threatened students with big sticks and sometimes forced them to remain seated and keep silent, crossing their hands on their chest. This served little purpose other than to encourage the learners to associate English instructions with punishment. In addition to the weak level of English teachers displayed in planning and delivering the English lessons, teachers were unable to manage their classes despite frequent warnings to children to stop talking loudly and fighting. Similar findings were also reported by Apolonio (2021), who stated that the observed teacher was being challenged to control the loud noise and movement of students in the classroom while using games to learn English verbs.

The issues of primary education were successfully discussed in some papers (Nebytova, 2022; Hrona, Vyshnyk, & Pinchuk, 2022; Kostikova et al, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study was conducted to explore the relationship between the training teacher trainees received from Kemissie College of Teachers Education and the teaching practice they engaged in at primary schools. The study found that the teacher training curriculum focuses on subject area knowledge, professional skills and teaching practices. These components are essential and helpful in providing competent teachers for primary schools. The participants in this study revealed that some of the courses that they attended have contributed positively to their effective teaching of the language at primary schools.

These courses include Child Development and Support, Classroom English, English Language Teaching Methods and Materials Analysis and Preparation. However, the trainee teachers, also stated that the practicum programs are not being handled in the most effective way for them to achieve the intended teaching competence. Most of the them also improved their knowledge of the contents of the subject they teach in the primary schools. They revealed that the training has exposed them to effective classroom management skills. However, the classroom observations revealed that the teachers are deficient in this aspect. The teachers were also observed making grammar and pronunciation errors while teaching the language to primary school students. hence, their proficiency level is not at the required level.

The participants in this study also doubted the effectiveness of the training in terms of equipping them with the needed teaching methods, strategies and skills to teach the language. The assessment mechanisms utilized by the supervisors also received a negative reaction from the trainee teachers.

As a result, it is suggested that the training should focus on helping trainee teachers progress in their academic endeavors. This can be realized by focusing on relevant courses, rather than loading the program with less relevant courses and course contents. In this regard, the neglected courses include phonetics, syntax, handwriting, and teaching English using songs and poems. The proficiency level of the participants suggests that more emphasis should be given to developing their communicative skills in English language for academic purposes, as well as instructional functions.

The practicum is a valuable component of the program as a way to bridge theory and practice because the trainees get a chance to practice the inputs given in the training sessions. However, it requires thorough attention to attain the intended aim. There should also be a systematic and standardized observation of the trainees' real classroom practices because it contributes to teacher quality.

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## **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

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