Early Grade English Language Teachers' Cognition about Language and Language Instruction: Survey Study Conducted in Ethiopian Context

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Abstract

Describing early grade teachers' cognition about language and its instruction prompted the impetus of embarking on the present study. To achieve this purpose, survey research design was employed, and data was collected from 35 early grade English language teachers (population of the study) teaching at primary schools of Wayu Tuka district, East Wollega Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. This population was comprehensively sampled and involved in the study. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaire, and classroom observation and introspective interview were employed in generating qualitative data. The numerical data was analyzed using descriptive (median) and inferential (correlation) statistics while thematic interpretative phenomenological analyses was used to analyze the verbally compiled data. Consequently, results of the analyses showed that the target teachers had confusions in naming their perceived cognition about language and its instruction. In spite of the confusions, results of the study evidenced that the teachers exaggerated perceived cognition about their actual practices of teaching the TL and using it in its instruction was not supported by their actual practices of using the TL for regulative and instructional functions of its teaching. These findings of the study have implications for both teacher education and development and research endeavors.

Key words: language teacher cognition; perceived cognition; actual cognition; language instruction; components of teacher expertise

Introduction

Teaching English language as a foreign/second language is different from teaching other subjects in that it involves teaching through using the target language (TL) itself as both regulative and instructional functions of language instruction. Regulative function of the TL refers to how language is used to manage the social space of the classroom, and the instructional function of the language implies the extent to which the TL is used to develop the knowledge and skills that are the focus of a lesson (Richards, 2017). These functions of the TL in its instruction show the extent to which teacher and teacher related variables are crucial in English language instruction and in having insights about the language teaching mind.

Teachers are the primary sources of L2 instruction in a context where foreign/second language instruction is mainly confined to formal classroom setting, especially in countries like Ethiopia. A body of literature (e.g., Al Malihi, 2015; Freeman, 2002; Kucer, 2005; Marzano, 2007; Richards, 2001; Uygun, 2013) documents that classroom teachers are the key agents in determining students' success in learning language. Richards contends that "…, it is teachers themselves who ultimately determine the success of a program. Good teachers can often compensate for deficiencies in the curriculum, the materials, or the resources they make use of in their teaching" (P. 209). *Good teachers* refer to those teachers who are equipped with, what Richards (2017) termed as, *components of teacher expertise* such as content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and ability, and discourse skills that the teaching of English as foreign language requires of them. Of these components, *pedagogical knowledge and ability* – the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction – and *discourse skills* – the ability to use English in a way that supports the learning of English – have immediate practical implications in English classroom.

An enquiry that needs to come here, therefore, is "Whether or not teachers are equipped with the *components of teacher expertise* that teaching the TL requires of them can be uncovered?". Two perspectives of empirical based enquiry paradigms of education in general and language instruction in particular that have been derived from perspectives of teacher learning in teaching characterize response of this question. Initially, teacher learning to teach own subject was viewed as front-loading. Prior to the mid-1970s, the front-loading or knowledge-transmission paradigm was the dominant perspective through which teachers are inculcated with the knowledge-bases required of them to teach their subject. Teacher education institutions were viewed as the only places where teachers are equipped with all the necessary knowledge at the very beginning of their career for all that they need to know and be able to do throughout their teaching lives (Freeman, 1993) (as cited in Johnson and Freeman, 2001). Rooted within this paradigm of teacher education, the focus of research accounts before the mid-1970s was looking for the typical teachers' teaching behaviors that could be linked to specific learning outcomes. Teaching was described as a set of discrete behaviors, routines, or scripts drawn from empirical investigations of what effective or expert teachers did in practice, and teaching behaviors that would ensure student learning were judged effective and efficient (Freeman, 1993) (as cited in Johnson and Freeman, 2001).

In the mid-1970s, the developments in cognitive psychology began to understand teachers as thoughtful professionals and came up with new insight in relation to teacher learning in teaching. The development initially indicated the complex relationships between what teachers do and what they know and believe in (Borg, 2009). Consequently, the issue of teachers' mental lives (cognition) that worked to describe their thoughts, judgments, and decisions as the cognitive processes and shaped their classroom behaviors began to emerge (Johnson & Freeman, 1998). This paradigm shift rejected the traditional process-product teacher learning and teaching paradigm because of its failure to acknowledge the socially-situated, among other factors, perspective of teacher learning in language and took teachers as thoughtful people who made rational decisions about what to do in their classrooms (Borg, 2003; Freeman & Johnson, 1998;

Johnson & Freeman, 2001; & Richards, 2017). The socially-situated framework of teacher learning claims that teacher learning in language teaching is a lifelong endeavor. Teachers' language learning experiences as students (beginning from elementary school), contextual factors in which they work, professional coursework, and classroom practices influence teacher cognition or teacher knowledge-bases in language teaching (Borg, 2003).

Understanding teachers as thoughtful professionals and lifelong learners of language instruction established a fertile ground for educational researchers in general and language teacher educators in particular to be aware of teachers' mental lives that play a tremendous role in their instructional choices and practices. As a result, research trends on teacher mental lives (cognition) had shifted researchers' attention from watching what teachers did to asking them why they did what they did. Johnson and Freeman (1998) note that a field of research which had become known as teacher cognition have began to explore the actual thought processes that teachers are engaged in as they planned and carried out their lessons in the late 1970s. Teacher learning/cognition in language instruction has become a strong agenda of research since the mid-1990s (Borg, 2006; Freeman, 2002 & 2006; Freeman & Johnson, 1998; & Richards, 2009). Nowadays, inquiring what teachers' know, think, believe in and do, and why they do in the ways they do activities of teaching has become a consolidated but not saturated field of research enterprise in second/foreign language education.

Moreover, Simon Borg's framework of teacher cognition in language teaching outlines both psychological (mental) constructs and behavioral and material constructs that teacher cognition involves (Borg, 2003). Psychological constructs refer to teachers' beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions. Behavioral and material constructs include teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities and self. Teachers unlearn issues related to these constructs as a result of engaging in lifelong language learning and teaching. All of these teachers' mental constructs are involved in their day-to-day decisions that they make in their actual teaching practices. This implies that improving teachers teaching practices that are precursors of their students' learning outcomes call for thoroughly understanding their thoughts in relation to each of teacher mental constructs listed above. However, empirical knowledge that is emanated from teachers own voices about what sorts of their mental lives are involved in their daily teaching practices that led to poor students' learning outcomes is scanty. Specifically, voices of diploma graduate of teachers, particularly in Ethiopian context, who teach at first cycle primary schools that are precursors of students' later learning are highly lacking in connection to their mental lives about language and its instruction.

So far, various scholars conducted empirical researches that documented experiences of second/foreign language teachers' mental lives in connection to language, language learning/teaching and teaching approaches. Some of them suggested that teachers' work environment (Suwannasom, 2010), school type – i.e., privet school versus public school – (Kavanoz, 2006 & Moini, 2009), and characteristics – i.e., academic rank, and teaching experience – (Moini, 2009) influenced teacher beliefs and cognition about foreign/second language learning and teaching. Other studies reported that teacher professional

coursework or learning experiences (Abreu, 2015; Bamanger & Gashan, 2014; El-Okda, 2005; Nordlund, 2017; & Özmen, 2012) and teacher metaphors of teaching (educational journey, educational construction, and educational conduit) and teachers' teacher models/metaphors (instructor, transmitter, and builder) (Xiong, Li, & Qu, 2015) shaped teacher cognition about foreign/second language learning and teaching. Moreover, there were also other studies that indicated relationship between teacher beliefs/cognition and practices of teaching the target language. Some suggested that teacher beliefs across teaching approaches – teacher-centered versus student-centered – and teacher beliefs and classroom teaching practices varied (Kavanoz, 2006; Kaymakamoğlu, 2018; & Larenas, Hernandez, & Navarrete, 2015). In contrast, a study conducted by Bamanger and Gashan (2014) suggested a positive relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices. Earlier local research accounts reviewed also unfolded the interplay between: (1) English language teaching policy and curriculum and its implementation practices in early grades (Dereje, 2012), (2) EFL teachers' beliefs and practices in teaching the TL (Animaw, 2011 & Birhanu, 2012), and (3) EFL teachers' reflection on learning and teaching the target language (Taddese, 2013).

Research findings documented here are important in understanding matters related to the topic under investigation. However, they are inadequate in yielding sufficient knowledge with regard to voices of early grade teachers who are embarked on the enterprise of teaching the target language. One, most of the studies reviewed were conducted on EFL teachers teaching beyond primary schools. Findings drown from data gathered from such teachers cannot reflect mental lives of primary schools teachers because: (1) the more someone's academic rank increases, the better his/her understanding of the TL and its instruction is; and (2) the higher the schooling level (e.g., tertiary level) at which one teaches, the better one's opportunity of learning the TL in its teaching language is. As a result, voices of teachers teaching in early grades (Grade 1 – 4) are still lacking. Two, most of the studies conducted so far were evaluative. They evaluated the impact of professional coursework on teachers' beliefs/cognition about language and language instruction, but they did not address issues related to what the teachers know, think, believe in and do about language and its instruction as a result of their experiences of language learning and teaching. Three, one of the basic components of language variables that affect teacher learning in language teaching – teacher knowledge and skills of using English for both regulative and instructional purposes (Richards, 2017) – was overlooked.

To narrow the gaps stated above, empirical studies that target at uncovering teachers' beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, and perspectives about teaching, teachers, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, materials, instructional activities and self are still required. However, all of these variables of teacher cognition in language teaching cannot be addressed at a time. Therefore, this article addressed issues related to language and its instruction putting aside the other teacher mental lives related variables for scholars in the field of EFL instruction to embark on, on one side. On another side, given the importance of teacher cognition in providing appropriate learning environment in English language instruction, insights obtained as a result of investigating teacher

cognition in language instruction inform endeavors required in the process of both teacher education and development. Insights findings of this research revealed may also be crucial in providing information that various stakeholders, for instance, policy makers, early grade teacher's training curriculum developers, early grade teacher educators, etc., of English language education look for to make decisions in their own field of businesses. Hence, the following guiding research questions were set:

1. What cognition do teachers of early graders have about language and language learning/teaching?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' perceived cognition about language and language learning and language teaching practices?
3. What is the connection or disconnection between teachers' perceived cognition about language and its instruction and their actual teaching practices?
4. What is the parity or disparity between teachers' perceived cognition about own experiences of using the TL in the classroom and their actual use of the target language?

Materials and Methods

Survey research design was employed to address the problem under investigation with the intent of describing the existing phenomenon pertaining to teachers' lived experiences about language and its instruction. This research design was preferred to the other ones because of its power to describe individuals' attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics (Cresswell, 2012) about a phenomenon under investigation. Accordingly, both quantitative and qualitative data was sought from 35 (13 male and 15 female) early grade students' English language teachers, who were population of the study and comprehensively sampled, teaching at primary schools of Wayu Tuka Woreda, East Wollega Zone, Ethiopia. Questionnaire, classroom observation and introspective interview were used to gather data. The former tool was employed to collect quantitative data pertaining to the participants' perceived cognition about language and its instruction. Classroom observation was used to collect qualitative data related to the participants' actual or live classroom behaviors, on one side. On another side, it was used to have insights about the relationship between the teachers' perceived cognition and their actual cognition in teaching language. Introspective interview (discussion before and after classroom observation) was used to elicit information with regard to why they behaved classroom activities of teaching in the ways they performed.

Materials (items of data gathering tools) used to collect data were adapted from existing literature documented scholars like Bell (2005), Dereje (2012), Gass and Selinker (2001) and Mackey and Gass (2005). Questionnaire items related to teachers' attitudes, behaviors, thoughts, knowledge, and beliefs about language and language learning/teaching were adapted from the works of Bell (2005), Dereje (2012), and Gass and Selinker (2001). A total of 72 items of questionnaire were developed. Of these items, 28 of them that were either positively or negatively worded dealt with the participants' perceived cognition about language and language learning/teaching; 34 of them elicited the target teachers' perceived perceptions about own actual classroom behaviors; and 10 of the items elicited information pertinent to the target teachers perceived beliefs about own ability of using the TL in a way it promotes

TL instruction. Classroom observation guideline was adapted from Target Language Observation Scheme (TALOS) developed by Nunan (1989) and Ullman and Geva (1985) and presented in the work of Mackey and Gass (2005). The scheme has exhaustively presented components that classroom observation pays attention to. Of the components presented in the scheme, those components that appealed to the present study's classroom contexts in terms of activities teachers are expected to perform at beginning, running, and ending lesson phases of lesson instruction were adapted. Eventually, items developed to gather data were given to colleagues in the field of the study for review, and they were revised based on comments and suggestions obtained from them.

In order for participants of the study easily comprehend items appeared in the questionnaire, they were translated to Afan Oromo and administered in May 2019. During its administration, participants were briefed about purpose of the study and assured confidentiality of the information they provided, and informed consent was secured. Questionnaire was administered to all subjects of the study on face-to-face-basis in two phases going to each of the participants' school. Participants of the study sat to fill in items related to teachers' perceived cognition about language and language instruction and about own ability of using the TL for teaching purpose in the first phase of questionnaire administration. Questionnaire that dealt with teachers' perceived cognition about own practices of TL teaching was administered in the second phase of quantitative data collection.

Participants of classroom observation were purposively selected from the total subjects of the study (i.e., 35 teachers) on the basis of proximity of their schools to easy access of transportation. Actual classroom observations were held in May and December 2019. Gaps observed in connection to eliciting the teachers mental lives in the analysis of the data collected in May 2019 led to the second round observation that was held in December 2019. During each of the observation rounds, each of the observee's willingness to be audio-taped during both classroom observation and introspective interview was also confirmed, and informed consent was secured. Consequently, live classrooms of six teachers (5 male and a female) were observed. This number of participants was determined based on sufficiency and saturation principles of selecting participants and collecting data (Seidman, 2006) of qualitative inquiry. Each of the teachers was observed at least twice to obtain detailed insights about the cases' actual behaviors, and data of all of the classroom observations were captured using audio-tape and field note. Each observation session lasted from 22 – 46 minutes. Inconsistence of duration of observation times occurred as a result of the teachers' delay to go to the classes at which the classroom observations were held or rush/delay to leave it before/after the time allotted to the period came to an end. Audio-taped introspective interview was also conducted in Afan Oromoo before and after each classroom observation event. Before classroom observation, introspective interview was mainly held to uncover the mental lives that underpinned the target teachers' practices of lesson planning. After classroom observation introspective discussion was held to uncover why each of the observees performed activities observed in the actual classroom in the ways they did. Eventually, the audio-recorded data was transcribed for later analysis.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used. The quantitative one was used to analyze the data collected numerically, using questionnaire, and data obtained from 32 teachers was used in the quantitative analysis while data obtained from three of the participants was discarded because of its incompleteness. Median of the data (ordinal data) was computed to have insight about the patterns that existed in the data, on one hand. On the another hand, Spearman Roh's rank order correlation coefficient of the data was computed to determine the relationship that existed between teachers' perceived cognition about language and its teaching and their perceived cognition about own practices of English teaching. This correlation coefficient was preferred to the other statistical packages because of its ideality in carrying out analysis of ordinal variables. The data collected verbally (using classroom observation) was analyzed thematically using teacher decision-making framework formulated by Richards and Lockhart (1994) (as cited in Osada, 2016). The framework asserts that teachers make decisions of teaching at three levels: at lesson preparation, lesson delivery (interactive), and lesson evaluation levels. These levels were used to analyze data captured during classroom observation. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was also used to analyze data obtained using introspective interview (discussion before and after classroom observation). This technique was used to have insights with regard to teacher mental lives that underpinned the decisions teachers made at lesson planning, delivery, and evaluation stages of classroom interaction.

Results

Questionnaire was used to generate data pertaining to the participants' perceived cognition about various constructs in relation to language and its instruction. One of the variables of teacher mental lives that items appeared in a questionnaire measured was *teachers' perceived cognition about language and its instruction*. Results of the data yielded that large percentage of the participants' rating of each of the items fall on the "Agree" continuum of the five-point Likert-scale – Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Undecided (3), Agree (4) and Strongly Agree (5). Similarly, median of almost all of the items, regardless of wording style (either positively or negatively) of each item, revealed that the teachers' degree of agreement to each of the statements was also fall on the "Agree" continuum of the rating scale. Table 1 depicts details of the participants' rate of choice of each of the items that measured their perceived cognition about language and its instruction.

Table 1: **Median of Teachers' Cognition about Language Instruction**

Thematic Variables	Number and styles of wording the items	Average valid choice rate in %					Average missing in %	Median of medians
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	S/Agree		
Language	6 +vely worded items	3.1	7.8	17.2	22.4	48.5	1	5
Language	2 +vely worded items	7.8	6.3	11	21.9	53	-	4.5

learning	*9 -vely worded items*	5.9	14.3	10.1	21.2	47.6	1	4
Language teaching	*6 +vely worded items*	10.9	14.1	11	26.6	36	1.6	4
	3 -vely worded items	5.6	12.5	10	23.8	48.1	-	4

Analysis of the data also revealed that there were some variables that the teachers were "Undecided" to indicate their degree of either disagreement or agreement. For example, median of the following questionnaire items was three. That means, the participants were uncertain to decide whether they agree or disagree with the ideas embedded in each of the items.

1. English language is: 1) a very difficult language; 2) a difficult language; 3) a language of medium difficulty; 4) an easy language; 5) a very easy language.
2. Your students learn English language better if you engage them in abstract language activities.
3. Your familiarity with how you were taught English language is sufficient to teach English language better.

Introspective interview of the data obtained after classroom observation revealed that the participants own learning practices of the TL when they were early grade students and their intuitions informed most portion of their actual teaching practices. For instance, Teacher 6, among others, was observed while he was teaching reading names of objects like "egg", "ox", "orange", and "elephant" using drilling. After classroom observation, when he was asked why he used "drilling" technique of teaching, he replied *"Nuti akkasitti waan barsiifneef, barataa yeroo turre, jalqaba barsiisaan yooroo nu barsiisu akkasitti nu barsiise. . . [We taught in that way or [or using drilling, emphasis added] because our teachers initially taught as using drilling when we were students.]"*.

Teacher 11, among others, was observed teaching reading words of parts of the body like "eye", "nose", "mouth", etc. using drilling while his lesson plan showed up that he planned to teach reading the words using "Explanation". Eventually, he was asked why he changed the decision he made at planning stage ("Explanation") to "Drilling" when he actually taught the lesson. The teacher replied he planned "Explanation" as teacher activity bearing in mind that he would explain the lesson he taught using students mother tongue, i.e., Afan Oromo, on one hand. On another hand, he replied that he changed what was planned ("Explanation") as teacher activity to "Drilling" because the current system does not allow using a single teacher and student activity, and student also did not learn the lesson if a sing teaching method, i.e., "Explanation", was used. Afan Oromo version of the teacher's response is exhibited in the following quote:

Interviewer: *. . . akkaataa dhiheessa barnoota keessanii kan karoorfattan, "Explanation" jedha. Isinimmoo akka sanatti barsiiseera jettanii yaadduu . . .? [You planned to teach your today's lesson using "Explanation". Did you think you teach as per of your plan?]*

Teacher 11: *. . . afaan kun ijoollee kanaaf haaraadha. Afaanuma kana gara Afaan Oromootti jijjiiree yemmuun dubbadhu akka "Explanation"iittan ilaala. [This language, i.e.,*

English, is new to this students. When I spoke translating this language, i.e., English, to Afan Oromo, I understood that translation as "Explanation".

Teachers' perceived cognition about own actual language teaching practices was the second teachers' mental live that was measured using questionnaire. Results of the data obtained in this regard revealed that the teachers perceive themselves as perfect practitioners in teaching English language. Median of each of the variables measured showed that the teachers performed every classroom activities of teaching the TL "To a very great extent" (see Table 2). As shown in the Table, average choice rate of the five-point Liker-scale of measurement of each of the variables also showed that "To a great extent" and "To a very great extent" attracted large percentage of the participants' responses.

Table 2: **Teachers Perceived Cognition about Own Teaching Practices: Median Value**

Variables	*Number of items measured each item*	*Average valid choice rate in %*					*Average missing in %*	*Median of medians*
		To no extent	*To a small extent*	*To some extent*	*To a great extent*	*To a very great extent*		
Teacher preparation	6 items	-	-	16.7	33.3	49.5	0.5	4
Lesson delivery	11 items	0.6	1.7	13.4	30.7	53.4	-	5
Lesson Assessment	4 items	-	2.4	13.3	33.6	50.8	-	5
Lesson adaption	4 items	-	2.3	14.1	30.5	52.4	0.8	5
Lesson evaluation	2 items	-	-	11	42	47	-	5
Classroom management	3 items	-	1	9.4	22.9	66.7	-	5
Motivating students	4 items	-	1.6	10.2	26.6	61.8	-	5

Based on the results of the study presented so far (see Tables 1 – 2), correlation and triangulation of results of the data were made. Spearman's Rho correlation coefficient was used to describe the relationship between teachers' perceived cognition about English language and its teaching and about own actual teaching practices of the target language. Spearman's Rho (r_s) correlation coefficient was preferred to correlate the two variables to the other ways of correlating variables because this tool of correlation was formulated to correlate data compiled using ordinal measuring level. Output of the correlation coefficient revealed that there was statistically significant, both strong positive, relationship between teachers' perceived cognition with regard to the variables correlated. Table 3 shows the summary of the output of r_s two-tailed correlation coefficient at $r_s = 0.748$, N = 28 and 32, p < 0.01.

Table 3: **Correlation between Teachers' Perceived Cognition about Language and Its Teaching**

			MTC	MTTP
Spearman's rho	Median of teacher cognition (MTC)	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.748**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
		N (In terms of items)	28	28

Median of teacher teaching practices (MTTP)	Correlation Coefficient	.748**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N (In terms of items)	28	34

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The quantitative data displayed the target teachers' perfection in their actual practices of both lesson preparation and lesson delivery of the target language. Reliability of this result was triangulated with the data obtained from the teachers' actual teaching practices (classroom observation and introspective interview) that they went through at lesson plan preparation and lesson delivery levels. One of the documents that reveals teachers' actual teaching practices of the TL is their lesson plan. The target teachers' lesson plans were collected and reviewed, and the teachers were also made to reflect on why they prepared the lessons planned in the ways they did. Figure 1, for example, shows Teacher 8's experience of lesson planning.
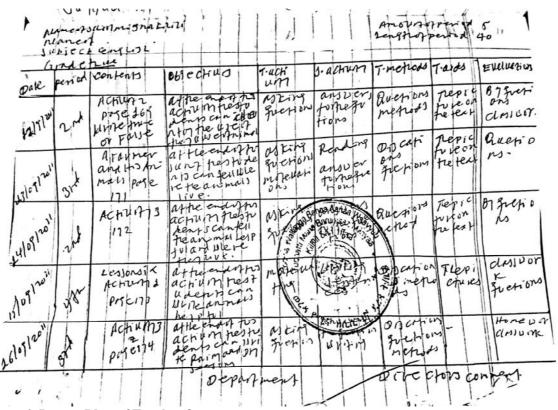

Figure 1: **Lesson Plan of Teacher 8**

As shown in Figure 1, almost all of the lesson plans that were collected and reviewed depicted similar format and expressions. For instance, one of Teacher 8's lesson plans is shown in Figure 1 as a sample. The Figure depicts body of the lesson plan that comprised "Content", "Objectives", "Teacher Activity", "Students' Activity", "Teaching Methods", "Teaching Aids", and "Evaluation", among others, that

headed column of five rows that presented lessons of five periods taught from Monday to Friday. As shown in the Figure, content of a lesson that Teacher 8 planned to teach on 15/09/2011 (according to Ethiopian Calendar, after all *E. C.*), for example, reads "Lesson six, Activity 1, Page 173". On another hand, directions of "Activity 1" reads "**Directions:** Read the substitution table. Write five sentences about the animals in the story, 'A Farmer and his Animals'" (Source: MoE, 2008: 173, Grade 3). This "Directions" implicitly implies that *Writing Sentences* is the main content of "Activity 1" that Teacher 8 failed to infer from the "Directions" of the activity, on one hand. On another hand, it implies that "Activity 1" cannot be content of a lesson by itself. In the same token, all of the teachers from whom lesson plans were collected and reviewed did not clearly state focus and purpose of the lessons planned to be taught throughout their experiences of lesson planning. Varied teacher and students activities that would lead to accomplishment of specific objectives of each of the lessons planned were not set. Assessment and evaluation techniques formulated were also not varied, clear, and aligned with purpose of each of the lessons planned and taught.

Based on such experiences of lesson planning, each of the participants observed was asked to reflect on why they prepared lesson plan using the format and expressions depicted in their lesson plans. All of them replied that the format of the lesson plan that they have been using is a conventional lesson plan format that have been used at their own and neighboring schools. With regard to expressions, they reflected that because there are a lot of things that a teacher and students do in classroom, it is not possible to write every aspect of instructional activities that are undertaken in the narrowly spaced lesson plan format. Below are the Afan Oromo versions of the teachers reflections on the issues described hereunder:

> **Teacher 8:** . . . mata-duree barsiisnu sana barataan akka inni hubatuuf, fakkeenya tokko tokko itti himanii, gaaffilee tokko tokko kaasanii, barataa hirmaachaa hinjirre illee akka inni hirmaatuuf yaadaa tokko tokko barataa kanaaf ibsanii, kaka'umsa godhanii akka inni mata-duree kana keessatti hirmaatuuf, jecha kana achi keessatti [fayyadame]. *[I said to motivate students with various ideas. Example, the term 'motivating' was used so that students understand the topic taught giving examples, raising various questions and explaining ideas to those students who didn't participate.]*

> **Teacher 9:** Garuu qabatamaa taasisuudhaaf yeroo baay'ee mana barnootaa irraa kan itti fayyadamamu akkuma mana barnootaatti karooruma kana bichaadha jechuudha. *[To make pratical. Lesson plan format used at school level is this one.]*

> **Teacher 11:** . . ., as jalatti xaqilaallaasaa as jala kaahuuf iddoon hinjiru waan taheef isheema kana qabeetan darbe malee gara fuulduratti immoo nan fooyyessa. *[Narrowness of the format of lesson planning prohibited writing everything we do in the classroom. I improve it in the future.]*

Median of the quantitative data displayed in Table 2 also shows that the target teachers discharged teacher activities of lesson delivering obligation *To a very great extent*. Reliability of this result was tasted using data obtained from classroom observation. To this effect, all of the teachers who participated in the

classroom observation exercise activities of lesson delivering session in almost similar fashion. I observed that almost all of them began their lesson greeting their students and moved on to either revising the previous lesson or to introducing the period's lesson. Asking questions from a lesson prior to the lesson at hand, reading directions of previously exercised activity, naming page number and topic of lesson taught earlier, or reading some of the questions appeared in the activities of the last lesson were the ways through which the teachers revised the previously taught lesson. As shown in Figure 1, Teacher 8, for instance, revised the lesson taught on 14/09/2011 (E. C.) prior to moving on introducing the lesson taught on 15/09/2011 (E. C.) as follows:

Teacher 8: *[After greeting students and making some sitting arrangements of students]* Silent, please. Ok. What we learn yesterday? . . . Who can tell me? What we learn yesterday? Who can tell me? What we learn? We learn on page 171 and 72, the dialogue "A farmer and His Animals". Yes or no? You learn it.
Activity 3: 1. How many people are in Ato Sembeto's family?
            2. Who is Kibitu and what does she do?
We learn it. Yes? Ok. Today we learn on page 173. Lesson 6 . . .

After classroom observation, one of the questions each of the teacher was asked was *why s/he revised the previously taught lesson prior to introducing the day's lesson.* Responses obtained revealed that the teachers were prompted to do so for three reasons: to fulfill one of the rules or requirements of lesson plan, to evaluate the extent to which the students learned the taught material, and/or to relate the previously taught lesson with the lesson of the day. These reasons are reflected in the following Afan Oromo version of the teachers' responses:

Teacher 11: . . . akkuma seerri "lesson plan" jedhutti daree . . . yoggaa galtu . . . barnoota kaleessa baratan keessa deeb'i jedha *[Rule of lesson plan orders that says that when you go to classroom revise the previous lesson.].*

Teacher 8: . . . mata-dureen itti aanuu ykn gilagaalli hojjechuudhaaf fuula dura jiru sun mata-duree barnoota darbee wajjin walqabata yoo ta'e, barattoonni waan baratan sana yaadatanii . . . barnoota itti aanee jiru sana akka isaan sirriitti hubataniif ykn gaaffilee gaafatamaniif illee deebii gahaa akka isaan laataniif ni gargaara barnoota darbe yaadachiisuun. *[If topic or exercise of the lesson at hand is realted to the previously taught lesson, revising the previous lesson is required so that students remember previously taught lesson and thoroughly understand the lesson at hand or give adequate responses they are asked.]*

Teacher 6: Jiijjiirama barataan sun barsiisaa sana hordofaa jiraachuu isaa, kaleessa wanta beekurraa gara wanta hinbeekneetti dhufaa jiraachuu isaa ittiin adda baasuuf. *[I revised the previously taught lesson to identify whether students were following me and to determine whether students progress from what they knew yesterday to what they don't know today.]*

Whatever previous lesson revising mechanisms were used, only in the classrooms where understanding checking questions were asked, I observed that 3 – 5 students participated in answering understanding

checking questions, and a few of them answered the questions correctly. I also seldom observed when the teachers practically attempted to link the previous lesson with the day's lesson where there were relationships between two lessons. In such and other contexts, I hardly observed any change of decisions made at lesson planning stage as a result of feedback obtained from revising the previously taught lesson. Instead, all of the teachers moved on to introducing the day's lesson, presenting it predominantly using drilling and/or oral questioning as technique(s) of teaching, and ending lesson phases respectively. Based on such behaviors of the teachers, I asked them why they performed teacher activities at various phases (example, lesson beginning, lesson running, and lesson ending phases) of lesson delivering during reflection sessions, and only the major ones were presented here.

The first question each of the teachers were asked was whether or not moving on to presenting the day's lesson in a context where majority of the students failed to respond to previous lesson understanding checking questions and were also not got prepared to attend the day's lesson is pedagogically acceptable. The teachers replied that because when to begin and end a lesson is already determined in annual lesson plan in general and daily lesson plan in particular, it is impossible to drop out the day's lesson and reteach the previous lesson. The solution is to sort out those students who were not unlearned the previously taught lesson and reteaching them in their part-time. The following Afan Oromo version quote is taken from the reflections the teachers provided in connection to the issue under discussion:

Teacher 6: Barattoota kana "make-up" iddoo barbaachisetti waamnee hubannoo kennufiidhaan warra sana walqixa akka isaan hirmaatan, daree keessattis deeggarsa addaa gochuudhaan sagantaa itti baasnee qopheessuudha. *[Where required, we render special support and make-up to students who lagged behind their counterparts to help them cope up with other students.]*"

Teacher 8: Karoorri . . . barnoota kana . . . yooman jalqaba, yooman xumura jedhameetti kan inni bahu. Tarii barataan yoo hinhubannellee, karooran karoorse dhiisee waa bira keessa seenuu osoo hintaane, . . . mata-dureen kun itti cimuu danda'a waan ta'eef, barattoota . . . sagantaa . . . wayitii barnootaarra adda ta'een . . . qobaatti barnoota laachuufiirraan kan hafe, barataadhaaf hingalle, isumarra dhaabbachuu qaba jedhee . . . karoora sana diiguu hinqabu. *[There is a lesson plan. It is prepared determining where to begin and end a lesson. In case students failed to show up mastery of previously taught lesson, the solution is not to leave teaching lesson of the day and to go back to teach previous taught lesson again but to teach such students in make-up classes.]*

All of the teachers were not abided to procedures and teacher and students activities formulated in their lesson plan during the actual presentation of lesson of a period which was observed. For instance, Figure 1 shows that lesson plan of a period that Teacher 8 used 15/09/2012 (E. C.) depicted that "Motivating" and "Writing Sentences" were planned as teacher and students' activities respectively. However, until 15:29th minutes of a period of 40 minutes, Teacher 8 repeatedly told the students how they can make sentences from the given substitution table, drew the *substitution table* on the blackboard, gave them an example (e.g., "Example: The cows produce what? produce milk. Or cows give us what? give us milk."),

formed groups and ordered students to work in group (e.g., "Ok, discussing, discussing. Group 1, group 2, group 3, group 4. Discussing how to make the sentences."), repeated giving the example given earlier (e.g., "For example, the cows produce milk. Ok, discussing . . . discuss a group.), ordered students to copy down what he wrote on the blackboard on their exercise book, asked students to make sentences, but no-one could do that. Throughout this time, I did not observe while the teacher and students undertook teacher and students' activities ("Motivating" and "Writing Sentences" respectively, see Figure 1, Lesson taught on 15/09/2011 – E. C.) that were determined in the lesson plan. The teacher himself asked questions and responded to them.

Like the ones stated in the above paragraph, questions targeted at eliciting information with regard to *why the target teachers taught contents of a lesson they taught* and *why they did not follow procedures of lesson presentation that were shown up in their lesson plans* were also asked. With regard to the first question, why the teachers taught contents of the lessons observed (Example, "The Farmer and His Animals", content of the lesson Teacher 8 planned and taught on 13/09/2011 (E. C.) (see Figure 1), all of the teachers replied that they taught content of the lesson itself rather than a given language skill. This means that Teacher 8, for instance, whose content of the lesson that he taught on 13/09/2011 (E. C.) (see Figure 1) was "The Farmer and His Animals" and was designed to teach reading comprehension, replied that he taught about "Qonnaan bulaafi bineeldotasaa, waa'ee Obbo Sambatoo, eessa akka jiraatu, waa'ee horii isaa, kkf *['The Farmer and His Animals': about Ato Sembeto, where does he live, about his animals, etc.]*". Likewise, Teacher 12, who taught "Reading names of animals" on 20/04/2012 (E. C.), replied that she taught lesson of that period because student's textbook itself orders to teach that lesson so that students understand about animals. Afan Oromo version of Teacher 12's response about why she taught the lesson about "Reading names of animals" is quoted hereunder:

> Egaa kitaabichumatu jedha. Waa'ee bineensotaa barattoonni akka hubataniifi. . . . bineensota keessaa kamtu miidhaa geessisa; kamtu miidhaa hingeessisu; kami namatti madaqee jiraatu; kamimmoo kan daggala keessa jiraatu isa jedhu akka isaan hubataniifi. *[The book itself orders to teach so that students understand about the animals and know those animals that harm, don't harm and are adapted to live with human begin and aren't.]*

Participants of the classroom observation were also asked *why they changed decision-made at lesson planning stage*, example, all of them changed teacher and students' activities formulated in the lesson plan, mostly they changed to drilling. In this regard, responses obtained from introspective interview implied that two reasons: namely, narrowness of the spaces of lesson plan format and their own intuition, forced the teachers to change decisions they made at teacher preparation stage while they actually taught the lesson they planned to teach. These reasons are manifested in Afan Oromo version of the teachers' responses quoted below:

Teacher 9: *[He taught 'reading words of parts of the body' using drilling.]* . . . yeroon dubbisu sanatti jecha sana quba koo irra kaa'ee ykn peennaan itti agarsiisee yeroon sagaleessu sana ni dhaggeeffatu; ni ilaalus. Ofiis yeroo sana sagaleessaa deemu jechuudha. Maal

akka jedhamu ilaalaa deemu . . .. Yeroo sana maalummaa jecha sanaa ykn jechi sun maal akka jedhamu qabataa deemu. . . . *[When I read the words touching by my figure or pen, students listen, observe and go reading with me. They go observing what it was said. At that time, the learn meaning of that word or what it is said.]*

Teacher 8: . . . karoorri . . . adeemsuma . . . ittiin hojjennudha malee, . . wanta . . . hojjennu hundumasaa waan dubbatu miti. . . . Wantoota daree keessatti raawwatamu hunda "lesson plan"iirra kaa'uun hindanda'amu. *[Lesson plan is tells us process of doing the work, but it doesn't tell us everything we do. It is impossible to write everything we do in the classroom on the lesson plan.]*

The last, but not least, question the teachers were asked to reflect on with regard to their experiences of delivering a lesson dealt with *assessment of a lesson*. Most of the teachers did not assess their lesson, and most of them signaled ended lesson of the period asking alternative questions like "If you have any question. No question? Thank you." (Teacher 8), "Have you question? If you have a question you can ask." (Teacher 9) and "Is there any question? We see tomorrow, thank you." (Teacher 12). Relying on such experiences of ending a lesson, the teachers were asked *why they eventually (at the end of the lesson) invited their students to ask questions (if any)*. To explain and to teach the issue the students' questions imply again were the major reasons derived from the teachers' responses. The following quotes were taken from the Afan Oromo version of responses of some of the teachers:

Teacher 12: . . ., fakkeenyaaf, "elephant" jechuun maalidha yoo naan jedhanii na gaafatan, Oromiffaan himuufiidhaafan. . . . *[To tell them in Afan Oromo, for example, if they asked me 'what is elephant'.]*

Teacher 9: . . . wanta gaaffii itti uumu irra deebi'ee akka isaan hubatan taasisuuf . . . *[To teach issues they were not clear about again.]*.

Result of the quantitative data obtained with regard to variables like "Lesson adaption", "Lesson evaluation", "Classroom management", and "Motivating students" revealed that the teachers' perceived themselves as if they perfectly perform activities related to these variables. During my actual classroom observation, however, I hardly observed a teacher who preformed activities that imply accomplishment of these variables even *to a small extent*. They began presenting lesson of the day even without maintaining readiness of their students to attend their lesson. I observed students doing various activities (such as chatting, writing something, talking to one another at a distance, changing sitting places) while the teachers were teaching. I also observed that the teachers continued teaching the lesson at hand until they finished lesson of the period in context where all or most of the students were not participating in answering teacher's questions or asking questions in the process of lesson presentation. In such contexts, the teachers would have adapted the lesson, but they had not done that.

The data obtained from introspective interview with regard to, for example, whether or not they prepared their students' to actively engage in the lessons to be taught prior to beginning of both revising the previous lesson and presenting the new lesson revealed that the teachers believe that becoming a student

or students coming to school by itself is an indicator students' readiness to attend their lesson. The following quotes show the teachers reflections in this regard:

> **Teacher 8:** . . . qophaa'ee dhufa barataan yoomiyyuu. Barataa qaxaleen qophaa'ee dhufa, hojii manaa hojjetee, kitaabasaa fudhatee . . .. *[Any time a student comes to school getting prepared. Clever student come to school getting ready, done his/her homework, and his book with him.]*

> **Teacher 11:** . . . barataan walqixa ta'uu dhiisuu danda'a. . . ., yeroon gaafadhu, ni deebisu; ni dubbisu; waanan jedhu ni raawwatu waan taheef, gar-tokkoon isaanii qophaa'aniirun jedha. *[All of the students could not be equally got prepared for attending lesson. . . . Because some of the students answer questions I ask them, read, perform what I order them to do, I believe that half of them were ready to attend their lesson.]*

Questionnaire was also used to generate data pertaining to the participants' perceived cognition about own skills of using English language appealing to the grade level they are teaching in a way it supports students' learning of the target language. Analysis of the data obtained using the tool indicated that the teachers' use the TL in its teaching at a *Very good* level. Table 5 displays detailed results of the data.

Table 4: **Teachers' Perceived Cognition about Own TL Using Skills**

Items/Variables measured	Valid choice rate in %					Median	Median of medians
	Weak	Basic	Ade-quate	Very good	Excel-lent		
Spelling skills of words of the TL			15.6	34.6	50	5	
Pronunciation skills of the TL		3.1	9.4	25	62.5	5	
Communication ability of own ideas	3.1	9.4	28.1	43.8	15.6	4	
Listening ability of ideas communicated	3.1	9.4	15.6	37.5	34.4	4	
Comprehension skills of written texts	3.1	6.3	15.6	34.4	40.6	4	4
Ability to convey ideas in writing		9.4	28.1	37.5	21.9	4	
Production of ideas grammatically	6.3	6.3	31.3	34.4	21.9	4	
Tackling unfamiliar words contextually	3.1	6.3	15.6	34.4	40.6	4	
Capability of using classroom English		12.5	9.4	46.9	31.3	4	
Overall command of English language	12.5	6.3	25	31.3	25	4	

Reliability of the data obtained from the teachers' perceived cognition about self ability of using the TL in a way it supports students' learning of the TL was tested using the data obtained from their actual classroom behaviors. Teachers' lesson plans and the interactions they make in the classroom reflect certain insights in relation to their ability of using TL in a way it supports its instruction. To this effect, certain aspects of the target teachers' reading and writing skills were reflected in their daily lesson plan; likewise, classroom interactions that they made while teaching the TL reflected their skills of using the TL orally to both facilitate and deliver lesson of the instructional period.

To begin with the first source from which the teachers' TL using experiences is anticipated (i.e., lesson plan), meanings communicated in the lesson plans were informed by the teachers' skills of reading and writing. Prior to beginning to write lesson plan, teachers read syllabus and student's textbook of the grade level they taught. Based on their understanding of the readings they made, they determine focus and purpose of the lesson and plan how to go about to achieve purpose of the lesson. To this end, data obtained from comparing and contrasting foci and purposes of lessons all of the target teachers formulated in their lesson plans with the ones stated, especially, in the student's textbook and syllabus of the book were found unrelated. None of the *contents* and *objectives* of lessons formulated by each of the teachers indicated that the teachers' determined focus and purpose of teaching the TL that contribute to the development of language skills embedded in the "Directions" of each of the activities. Figure 2, for instance, depicts one of the language lessons presented in English for Ethiopia Grade 3 Student's Textbook (MoE, 2008: 173, Grade 3) that Teacher 8 and Teacher 11 relied on in planning lesson of a given period and in teaching the lesson planned to be taught.
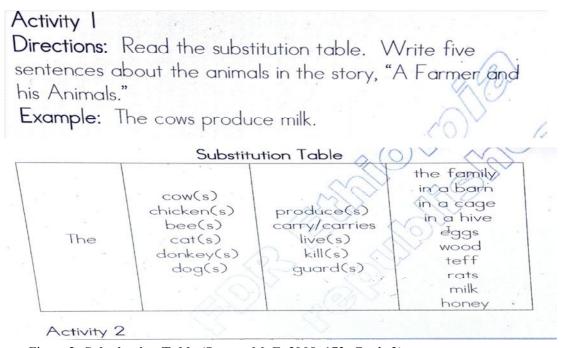

Figure 2: **Substitution Table** (Source: MoE, 2008: 173, Grade 3)

It was based on information stated in Activity 1 of Figure 2 that Teacher 8 and Teacher 11 prepared lesson plan that they used in teaching language skills the Activity depicts. In their lesson plan, they determined *content*, *objective*, and *teacher activity* of the lesson as follows:

Teacher 8

Content: Lesson six; Activity 1, Page 173
Objective: After this lesson, students will be able to write animals helpful.
Teacher activity: Motivating
Teacher activity observed during actual teaching: Asking question

Teacher 11

Content: Substitution table
Objective: After this lesson, students will be able to use substitution table.
Teacher activity: Revising
Teacher activity observed during actual teaching: Asking question

As shown in the quote, *Lesson six; Activity 1, Page 173* (Teacher 8's words) and *Substitution table* (Teacher 11's words) cannot be contents of a language. Likewise, *students will be able to write animals helpful* (Teacher 8's words) and *. . . students will be able to use substitution tables* (Teacher 11's words) cannot be purposes for which language is taught. As opposed to the data presented in Table 3, the above quote showed that the teachers got confused to determine *type of language skill* that the table presented in Figure 1 was intended the students to practice and why they practice that language skill. This failure could occur as a result of the teachers' shortcomings with regard to comprehending "Directions" of activities of lessons in particular and lack of reading knowledge and skills in general.

The teachers' lesson plan was also thought to be one of the sources from which insights about their skills of writing could be obtained. Its analysis showed that the teachers used to use identical expressions throughout all of their experiences of lesson planning As shown in Figure 1, the only and major activity that the target teachers were doing when they sat for writing *lesson plan* of a lesson ahead of them was changing only contents and objectives of their lesson. They set contents of their lessons coping unit names (e.g., Unit 4), lesson names (e.g., Lesson Six), activity names (e.g., Activity 1), page names (e.g., Page 173), and/or words (phrases) of "Directions" (e.g., Substitution table) of the activity presented in student's textbook that they were planning to teach. Similarly, they wrote objective of that lesson subordinating a clause that reads "After this lesson, the students will or can be able to" to a given word or phrase to the content of the lesson they formulated or copied from the activity they taught. Generally, the teachers experiences of writing that analysis of their lesson plans revealed showed that the teachers' route memory (but not thinking skills) informed their writing endeavors of lesson planning as opposed to the result of the data obtained using questionnaire (see Table 3).

Classroom interaction that the teachers made while teaching the TL was the second source from which insights in relation to the participants' ability of using the TL for both regulative and instructional purposes of TL instruction were sought. All of them greeted their students fluently using the target

language. On the other hand, transcription of the data obtained from classroom observation showed that the teachers used students' mother tongue, TL, or TL and its equivalent translation for regulative purpose of TL instruction. The quotes presented hereunder were taken from various teachers' experiences of using the TL for regulative purposes of TL teaching.

Teacher 6: . . ., our previous lesson we discuss about lesson seven. Under lesson seven, the given words or the given words. This is a given under lesson seven. We discuss last week or last period under lesson seven about these two of words.

Teacher 8: Silent, please. Ok. What we learn yesterday? What we learn yesterday? Who can tell me? What we learn yesterday? Who can tell me? What we learn? We learn on page 171, 72 the dialogue "A farmer and His Animals". Yes or no? You learn it.

Teacher 9: Textbook page 111 (Fuula 111 irra kan jiru ilaalaa mee kitaaba keessan . . .). The kinds of the house . . .. (Gosoota manaa warri tahan achirra jiru. Manni bifa iskuweerii taheen yerootti ijaaramu jira. Akkasuma 'round shape' kan jennu ykn bifa naannawaa ta'een, bifa geengoo taheen, geengoo tahee yeroonni ijaaramu jira. *[Types of homes are given there. There is an occasion when a home with rectangular or circle shape is built.]*)

Teacher 11: T: Ok, yesterday, we learned this topic. Our topic was "sense organs". . . . Let's revise . . . (Keessa deebina mee. Kaleessa baranneerra mitii kana?). Raise your hand. Who can read this word? . . .
S_1: eye

The data shown in the above quotes did not show that the teachers were as fluent users of the TL in a way it promotes students' learning as the data obtained from their perceived cognition about self ability of using the TL (see Table 4) depicted. In most cases, the teachers' speeches, except that of Teacher 11's, were grammatically awkward and filled with repetitions. To spot out some of the problems the extracts had, part of Teacher 6's speech that reads ". . ., our previous lesson we discuss about lesson seven. Under lesson seven, the given words or the given words. This is a given under lesson seven." was copied here again. In the first 'would be' sentence of this quote, the phrase *our previous lesson* was incomplete in meaning because it had no simple past verb and complement. The sentence *we discuss about lesson seven,* which by itself had tense problem, can also not be an appropriate complement of the phrase it followed. The 'would be' sentence *Under lesson seven, the given words or the given words* was also incomplete – it cannot convey any meaning and had unnecessary repetition – for one thing. For another thing, assuming that this sentence (to use his intention) was complete and meaningful, the teacher jumped to uttering the following sentence (i.e., "This is a given under lesson seven.").

With regard to using the TL for instructional function – which refers to how language is used to develop the knowledge and skills that are the focus of a lesson – the data obtained from the classroom interactions did not indicate that the teachers were as fluent as the data obtained from their perceived cognition showed in Table 4. Like using TL for regulative function of instruction of thee TL, the data emanated

from the target teachers' oral interaction also showed that most of the speech acts that the teachers made were those that were taken from either "Directions" of activities or sentences/phrases of items that appeared in the activity under instruction, on one hand. On another hand, some of the teachers were observed while teaching the TL using the students' mother tongue. For example, the extract bellow shows how Teacher 8, who taught the "Activity" displayed in Figure 2, introduced content of his lesson and gave example.

> Today we learn on page 173, Lesson 6. On your textbook page 173. Read the substitution table. Write five sentences about the animals in the story, "A Farmer and His Animals". *[The highlighted one was taken from "Directions" of the activity.]* Read the substitution table *[totally taken from the "Directions"]*. First, we read what? Substitution table *[taken from "Directions]*. After that, we write sentences from the substitution table. When we write these sentences, the dialogue page 171, "A Farmer and His Animals". Yes? Ok. *Example:* The cows produce milk. The cows produce milk. *[An example taken from textbook.]* First we write for example substitution table. Here is substitution table *[repeated]*. Example: The cows produce what? produce milk. Or cows give us what? give us milk. Ok. When we write or make sentences, we see the substitution table, substitution table. Here is the substitution table *[Drawing the substitution table on the blackboard]*.

As shown in the extract, the teacher could not tell content or language item of the lesson. In the first two sentences, he told them he was about to teach a given page number (page 173) and lesson (Lesson 6). Then, he read "Directions" of the activity and gave them an example saying it again and again. In his sayings, he did not try to make any modification so that it became clear to students.

On the other hand, Teacher 9 presented one of the lessons he taught during classroom observation in Afan Oromo. The only time at which he used the TL was when he was reading what he wanted to talk about. The following quote is taken from the interaction he made when he taught about reading "Parts of the Body".

> **Teacher:** Lesson 1: Touch each picture and name the body part. [Read from book.]
> **Student X:** Fuula meeqa? *[On which page?]*
> **Teacher:** Page 33. Fuula 33 *[Page 33]*. 'eye' jechuun ija jechuudha *['eye' means 'ija'']*. . . . 'eye' jechuun maalidha jechuudhaa, 'ija' jechuudha *[What does 'eye' mean; it means 'ija']*.
> **Teacher:** Isheen kun maal jedhamti *[[pointing to a picture showing 'nose'], what do we call this one]* 'Nose'. 'Nose' jechuun maal jechuudha *[What does 'nose' mean?]*?
> **Students:** funyaan *['fugnan' is the Afan Oromo version of 'nose'.]*
> **Teacher:** funyaan jechuudha *['nose' means 'fugnan']* . . . . xiyyi sun maal agarsiisee jiraa *[What has the arrow shown]*? . . . 'funyaan' isa Afaan Oromootiin jennu . . . *[The object that we call 'fugnan' in Afan Oromo.]*

Discussion

This empirical research was conducted to describe early grade teachers' perceived and actual cognition about language and its instruction, and responses in relation to the basic research questions formulated

were sought in the data generated. Accordingly, results of the quantitative data obtained in connection to the target teachers' cognition about language and its instruction came up with inconsistent meanings. Thematic analysis of the data implied that the teachers' did not demonstrate firm understanding of both theories of learning (Gredler, 2009; Pritchard, 2009; & Tracey & Morrow, 2006) and theories of language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001) and their pedagogical implications. The teachers understand language as a tool which has its own structure governing its appearance and is used for communication among human begins, on one side. On another side, results of the data revealed that the teachers were either confused or undecided about the features that English language instruction exhibits. For instance, literature (e.g., Johnson & Freeman, 2001; Richards, 2017; Valencia, 2009; & Saleh & Yusof, 2015) suggests that teachers' both declarative knowledge (knowledge about teaching) and procedural knowledge (knowledge about how to teach) are equally important in teaching a language. However, results of the data showed that the teachers favor that their proficiency in English language is more important to teach skills of the TL than teaching their skills of the TL, and students gain true language skills by imitating their teachers' models of using the target language.

Comparison of results of the data obtained numerically (perceived cognition) and verbally (actual cognition) revealed that the teachers held exaggerated perceived cognition about own practices of teaching the TL and ability of using English language in its instruction (see Table 3) than their actual cognition of teaching and using the target language in a way it supports students' learning of the target language. Results of the quantitative data underscored that the teachers were proficient in their practices of both language lesson preparation and its delivery. In contrast, results of the data obtained from the qualitative parts of the study depicted the teachers' failure in: (1) determining focus and purpose of language teaching and how to go about to achieve purpose of teaching a given language skill (see Figure 1 & Table 4), (2) naming conventional theories that underpinned the decisions they made at both lesson planning and lesson delivery stages (see data from introspective interview), and (3) fluently using the TL for both regulative and instructional functions of their actual TL instruction endeavors (see data from classroom observation). For example, results obtained from classroom observation and introspective interviews showed that the teachers were uncertain in relation to whether or not their experiences of learning the TL when they were early grade students underpinned their current practices of TL learning and teaching, on one side. On another side, they were observed when they relied on their familiarity with how they were taught the TL in their actual teaching practices of English language. Generally, these results of the study imply that there has been a disparity between the teachers' perceived cognition and actual cognition about language and its instruction.

When contextualized, results of the data obtained in this study complemented with most of the results documented in earlier studies. To mention some, like results of the study depicted in the present research, one of the results of the study conducted by Dereje (2012), who investigated the gaps between teaching English language at Grade 1 – 4 and the stipulated language policy and its implementation, revealed that "Even though teachers see themselves positively in terms of their English proficiency . . ., the multi-

sources of data evidenced that teachers' English language proficiency . . . *[is]* weak to implement the tasks and activities embodied in the English textbooks as intended." (P: V). Birhanu (2012) also investigated secondary school EFL teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices and reported that the teachers did not have realistic interest and competence in their English language teaching profession. This finding also supplements one of the findings of the study at hand that reads the teachers' intuited and perceived proficiency about own practices of teaching the TL appropriately using the TL itself was not supported by the data obtained from their actual practices of both using and teaching the target language.

The target teachers' inadequate English language content knowledge and skills manifested in the actual practices of using and teaching the TL (see data from classroom observation and introspective interview) partly resulted in their weak lesson preparation, lesson delivery, and lesson evaluation in their actual teaching practices. This finding agrees with the claim made in Richard (2017). Richards argues that short-comings teachers exhibit in practical pedagogical knowledge and skills at lesson preparation, delivery and evaluation stages of their actual teaching practices are partly informed by their inadequate target language knowledge and ability. He adds that teachers with limited knowledge of the TL and discourse skills are restricted in their choice of activities available to them and may not be able to move beyond the prescribed syllabus, fail to use the TL for both regulative and instructional functions of language instruction, and hardly reflect on their day-to-day teaching practices and make appropriate decision for their future career.

Last, but not least, the disconnection between that the target teachers' perceived and actual cognition about language and its instruction displayed in the results of this study also supplements earlier research reports documented by Güngör and Yayl (2012) and Larenas, Hernandez, and Navarrete (2015). Larenas, Hernandez, and Navarrete, who conducted empirical research on source of teacher change in beliefs and teaching practice, reported that teachers' belief about learning and teaching L2 varied from their actual teaching practices. Güngör and Yayl, who investigated pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy and anxiety, documented that pre-service teachers were observed to have above average self-efficacy perception while they were anxious about their English level and their teaching speaking-listening comprehension skills.

Conclusion

This empirical research was conducted to describe early grade teachers' perceived and actual cognition about language and its instruction. Results of the data obtained from all angels of data sources evidenced that the target teachers' mastery of *components of teacher expertise* that the teaching of English language requires of them was found inadequate. Consequently, it is tough to claim that teaching the English language skills that are embedded in the students' textbooks of English for Ethiopia Grade 1 – 4 has been in place in the schools where the target teachers were teaching. This implies that in-service trainings need to be stipulated and provided to the teachers as part of short-term solution of the problem. Empirical

research undertakings that targeted at uncovering factors the contributed to the problems identified in this and related research findings, on one side, and suggesting ways forward need to be undertaken as long-term solution of the enterprise of teaching English as both foreign and second language, on another side.

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