

## **Original Research Article**

### **EFL INSTRUCTORS' AND STUDENTS' PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE TOWARDS ACTION RESEARCH**

#### **ABSTRACT**

*The main objective of this study is to explore EFL instructors' and students' perception and practice towards action research in Jimma College of Teachers Education. To achieve this objective, relevant data were collected using semi-structured interviews (filled out by five EFL instructors, 10 third year English Language students, research and publication committee members, Dean Interview and Focus Group Discussion). The qualitative data gathered through the general open-ended questionnaire was thematically organized, transcribed and analyzed. The results indicate that most of the respondents show good perception concerning the significance of action research in improving their teaching practice, solving students' academic and non-academic problems, developing team spirit and mutual support among teacher educators, creating opportunities to increase their academic writing skills, and developing personal professional perception respectively. Finally, the results of the study revealed that the practices of action research in the college were ineffective. There were perceived challenges like shortage of resources for support, budget and material, low top management attention, instructors' dual role as teachers and researchers, initiation and recognition by trainers themselves.*

**Key words:** *EFL teachers, EFL students, Action research*

#### **Introduction: Background of the Study**

Action research (AR) is a process of systematic inquiry that seeks to improve social issues affecting the lives of everyday people. Historically, the term 'action research' has been long associated with the work of Kurt Lewin, who viewed this research methodology as cyclical,

dynamic, and collaborative in nature. According to Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), action research is a form of collective reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations. Action research is an attractive option for teacher researchers, school administrative staff, and other stakeholders in the teaching and learning environment to consider. Specifically, action research in education can be defined as the process of studying a school situation to understand and improve the quality of the educative process.

Johnson (2012) asserts that, action research bridges the gap between research and practice. For instance, the theoretical components underpinning action research practice are used to help practitioners understand and observe what is happening in a classroom setting. At the same time, and with the interests of best practice in mind, these collected data “are used to understand or inform theories and research related to best practice” (Johnson, p. 20). In a similar vein to the enhancement of the professional disposition of teachers, action research encourages teachers to become continuous learners within their classrooms and schools. Because of the professional, reflective stance required by practitioners engaged in the action research sequence, teachers are further encouraged to “examine the dynamics of their classrooms, ponder the actions and interactions of students, validate and challenge existing practices, and take risks in the process” (Mills, p. 46). These specific actions are similar to those regularly exercised by teachers on a daily basis; using a systematic, strategic action research plan provides those daily actions with increased structure, focus, and methodological rigour.

Classroom action research is an alternative research application that can be easily conducted during teaching and learning processes. Classroom Action Research can sharpen teachers’ skill in teaching methodological research application. Researchers pushed to make notes about classroom activities, doing action, observe and make reflections. The research cycles suggested by Kemmis and Taggart benefit to expected research direction. They further state that it helps action research for both teachers and students to examine all the strengths and weaknesses of their

teaching linked with the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is becoming more important to improve the classroom practices of English language teachers, especially when presented to a professional audience for critique.

Classroom research encourages a discourse among teachers that they can be research-oriented and committed to action and the improvement of practice (Hopkins, 2002). Currently, most published paper in the area have focused on the involvement of English Language Teachers in action research. However, the instructors' and students interaction in the participation has received limited attention. Action research has been directly linked to the professional growth and development of teachers. "Improved instruction, more reflective learners, professional growth and collegial sharing-all can result from involving teachers in classroom research"(Johnson, 1993). On top of the points noted above, this research inspired to study the perception and practice for EFL instructors and students'towards action research. Besides this, learners' perception and practice towards action research has not yet been investigated in JimmaCollege of Teachers Education. Therefore, it appears important to undertake a study and know the nature of instructors and students' perception and their practice towards this action research in the context of Jimma College of Teachers Education, Ethiopia, Oromia region particularly on the practicum courses.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The most effective method of generating autonomous professional development is through the ability to reflect on one's own professional practice action research. Perception and practice towards action research, therefore, can be a perceptual problems of instructors regarding action research, initiated him to develop an interest to investigate the perception in the classroom. Based on our experiences as University professors, we noticed that although Perception and practice towards action research has been implemented in the Ethiopian public colleges in the last seven years, it seems that stakeholders (instructors and students) have still insufficient awareness about the approach.

Learners' and instructors' practices and perceptions may be the major factors that hinder this innovative method. Typically, in Ethiopian EFL classrooms at all educational levels in general and college education institutions in particular, a teacher-centered approach needs to be

minimized. This being the case, yet, studies that focus on EFL instructors' and students' perception and their practice towards action research are insufficient in this context. Considering this, this study attempts to explore college instructors' and students' practice and perception towards practicing action research in teaching English as a Foreign Language in Jimma College of Teachers Education. It will also investigate the relationship between students' and instructors' perception and practice towards action research. Therefore, this study is aimed to fill this knowledge gap by discovering the relationship between students and instructors' perceptions with that of their investigate objectives ascertain.

### **General Objective**

The main objective of this study is then to explore EFL instructors' and students' perception and practice towards action research in Jimma College of Teachers Education.

### **Specific objectives**

Specifically, this study tried to identify EFL instructors' and learners':

- Perception and practice about action research
- Investigate other non-perceptual factors; affecting's EL instructors 'action research practice.
- Analyze how instructors' perception affects their practice towards action research.
- Appear the manner in which EFL instructors' assist their learners' practicum course towards action research.

### **Scope of the Study**

Although, action research has been implemented in all education fields of study, however, to make the study manageable, it was delimited to third year English major students and English instructors. The focus of the study would be how EFL instructors' perceive action research, its importance in improving their teaching practice, was developing their profession and classroom management skills, increasing positive team spirit among themselves, which affect their involvement in responsibility action research. On the other hand, third year English major

students of the Jimma College of Teachers Education were chosen because the students, having CGPA results in the previous semesters and years requirements of learning, are expected to have ample experiences and can provide adequate information on the issue raised.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Study Area and Period**

The study was conducted in Ethiopia public college with particular focus on EFL instructors and learners in the year 2019/20. The students were third year English majors who were selected from the Jimma College of Teachers Education. The students were classified as low, middle and high ability groups based on their CGPA results in the previous semesters and years.

### **Study Design**

The study employed a qualitative data were generated through semi-structured interview and focus group discussions to explore EFL instructors and learner's perception and practice of action research in Jimma College of Teachers Education. This method helped the researcher by addressing issues pertaining to perception, the extent to which perception affected EFL instructors and learners' practice of action research, and the manner by which instructors provide professional advice to their students toward action research during practicum course. The explores believed that semi-structured interview and focus group discussions study design could increase the reliability and applicability of the conclusions by providing different types of data related to the same research problem. Thus, by employing this study design, qualitative data were collected in order to through semi-structured interview and focus group discussions to answer the research questions set based on the research objectives.

### **Study Population**

The target population was five English instructors, two Research and Publication Committee members, 10 third year English major students and Dean of college were considered as part of the study. They were selected based on our assumption that they could have ample experiences with regard to action research during their three years stay using this approach

### **Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

All EFL instructors, research and publication committee (RPC) members, and dean of college were selected purposively as a representative sample because they were typically important to give rich data concerning the perception and practice toward action research in the College. As Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996:227) states, a purposive sampling is a situation where, "...the researcher selects a sample that suits the purposes of the study and that is convenient ..." So, this study has conveniently selected the above mentioned participants because they were at the forefront in implementing the aim of action research for EFL teachers. Similarly, this study used purposive sampling. They were efficient to understand the questions and provide objective data; the top 10 students were selected based on their cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Thus, 18 subjects were selected as a representative sample of the study.

### **Instruments for Collecting Data**

In this study, interview and focus group discussions were required as instruments for gathering data.

### **Interviews**

Semi-structured interview enabled the researcher obtain an in-depth understanding about EFL instructors', students perception and practice concerning action research. According to Bell, Bush, and Goulding (1984:184), "Semi-structured interview tends to be the one most advocated by educational researchers as it allows respondents to express themselves at some length, but offers enough shape to prevent aimless rambling." They further state that Semi-structured interviews, having similar contents with the questions to crosscheck the responses drawn through the questionnaire was prepared based on the objectives of the study and the review of related literature. It was believed that such an interview would be appropriate to permit a greater depth of response, which cannot be obtained through any other data gathering tools. It ensures flexibility in which new or extension questions can be forwarded during the interview based on the responses of the interviewees.

### **Focus group discussion**

The researcher employed an FGD with English language students and teachers for various reasons. An FGD is a qualitative data collection technique that provides a forum for a group of people of similar characteristics to discuss issues of importance to their group or community. Since ten top third year English majoring student were selected based on their cumulative grade

point average (CGPA), they were supposed to provide objective data relative to the other student of the field. The aim is to gather general perceptions rather than individual experiences “participants should not be asked to narrate personal experiences” The essentiality of using FGD would be mainly to get; specific issues or topics (resist the need to cover all topics), group dynamics should be observed and recorded and agreements or disagreements may occur. Moreover, large amount of information was gathered from many people in a short time – appropriate handling of data is critical. The discussion questions were prepared and conducted in English language, but the examiner sometimes translated in to Afan Oromo (i.e., participants’ native language) to avoid ambiguity among the participants and increase certainty when discussing the questions.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Before commencing the data analysis the interview questions, focus group discussions were checked for response accuracy. To explore the perception and practice of action research on college students and English language teachers, qualitative data analysis can be carried out in this study. The interview data was recorded by using cassette-tape recorder, and the audio-recorded interviewees’ responses were transcribed and the transcription of each interviewee was documented for evidence. The researcher took down note, presented the results by taking a direct quote of their discussion report, organized and qualitatively analyzed along with the data gathered through semi-structured interview by narrative analysis. “Narrative analysis is an in-depth approach to analyzing qualitative data.” (Myers 2008).

To make the analysis easy and precise, the researcher randomly gave code names to,  $T_1$ ,  $T_2$ ,  $T_3$  ...  $RPC_1$ ,  $RPC_2$  and dean of the College according to the sequence of interview made to them.

With regard to the qualitative data, the required information was transcribed, quoted and analyzed qualitatively based on the research questions posed. Finally, In the case of semi-structured interview, focus group discussions were putted together and accurate inferences were made.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The main purpose of this study was to explore college EFL instructors’ and students’ perception and practice towards action research in Jimma College of Teachers Education. To collect relevant data for the study, semi-structured interview and focus group discussions were employed.

Therefore, the analysis of the data collected from all respondents was done using thematic qualitative analysis and interpreted to answer the research questions of the study. To provide the relationship between instructors' and students' perception and practice towards action research were discussed respectively. Many of the student respondents think action research is a useful toward EFL and they believe that working in educationally benefit themselves from one another. However, more than half of the instructors believe that action research is pedagogically valid technique in the field of EFL. Parallel to this, almost half of them stated that this action research contributes little achieves academic development. They are interpreted below.

### **Analysis of relationship between teaching and research**

It is difficult to see one in the absence of the other because research paves the way for teacher educators to assess and diagnose teaching and learning problems act towards finding possible solutions for the problems.

*Teaching and research are highly integrated. Teaching is an art. As an art, it goes under many changes and developments. Traditional ways of classroom instructions are frequently replaced by modern and innovative methods of teaching. However, such changes for improvement often happen not as a matter of mere trial and error, but as a fact of scientific research . . . . (T<sub>1</sub>)*

The above data show the relationship between teaching and research is that of a cart and a horse guides a horse as the cart, teaching is guided or led by research.

**T<sub>2</sub>:** This strongly emphasized that relationship between teaching and research, exposed:

*...both teaching and research are based on reality, seen as part of the duty and not an 'add on', give rapid feedback, provide opportunity to practitioners to try out new ideas and solutions to problems, and encourage reflection and further development. Generally, students act as researchers in their classrooms, put the findings into action, and exercise as part of their professional development.*



According to the above ( $T_2$ ), research is an activity that creates opportunity for teachers to try out innovations, assess their practices, and seek possible solutions to problems that may occur in the process of every day teaching. As teacher educator, he indicated that research is a means to reflect up on their professional career.

**T<sub>3</sub>:** Here, stressed on the relationship between teaching and research:

*...they are both interdependent. Research can be considered as an authentic source for improving teaching, particularly English language teaching. As there are changes, new findings could be exploited and applied to language teaching.*

As clearly explained by instructor ( $T_3$ ), must interdependently exist primarily to improve teaching. In addition, research is useful for the proper exploitation of one's human potential, which would enhance the ability to depend on new ideas and thoughts in making decisions concerning instruction. Moreover, in explaining the relationship between research and teaching, another instructor ( $T_4$ ) perceived that "Research is a means to introduce new method of teaching, investigate problems, and seek solutions for the problems." According to my observation, teacher educators practice different types of researches, they investigate new mechanisms, strategies, and styles of doing things.

### **Analysis of specific relationship between EFL and Action research**

EFL teaching is regularly prepared using instructional plans; teachers need to actively participate in undertaking action research. It creates a fertile ground for instructors to develop their language skills, particularly academic writing skills in which researchers increase their ability to generate, organize, and synthesize ideas in a coherent way.

*Action research is significant for the improvement of English language teaching. Developing English language skills requires a teacher to know to what degree the learning outcomes have been met by his/her students and make adjustments to instruction as needed. In order to do this, teachers must be familiar with and conduct action research. ( $T_1$ )*

According to the data indicated in  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  was explaining the relationship between action research and English language teaching are significance of action research in their professional

development, the assessment of the actual teaching and learning situation, and ensuring the provision of high quality education. He responded:

*I think the relationship between English language teaching and action research is that teachers who practice action research ... perceive action research as a method of professional development, means of improving classroom practices and raising standards ... inventing procedures grounded in classroom practice that would call for the planning of the next action.*

Moreover, for instructors (T<sub>3</sub> and T<sub>5</sub>), it is a method of solving problem, "... action research is more scientific and conducive to give immediate solutions to problems that may occur in the teaching learning processes." (T<sub>3</sub>). Similarly, (T<sub>5</sub>) indicated that, "... action research is a means by which a teacher can identify any specific problem related to his teaching in a classroom." For example, in conducting action research, a teacher can measure how the methodology she/he applied is effectively functioning in the classroom; to what extent she/he meets the needs of instructors both individually and groups. It is a self-reflective practice in teaching English.

In fact, EFL in particular and teaching in general should follow systematic approaches of assessing needs, planning, implementing, and evaluating outcomes, makes it science. Similarly, the instructors' perception has also strong rich and empirical evidence concerning the nature and background of their pupils, the subject matter they teach, the social conditions and its culture, and the educational system of the country at large. (T<sub>4</sub> and T<sub>5</sub>), explained that action research is primarily meant for problem solving. It follows empirical evidence in which the evidence is analyzed, synthesized, and interpreted to draw methods, which help to meet the pre-determined objectives of the course. As individuals or group initiates toward action research in teaching EFL, it has direct relation and implementation with teaching-learning processes.

### **Instructor's beliefs toward the role of action research in teaching EFL**

EFL instructors in response to the question, 'What are your beliefs about the role of action research in teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL)?', instructor (T<sub>1</sub>), responded that, "I believe that action research plays a key role in the teaching of EFL. Foreign language may not be learnt in the same way as the native language. Therefore, to identify the possible ways of teaching foreign language, action research is essential." Other instructor similarly disclosed that

in the teaching of EFL, action research is a fundamental tool to measure and evaluate the overall teaching program, particularly, the teaching of English language, which could help to improve, modify or even totally abandon it. The following quote from instructor (T<sub>2</sub>) support to this view:

*My beliefs about the role of action research in teaching English as EFL are as follows. Firstly, it makes change in teaching and assessment methods. Secondly, it encourages the identification of the most appropriate principles and developing practical classroom application. Thirdly, it enables me to investigate learners' problems, and intervene in to the life chances of disadvantaged students. Fourthly, it improves teaching practices. Finally, it helps to systematically observe, describe, plan, act, reflect, evaluate and modify the situation.*

As indicated in (T<sub>3</sub>), the role of action research in teaching EFL ... as language is dynamic; we expect changes in life that promote rapid change in words of the language, approaches, methods and techniques that may advance the learners' overall ability. In fact that action research is collaborative in its feature, could call for practitioners' argument and discussion, and hence create for them the opportunity to cultivate new theories, methods, principles and techniques. The sentiments expressed in the quotation abovewhen teachers undertake action research together, they argue up on varieties of approaches that help them to effectively manage their profession as teacher educators.

According to instructor statement reproduced above, "Action research is a fundamental method of providing immediate solutions to problems that encounter students and teachers in every day teaching and learning processes." According to instructor, action research have used to examine one's own instruction, students' learning, the actual implementation of varieties of active learning methods, and the environment in which teaching and learning takes place. It can further be said that(T<sub>4</sub>), "The role of action research in teaching EFL could be to adapt the different teaching methods advocated by different scholars with local needs." The foregoing shows thatto back up our knowledge and relate foreign language (English language) to our locality, action research is very crucial. Both instructor (T<sub>4</sub> and T<sub>5</sub>), indicated that action research plays a crucial role in negotiating the different approaches of teaching EFL employed around the world with the real students' needs, interests, abilities, backgrounds, and classroom situations of our schools. Instructor (T<sub>4</sub>) added her voice to this statement as follows:

*Action research has a key importance to evaluate the outcome of the teaching process. It helps to seek possible solutions for problems encounter while teaching English. It follows the process of preparing action plan, trying out and evaluating to assess exactly the extent of alleviation of the problem.*

One may add that(T<sub>5</sub>), “The role of action research in teaching English is that, it enables the teacher to easily recognize problems related to his teaching and give immediate solutions at its onset.” Following his statement(T<sub>5</sub>), action research enables teachers to learn from their practice and plan on the kind of amendment or interventions have to be made. Therefore, they could easily meet the needs of their students both as an individual and as a group.

#### **Instructors’ views toward action research in developing collaboration and team spirit among teachers**

According to most instructors’ reflection, there was positive attitude towards the contribution of action research as a means of developing collaboration and team spirit among teachers. As indicated in (T<sub>1</sub>), Teachers get opportunity to share experiences, use research-based instructions that engage students in active, communicative learning. Therefore, action research creates conducive atmosphere for teachers to openly discuss, argue, debate, and share experiences. Similarly, following his statement(T<sub>2</sub>) as follows:

*The role of action research in developing collaboration and teamwork among teachers is that it enables teachers to develop mutual understanding and trust. It also facilitates interactive discussions to solve problems, understand concepts and develop critical thinking skills.*

As indicated from the above view, teaching is a profession; it should be governed by certain professional codes of ethics. It is further to be noted that action research necessitates are collaboration and collegiality among staff members. further noted that a teacher are become involved in a collaborative action research group and to communicate, discuss and share ideas, and make judgments with the other participants, could result in changing teaching practices. Moreover, the teaching in EFL requires teachers to work in collaboration, as language development needs interaction, frequent drill and practice. This subsequently could lead to the

attainment of the institutional aims and goals. The words of (T<sub>3</sub>) reproduced below are instructive:

*... firstly, it encourages teachers' debate and arguments, and self-reliance. Secondly, it motivates teachers to apply significant tasks and activities in their class to promote better learning. Thirdly, it encourages trainers' periodical revision of their instructional plans and the improvement of their pace. Fourthly, it allows commitment of teachers and regular exchange of experiences. Finally, it serves as a means of solving school and/or classroom problems together.*

Strengthening the above instructors (T<sub>4</sub> and T<sub>5</sub>) expressed their feeling in the same way, action research and its implementation can develop and strengthen team spirit when it have done on common agreeable methods of teaching. In addition, it does a good in developing alliance among teachers because it creates opportunity for teachers teaching the same course to discuss concerning the course and their classroom, and hence, devising better method of teaching and intervening in to students' academic problems together. In the place where there is a good practice of action research by teacher-practitioners, there is harmony and mutual support.

### **RPC concerning the perception in EFL instructor toward action research**

EFL instructors in particular were found to have little problem of awareness concerning action research, although have motivational factors that affected their action research practice. As indicated in *RPC*<sub>1</sub>, "...mostly, instructors are not interested to carry out action research by their own internal motivation unless there is some sort of reinforcement behind."

The foregoing shows that EL instructors have good perception about the significance of action research in improving their teaching practice, solving students' academic and non-academic problems, developing team spirit and mutual support among teacher educators, creating opportunities to increase their academic writing skills, and developing their personal and professional career in life.

### **Instructors' self-reflection on their practice toward action research in teaching EFL**

For the majority of EFL instructors' responses concerning toward action research practice has shown that they made less effort for different reasons. Following his statement (T<sub>4</sub>), "...rarely,

because of constraints like time, budget, initiation and lack of recognition.” Furthermore, instructor (T<sub>5</sub>) views practicing action research is lack of favorable or suitable conditions. He reflected that he used to make some trials of action research, although he cannot successfully accomplish what he planned.

Since most respondents showed that similar views concerning in practice of action research, little effort or occasionally took part in action research. As indicated in (T<sub>3</sub>) view, “I took part in carrying out action research only when I was taking Higher Diploma Program (HDP). I do one action research with two of my colleagues.” According to this instructor, HDP is part of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and all instructors have taken this training. Consequently, they have opportunity to practice action research a fundamental requirement for the successful completion of the program.

### **Major stakeholders’ evaluation in EFL instructors’ toward action research practice**

As indicated in *RPC<sub>1</sub>* views,

*... I personally, have not faced any action research document carried out by an individual English language trainer, except in a team of four or five members. According to the principle of HDP, teacher educators should actively participate primarily in activities like active learning methods, instructional planning, and action research. All educators, including English language trainers have to go through these tasks, and hence gain access to the practice of action research. Consequently, EL instructors’ action research practice is not significantly observed as compared to others. Like other trainers in the college, EL trainers are instrumentally (i.e., salary increment, academic promotion, etc) oriented towards the practice.*

For the purposes of this discussion, *RPC<sub>1</sub>* were not established to coordinate and supervise EFL instructors’ practice in action research, it is also instructors have took in other fields of specialization. They have no outstanding research practice recorded in the college by EL instructors. In supporting the above view, the Dean said “..., both EFL instructors and students of the college practice action research very poorly.” Extending his idea, “...instructors are

usually engaged in such activities when there are academic, financial and material benefits.” particularly EL trainers tended to view the practice of action research in the eyes of incentives. Moreover, another member of the committee ( $RPC_2$ ) views a follow:

*It is a rare phenomenon, if any that research works are done here in the college.  
Whenever some researches like papers happen to come to the committee, it is a returnable copy that we receive, comment and give back to the owner.*

The foregoing shows that research works have seldom done in the college and ELT participation status in action research was difficult to independently judge. From the above views of the major stakeholders, action research has not perceived as part of teachers every day duty. Besides, the RPC was established and merely accomplishing its responsibilities for the fulfillment of the formality of the guideline from the regional education bureau. It did not properly plan the activity, encourage educators, and evaluate the achievement gained.

It seemed to undermine the role of action research as a method to improve school practice, solve problems, develop team spirit, promote better student learning, etc.

### **Instructors' evaluation in the role of stakeholders encouraging learners toward action research**

According to the reflection of majority of the respondents, the effort that RPC of the College has made in order to encourage student toward action research is insignificant.  $T_2$  Show that, “The role of RPC in encouraging teachers to undertake action research in our college is somewhat insignificant.” Similarly, as indicated in ( $T_1$ ) view:

*As far as evaluation is concerned, there is a limited effort made on the part of RPC to encourage teachers to undertake action research in our college. It does work occasionally and even there are times when it ceases to function.*

Most other respondents contribute to the same view with the aim of the effort of the committee was poor. Most of his statements not effectively discharging its responsibility; however, its delegation was to perform activities such as encouraging and coordinating all teachers and other staff members to participate in preparing graduation bulletins, undertaking action research, writing poems, publishing pamphlets, and brochures that have different lessons and purposes for trainees. According to the response of English language teacher educators, the role of the college

dean was not satisfactory. From (T<sub>1</sub>) above it can be deduced that there is an attempt, other than the contribution is not satisfactory. As is shown (T<sub>3</sub>) views the contribution of the College Dean as follow:

*It should include activities such as organizing teachers to do action research, allocating budget to purchase the materials necessary for the project, giving awareness raising workshops through more knowledgeable teachers on action research, considering action research in the year's action plan, working in collaboration with teachers, informing teachers about the demanding problems.*

Conversely, (T<sub>2</sub> and T<sub>5</sub>) was not want to say much about the role of the College Dean in encouraging trainers to take part in the work of action research and there is nothing that could be evaluated, he seemed positive towards the activity in general. Moreover, the College had not given much emphasis to action research because it is merely used as a requirement for salary increment and professional.

#### **RPC's self-reflection encouraging instructortoward practice in action research**

RPC<sub>2</sub> views:

*The college has valued research as one of the professional commitment and criteria for professional as well as criteria for biannual work efficiency evaluation (done by the college itself) however, the encouragement on the budget and material incentive is not available. The RPC did not do any practical supportive except planning to give workshop for the staff.*

According to the above respondent, involvement in the practice of action research have considered as one of the professional competencies instructors should toward in regular teaching and learning activity. In contrast, the college had not provided the necessary facilities such as, financial and material resources required effectively run the project. Hamersley (2007: 176) states that, "the relationship between outside facilitators and action researchers can have profound effects on the character of the action research undertaken." In admitting the above fact, the Dean responded,



*We have done nothing in substance other than announcing the importance of action research on staff meetings, but now there is a plan to give awareness raising trainings in collaboration with HDLs and RPC members.*

Such less emphasis towards the project by the college authorities demotivated the committee to properly plan, implement and evaluate the practice and progress of action research in the college. Thus, the committee was rarely encouraging teachers, including English language inductor, to engage themselves in the research activity.

However he has not clearly pointed out the kind of encouragement (i.e., moral or financial) he renders to these trainers, *RPC<sub>2</sub>* shareas, "...as a committee, I encourage teachers to conduct action research because it is the best method to bring possible solutions to problems that occurs in the course of teaching and learning." As is shown, trainers suffered from the workload they have, as teachers could not allow them to undertake action research. He expressed his view that action research, as an activity, is crucial for English language trainers to improve their teaching practice, support their decision with real evidence, develop their professional competence, create supportive and conducive environment for instruction, etc.

### **Constraints or challenges for instructor toward in action research**

The responses of the subjects have shown that, lack of time and financial support were the most frequently reported constraints that lessens their action research practice. As indicated in (T<sub>5</sub>), 'The most revealing problems or research constraints are time and finance.' He further explained that shortage of time is a serious attribute to do research to his satisfaction and still fulfilled his professional roles, especially teaching. Similarly, "...time and financial constraints are hampering my practice of action research." He further indicated that practitioners have to be prepared taking a considerable amount of time and budget for the proper and thorough planning of the research project.

Moreover, it can further be said that(T<sub>3</sub>), "The most revealing problems or research constraints I encountered in toward research are scarcity of reference materials." He stressed on the shortage of time and financial support, and lack of necessary materials (i.e., model action research done and reference materials) as limiting factors that inhibit trainers' participation in action research.

### **Students awareness toward the role of action research in teaching English**

In fact, that English is a foreign language created in the minds of students the perception that it is a difficult language to acquire easily and in a short period. A group of students that has ten members reported,

*The role of action research for teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) include:- it fosters their knowledge of the subject matter, it creates a conducive atmosphere for the teaching and learning process, it helps teachers to give judgment or decision which is based on reality, it helps to evaluate the consistency between theory and classroom practice.*

When we see the student responses action research have a significant role for the successful attainment of the pre-determined educational goals and objectives. As action research is both problem-solving and professional development methods, it gives opportunity for teachers to manage the pace of their instruction and advance their professional career as English language teachers. In this regard, they forwarded some of the roles of action research for teachers of EFL as,

*It helps as a means of obtaining feedback on the effectiveness of one's teaching, remedying problems diagnosed in specific situation, injecting additional or innovative approaches to teaching and learning in to an ongoing system, determining the best method of teaching-learning process, enhancing quality of education, promoting better learning by students, bringing the change needed.*

From the above views, teachers should actively engage themselves in the activity of action research. As they make action research part of their every day activity, at the same time, they could get the chance to upgrade their writing skills, develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, establish positive team spirit, and get a room to reflect up on their own practice.

### **A reflection from students concerning with instructor provision of advice in action research**

The result of the study with focus group discussion have shown that their advisors occasionally gave them constructive comments and feedbacks on the action research done during the final practicum course. In fact, according to their information, teachers whose areas of specialization

are related to give the theoretical aspect of action research to them. They were assigned advisors for their research from English language instructor. The following quote from group support to this view:

*Our research advisors provide us with the necessary support while we undertake our action research on the practicum course. To mention some, our advisors comment and approve the title for action research, give feedback on the procedures and methodologies we have to follow when writing the proposal, suggest us relevant reference materials, comment and amend the preliminary components of action research report.*

As indicated in the above view, some members of the group expressed their dissatisfaction concerning their advisors' contribution for their research project they carried out as,

*Although we are well equipped with the theoretical aspect of action research, our advisors are not committed to help us deal with our project. We only follow the model of our senior graduates' way of doing action research. Once trainees are placed to the schools for teaching practice block teaching), it is up to them to identify topic for research, plan, gather data, analyze and interpret, write the report, and come for the reflection. We all carry out action research in a similar fashion. One is not different from the other (i.e., a copy of each other\_ plagiarism) except very little changes in research setting, handwriting, punctuation marks, etc. There is no consistence between what we theoretically learn and what we practically implement (i.e., practicing action research in schools).*

The sentiments expressed in the quotation above they could not clearly understand the reason behind trainers' lack of commitment to assist them in their action research, they felt discomfort as regards to their research advisors.

### **The students' opinion in research advisors' for research expertise**

Instructors were proficient enough to guide them in to the work of action research. Although they may be reluctant in helping students on their research project, English language trainers were proficient in both the theoretical and practical aspect of action research. In this respect,

*Primarily, our instructors' problem is not emerged from those factors related to proficiency, but issues associated to commitment, devotion, and diligence. They have rich experience in providing advice for instructors in action research on practicum courses in the college. However, they lack of commitment and diligence. This might be related to lack of or reduction in incentives for the activities (i.e., reading the material, giving feedback, etc.) they undertake as advisors. They do not take much time to thoroughly read and give constructive comments. Besides, this lack of commitment might be related to lack of motivation and their dual role as research advisors and regular teachers.*

Instructors have not committed themselves to provide the necessary professional advice and guidance for EL majoring trainees on action research. This was mainly due to lack of motivation and encouragement, their dual role as teachers and research advisors, and lack of resources by the authorities of the College. Moreover, instructors have more knowledge and skill (i.e. theoretical and practical) in action research, other than lack of commitment, diligence, and encouragement.

### **Conclusion**

The analysis of the qualitative data indicated that most of the participants were good perception concerning the significance of action research in improving their teaching practice, solving students' academic and non-academic problems, developing team spirit and mutual support among educators, creating opportunities to increase their academic writing skills. Among student respondents, think practice of action research were unable to problem of perception, non-perceptual factors (i.e., other external factors). However, action research was not perceived as part of teachers' every day duty. With this regard, the RPC were established and merely accomplishing its responsibilities to fulfill the requirement of the guideline from the regional education bureau. They did not properly plan the activity, encourage teacher educators, and

evaluate the achievement gained. They seemed to undermine the role of action research as a method of improving school practice, solving problems, developing team spirit, promoting better student learning, and enhancing varieties of English language skills.

The result of the study indicated that students were not satisfied by research advisors' provision of professional assistance in action research on practicum courses. In relation to this students carried out action research in a similar fashion (i.e., one is a copy of the other-plagiarism), except very little changes in research setting, handwriting, punctuation marks and other formats. Consequently, majority of the instructors were found have not conceptual problem about action research both the theoretical and practical aspects, other than they lacked commitment, encouragement, and diligence, which were attributed to lack of proper incentives and other essential facilities. English Language teachers' provisions of advice to students in action research on practicum course were found to be low.

### **Ethical considerations and consent**

Ethical issues pertaining to the legitimacy of this study and the rights of the human participant were addressed in the following ways. The current researcher have designed appropriate ways of ethical consideration so that many people are willing to disclose a lot of personal information during our research so we confirmed that we treat all the participants and the information they provide with honesty and respect. Thus, the participants were provided with written consent (informed consent) in the introduction part of the questionnaires and given the opportunity to determine their confidentiality or anonymity. Informal ethical issues are those that emerged in the field. The researcher considered and respected informant requests; informants were informed that they would remain anonymous throughout the study.

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