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Examining English Language Teachers' Beliefs in the Context of English Language Education Reforms

By Eba Mijena
Wollega University, Ethiopia

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I. Introduction

English language has become the language of every nation and the major tool for global communication. It is used in every sector for different purposes around the world. Among the various sectors where English is prominently used is a school. In most schools, English is used as a medium of instruction or taught as a subject or it is used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject. This indicates that English is a valuable tool in education and for quality of education. This valuable tool need to be taught properly for the attainment of the goal required. Nevertheless, the teaching and learning of this tool might be affected by various factors. Among these, teacher beliefs about the teaching and learning of English could be mentioned as the major one.

One important question, which can be raised along with teachers' beliefs, is what these beliefs can cause. Different scholars (like Stuart and Thurlow, 2000) indicated that teachers' beliefs are considered as important variable in teaching. No doubt that belief affects everything and it is generally agreed that what teachers do in the classroom is mirrored by what they believe and their beliefs often operate as a filter through which instructional judgments and decisions are made (Farrell & Lim, 2005). Moreover, McDonough (1991) indicates that beliefs affect behavior. He says "…. what we believe we are doing, what we pay attention to, what we think is important, how we choose to behave, how we prefer to solve problems, *form the basis for our personal decisions* as to how to proceed" (p.9) [Italics mine]. From this, one can see that beliefs determine actions and decisions. This is because as Borg (2001) explains individuals are committed for the beliefs they hold. It is clear that beliefs are the best indicators of the decisions individuals make throughout their lives (Dewey, 1933). Teacher beliefs affect the materials and activities they choose for the classroom. When generally seen, teachers' beliefs influence their consciousness, teaching attitude, teaching methods and teaching policies, and finally, learners' development.

Beliefs about teaching and learning affect the processes, procedures to be used and all other actions taken by the teacher. This can be seen from different points of views. It is believed that two main approaches, i.e. the behaviourist and constructivist, prevail among teachers. The behaviourist principles claim that learning occurs through the passive transmission of information from one individual to another whereas the constructivist principles argue that learning occurs when a learner actively constructs meaning from elements in the environment. This central idea behind constructivism, that human learning is constructed, that learners build new knowledge upon the foundations of previous learning, conflicts with the key tenet of behaviourism – that reception, rather than construction leads to learning (Hoover, 1996).

What are the origins of the beliefs individuals hold? The direct forward answer could be the lived experience. In line with this, Johnson (1994) and Richards and Lockhart (1994) believe that beliefs are formed as a result of a person's education and experience, established practice, teachers' personality factors, educational principles, research-based evidence, and principles derived from an approach or method. This indicates that past experiences and other factors play significant role in affecting individuals' beliefs. It is also believed that "teachers' belief systems are founded on the goals, values, and beliefs teachers

Author: Wollega University. e-mail: eba.mijena@gmail.com

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hold in relation to the content and process of teaching, and their understanding of the systems in which they work and their roles within it" (Richards and Lockhart, 1996:30).Real and effective change in teachers' can only occur through a change in their beliefs (Kennedy and Kennedy, 1996).

The English language teaching in Ethiopia has adopted the problem-solving approach since the introduction of the new Education and Training Policy in 1994. It is believed that this innovative approach leads to the quality of English language teaching and learning. For the effective implementation of this innovative approach, the present government introduced different professional development strategies like English Language Improvement Program (ELIP), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), Induction and other capacity building strategies with the introduction of Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) in 2003. Moreover, the teaching materials and the methods of teaching, currently in use also promote teaching English for effective communication. In spite of all these efforts, however, parents and other stakeholders comment that the current teaching practices in Ethiopian schools could not bring about the required change. One can ask "Why teachers' practices have not changed?" This question will lead one to look at how teachers think of the teaching and learning of English language teaching as this will affect what teachers do in their teaching. Therefore, this study will try to answer the following research question: What beliefs do English language teachers hold about the teaching and learning of English in the context of English language education reforms in western Ethiopia? One might introduce an earth-shaking methodology, idea, material or anything but for me these are nothing unless they are supported with proper beliefs.

II. Materials and Methods

a) Research Design

The major purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs hold by western Ethiopia English language teachers (with particular reference to the three towns of Wollega (Nekemte, Shambu and Gimbi) in the context of English language education reforms. The research in here employed a descriptive survey research design.

b) Samples and Sampling Techniques

Data were collected from 125 school teachers of Nekemte, Shambu and Gimbi towns who participated in the two days workshop organized at each respective town by Wollega University in the months of February 2013, March 2013 and in the month of April 2014 on the theme *Enhancing ELT in Schools.* The teachers involved in the study hold the qualification of diploma and first degree with experiences varying from 5 (five) years to 36 (thirty six) years in teaching either English or other subject. These teachers teach English in schools from Grade 1 to Grade 12. All teachers who took part in the workshop were the samples of this study. Out of the 125 teachers, 15 of them were chosen for the interview. The 15 teachers involved in the interviews were purposefully selected to include teachers teaching from different grade levels (First Cycle Primary Level, Grades 1-4; Second Cycle Primary Level, Grades 5-8, and Secondary Level, Grades 9-12). All the interviews conducted were audio-recorded and properly transcribed by playing the tape two times. The transcription was made properly incorporating what the interviewer (I) and the responses from the respondents (R where R_1, R_2, R_3 .... R_{15} was used for the 15 respondents).

c) Instruments

The present study employed questionnaire and interviews as data gathering tools. The data collected using questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively while the data gathered through interviews were analyzed qualitatively. The questionnaire for data collection included a survey questionnaire of two parts: background information and beliefs of language teaching difficulty, language teaching approach, teaching preference of language skills, language proficiency and motivation. The items of the questionnaire were designed based on the practices in the teaching and learning of English. Five-point Likert scale was used and participants were asked to gauge their beliefs by indicating the extent to which they agreed with each statement using (1) SD = strongly disagree, (2) DA = disagree, (3) N = neither agree nor disagree, (4) A = agree, or (5) SA = strongly agree. These were merged into three (agree, undecided and disagree) to make it easy for analysis which were presented in percentages.

III. Results and Discussion

As indicated earlier, the study was focused on examining beliefs about English language teaching and learning held by English language teachers in the context of English language education reforms in Western Ethiopia with particular reference to the three towns of Wollega (Nekemte, Shambu and Gimbi). Based on the result of descriptive statistics, present study indicated that participants held various beliefs about language teaching and learning.

a) Data analysis

i. *Difficulty of Language Teaching and Learning*

In item No. 1, teachers were asked to indicate their agreement with the statement "The beginning of teaching English from Grade 1 will make its teaching and learning complex to teachers and students". The results were indicated in the chart below.

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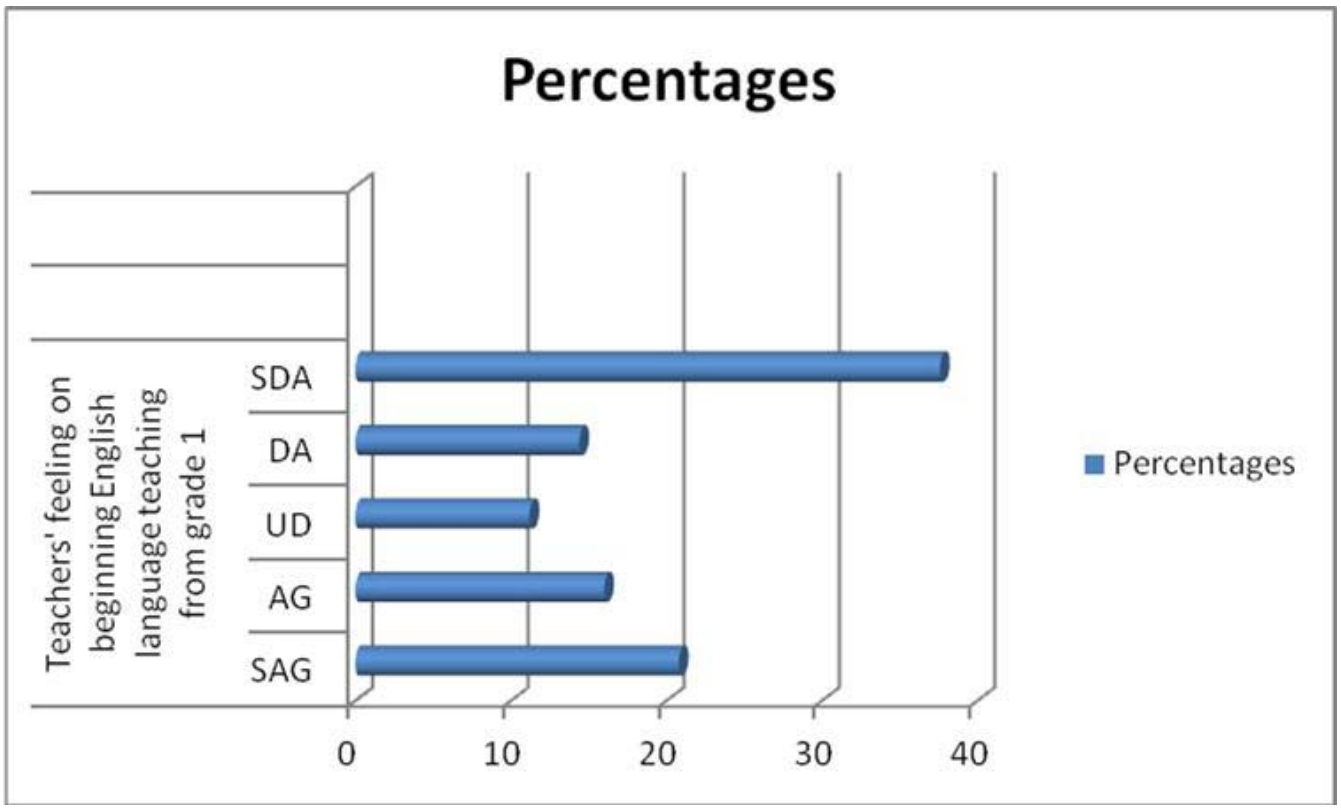


Figure 1 : Beginning English language teaching from grade 1 will make its teaching difficult for children

As can be seen in the graph, even if the majority of the teachers disagreed with the statement, around 36.8% of the teachers still feel that the beginning of English language teaching and learning from Grade 1 makes it complex to teachers and students. Those who agreed with the statement were asked the reason why they believe so. Most of them indicated that English is very difficult for Ethiopian children as it is not their mother tongue. The sample transcripts from the interviews are indicated below:

I: What do you feel about the importance of beginning English language teaching and learning from Grade 1?

R_4: For me, beginning English language teaching and learning from Grade 1 in Ethiopian schools is making the students not to understand their lessons. Students at all cannot understand it. They cannot speak a single word in English and cannot write a single sentence. I do not believe that it is important to begin from Grade 1. It has to begin when students are matured enough. For teachers also it is challenging.

R_6: Beginning the teaching of English language from Grade 1 is good but children cannot understand it. So, if children do not understand, it is a waste as I believe.

R_{11}: English language is difficult for children. All children do not want to talk in English. This is because they do not know it.

I: Why do you think students cannot be at English or cannot understand it?

R_6: You know most of the students are lazy in English. And English is difficult.

As can be seen in the interview transcripts, teachers believe that English language is difficult for children and students cannot learn it. There are teachers who feel that teaching English to children is a challenging business. In other words, this shows that the teachers themselves feel that beginning English language teaching from Grade 1 is making teaching and learning challenging. Nevertheless, one can ask that "Is it really the beginning of English from Grade 1which makes its learning difficult?" This might not be the case. Properly trained teachers who are confident enough will make it possible. It can therefore be assumed that such feelings can have adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning, which can in turn affect the quality of education. Teachers were also asked to indicate their agreement about the statement "Teaching English is easy".

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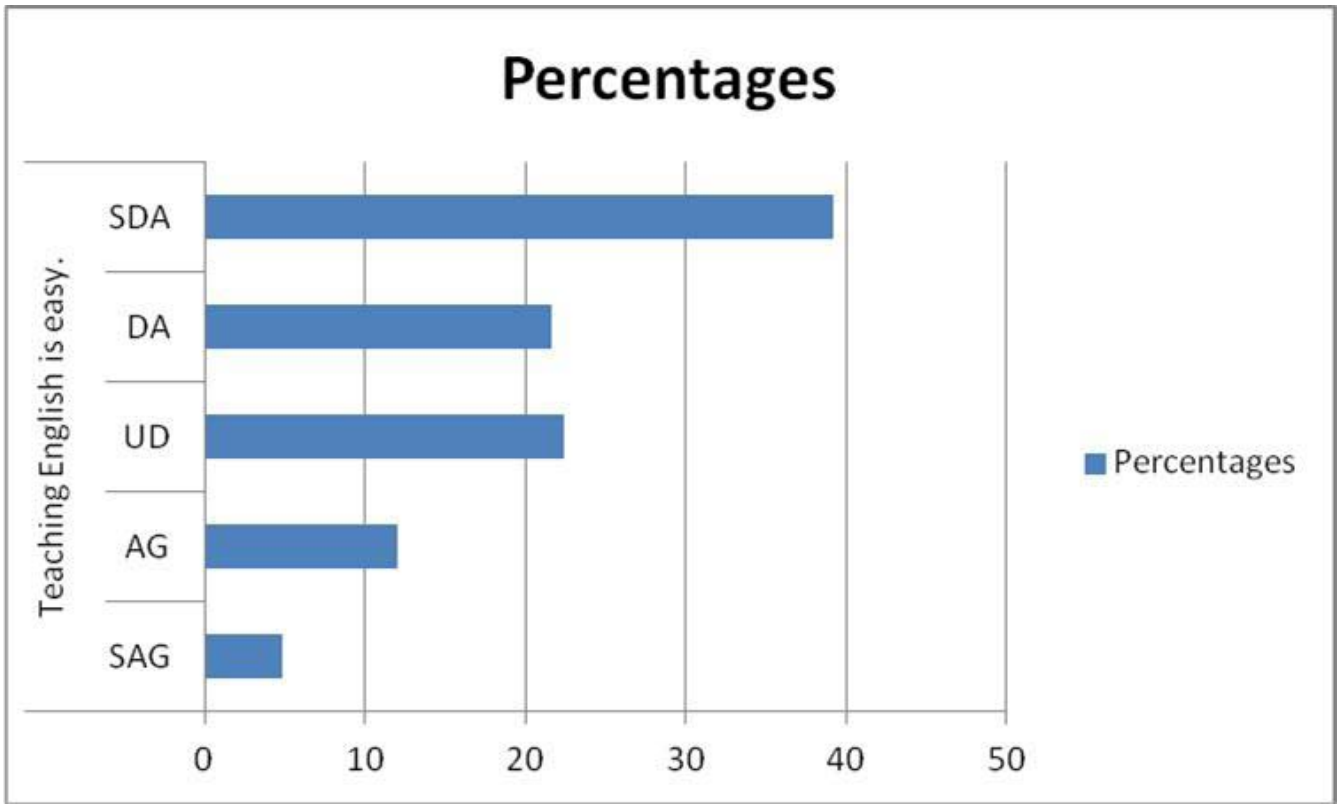


Figure 2 : Teaching English is Easy

As depicted above, the majority of the teachers (60.8%) felt that teaching English is difficult. This is consistent with the above (Question 1) finding whereas only 16.8% felt that the teaching of English is easy. Therefore, one can easily understand that the teaching of English is perceived as difficult with the majority of them. Such kind of feeling can affect teachers' teaching of the subject.

In Item No. 2, teachers were asked to indicate their feelings about grammar in this way: "Grammar is easier to teach and learn than other skills". 51.8% of them agreed with the statement while 29.8% disagreed with it. The remaining 18.4% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The implication here is that those who believe that grammar is easier than any other language skill would give emphasis to the teaching of it than any other language element.

b) Emphasis given to language skills

Here, teachers were asked the most important language skill in English language teaching. The results were indicated in the following table.

Table 1: The most important language skill

S.No	Importance of Language Skill	Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%
3.	It is pronunciation which is the most important element in language teaching	47	37.5	21	16.8	45	32
4.	It is reading which is the most important element in English language teaching	47	37.6	21	16.8	57	45.4
5.	It is vocabulary which is the most important element in English language teaching	58	46.4	17	13.6	50	40
6.	It is listening which is the most important element in English language teaching	43	34.4	36	28.8	46	36.8
7.	It is grammar which is the most important language element for students to learn in English language	60	48	21	16.8	44	35.2
8.	It is speaking which is the most important element in English language teaching	75	60	18	14.2	32	25.6
9.	English skills should be taught in this order: listening, speaking, reading and writing.	97	77.6	7	5.6	21	16.8

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In Table 1 above, teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement about the statements given. These have been discussed below.

i. *Pronunciation*

In Item No. 3, as indicated in the table, 37.6% of the respondents felt that pronunciation is the most important element in language teaching while 45.6% of them disagreed with the statement. The remaining 16.8% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The results show that there are still teachers who favor pronunciation other than the other language skills which might have impact on their classroom teaching.

ii. *Reading*

In Item No. 4, 37.6% of the teachers agreed that reading is the most important skill in the teaching of English language while 45.4% disagreed with the statement. The remaining 16.8% responded 'Neutral'. This shows that teachers have had different thinking about the statement. These differences lead to the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching. The results show that there are still teachers who favor reading other than the other language skills which might have impact on their classroom teaching.

iii. *Vocabulary*

In Item No. 5, 46.4% of the teachers indicated that vocabulary is the most important element in the teaching of English while 40 % disagreed with the statement. The remaining 13.6% responded 'Neutral'. This shows that teachers had different thinking of vocabulary. These differences lead the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching. One can also see that there are still teachers who favor vocabulary other than the other language skills which might have impact on their classroom teaching.

iv. *Listening*

In Item No. 6, 34.4% of the teachers agreed that listening is the most important element in the teaching of English while 36.8 % disagreed with the statement. The remaining 28.8% responded 'Neutral'. This shows that teachers had different thinking of listening. These differences lead the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching. One can also see that there are still teachers who favor listening other than the other language skills which might
have impact on their classroom teaching.

v. *Grammar*

In Item No. 7, 48% of the teachers agreed that grammar is the most important element in the teaching of English while 35.2% disagreed with the statement. The remaining 16.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. This shows that teachers have had different thinking of grammar. These differences lead the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching.

vi. *Speaking*

In Item No. 8, 60% of the teachers agreed that speaking is the most important element in the teaching of English while 25.6% disagreed with the statement. The remaining 14.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. This shows that teachers have had different thinking of speaking. These differences lead the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching.

vii. *Writing*

In Item No. 9, 77.6% of the teachers agreed that it is writing which is the most important element in the teaching of English while 16.8% disagreed with the statement. The remaining 5.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. This shows that teachers have had different thinking of writing. This difference leads the differences in classroom practices, which will affect the quality of teaching.

In summary, the above results indicated that teachers had different feelings about the importance of language skills which might affect their actual classroom practice. The results showed that teachers hold mixed beliefs about the place of language skills in the teaching and learning of English. Some believe that it is writing which is the most important while others say it is speaking and still while others believe other language skill or language element is more important than the other while the language teaching and learning theories and philosophies recommend that language skills are equally important. The most core point observed in the analysis is that a minimum of 43% of the teachers have shown their agreement that one language skill or element is more important than the other. This thinking of the teachers might lead to the differences in their emphasis during classroom teaching.

In Item No. 10, an attempt was made to present the above questions in a different way where teachers were asked to rank the language skills and elements in their order of importance from the most important to the least important (from the most important, 1 to the least important, 7). The responses from the respondents were summarized in the following table.

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Table 2 : Ranking language skills

Language skills and elements	Rank													
	1st	%	2nd	%	3rd	%	4th	%	5th	%	6th	%	7th	%
Speaking	7	5.6%	3	2.4%	33	26.4%	15	12%	19	15.2%	26	20.8%	4	3.2%
Listening	6	4.8%	3	2.3%	13	10.4%	20	16%	57	45.6%	37	29.6%	30	24%
Grammar	61	48.8%	42	33.6%	20	16%	9	7.2%	16	12.8%	9	7.2%	2	1.6%
Pronunciation	17	13.6%	13	10.4%	15	12%	21	12.8%	12	9.6%	7	5.6%	12	9.65
Vocabulary	21	16.8%	51	40.8%	28	22.4%	14	11.2%	7	5.6%	5	4%	7	5.6%
Writing	2	1.6%	6	4.8%	7	5.6%	19	15.2%	8	6.4%	16	12.8%	29	23.2%
Reading	11	8.8%	7	5.6%	9	7.2%	27	21.6%	6	4.8%	25	205	41	32.8%

Table 2 above shows that grammar 61(48.8%), vocabulary 51(40.8%) and speaking 33(26.4%) were ranked first, second, and third according to their importance. The three language elements: grammar, vocabulary and speaking appeared as the first three most important language skills/elements while the other skills like listening, reading and writing were not among the top ranked skills. The findings shown in Table 1 and Table 2 indicate some inconsistencies in teachers' responses. Even if grammar and vocabulary are indicated among the first three top chosen language skills in both tables, writing and speaking are not in the list of the top priorities for teachers. The findings from both tables (Table 1 and Table2) indicate that grammar and vocabulary are chosen as the most preferred areas for teaching by teachers. Nevertheless, the present approach to the teaching and learning of English language in Ethiopian schools promote that all language skills are equally important as proficiency in the particular language cannot be attained by ignoring one or the other skill. These days, it is recommended that grammar and vocabulary are taught in integration with other skills than being taught as separate entities. The responses to the interviews made also indicated the same view. Here is one of the sample interview transcripts:

I: Which language skill or language element do you like teaching most? Why?

R_1: I prefer and love teaching grammar. This is because if students learn grammar in a good way, they can write correct sentences and they speak correct statements. You know grammar is the basis for every skill.

R_3: Vocabulary grammar and pronunciation. If students have good pronunciation, if they know different words and if they know correct tenses, they can know the language well. These are very important for my students. In Grade 8, Grade 10 and Grade 12 national examinations also grammar questions are more than others and as a result a teacher must give attention to them. If you take listening and writing why do I give much time for teaching? It is not there in classroom examination and in the national examination. So teaching them is important but it not help students in examinations.

Here, one can see that different factors and beliefs affect teachers' preferences of teaching the language skills. The first one is that they believe that the focus on grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation improve the quality of English language learning. Second, they believe that the focus on grammar in classroom teaching help students a lot in writing the classroom and national examinations as most of the examinations are grammar dominated ignoring the other skills like speaking, listening and writing. From this second reason, it is not very difficult to understand that the nature of classroom and national assessments determine the types of language skills and language elements preferred to be taught in classrooms. This is what many authors (like Arthur, 1989) state as wash back effect. As indicated elsewhere in this paper, it is the existing practices which affected teachers' beliefs.

c) Approaches to teaching and learning English language

This section (Item No. 11-20) deals with examining the teaching approaches preferred by English language teachers in the context of the current English language education reforms. It is believed that the teaching approaches preferred by teachers determine the quality of teaching a particular language skill or element and in turn this affects the learners' proficiency in the language skill. Here, teachers were requested to indicate their agreement with seven

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different statements which were indicated in the following table.

Table 3 : Approaches to the teaching and learning of English

S.No	Statement	Agreement					
		Agree	%	Neutral	%	Disagree	%
11.	Language skills should be taught in integration	45	36	18	14.2	62	49.6
12.	English language teachers should keep students from making any error	101	80.8	13	10.4	11	8.8
13.	Students learn English when they fully engage in it	64	51.2	17	13.6	44	35.2
14.	English language teacher needs to explain the lesson bit by bit to help students understand it fully	76	60.8	25	20	24	19.2
15.	English language teachers should talk more than students in the classroom as they have to be models.	48	38.4	12	9.6	65	52
16.	Students learn English best when a teacher gives notes, and asks students to copy the notes into their notebooks and explains to them properly	42	33.6	14	11.2	69	55.2
17.	Reading is taught by asking students read aloud turn by turn in the classroom	48	38.4	21	16.8	56	44.9
18.	Students need to be properly taught the rules of English language and memorize them not to deviate from the correct form or rule	61	48.2	33	26.4	31	24.8
19.	The teacher has to translate everything into mother tongue to help students understand English fully	27	21.6	15	12	82	65.6
20.	English skills should be taught in this order: listening, speaking, reading and writing.	97	77.6	7	5.6	21	16.4

As depicted in Table 3 above (Item No.11), 36% of the teachers agreed with the idea that language skills should be taught in integration while 49.6% disagreed with it. The remaining 14.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The results show that there are teachers who believe in integration of language skills while the others do not.

Regarding keeping students from making any error in English language classrooms (Item No.12), 80.8% of the teachers indicated that English language teachers should keep students from making any error while only the remaining 8.8% did not agree with the statement. From these results, it is possible to see that teachers give their attention to keeping students from making any error. Error correction seems the majority of the teachers. The present classroom context requires teachers to help their learners learn the language through practice, error correction should not be the major task of a classroom teacher.

Table 3 above (Item No. 13) also shows that 51.2% the teachers felt that students learn English when they fully engage in it while 13.6% did not decided their agreement and 35.2% have shown that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. The present language teaching and learning theory suggests that students should fully engage in the learning of the language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Even if the majority of teachers believe that students learn English when they fully engage in it, about half of them were still not sure of the fact that students should fully engage in the learning of English or don't at all agree with the statement. If teachers do not believe in engaging students in the learning, they might be inclined to use the teacher-fronted approach.

The other important issue (Item No. 14) discussed here is how teachers feel about lesson explanations in English language teaching classrooms. Here, majority of the teachers (60.8%) indicated that English language teacher needs to explain the lesson bit by bit to help students understand it fully while only 19.2% disagreed with the statement. This clearly implies that after more than 20 years of the introduction of problem-solving and learner-centered approaches, teachers' thinking of teaching English has not shown any change. As indicated above, even if the majority of teachers (where 51.2% agree) indicated that they agree fully with engaging students in learning, there are still teachers who do not agree with the idea.

Regarding the reaction of teachers towards the statement "English language teachers should talk more than students in the classroom as they have to be models" (Item No. 15), 52% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while 38.4% have shown their agreement. The remaining 9.6% neither agreed nor disagreed. From these results, it is possible to observe that quite a large number of teachers (38.4%) believe

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that teachers should talk more than the students in the classroom. This finding is not in line with the role of teachers in the modern language classrooms, which indicate that teachers are facilitators than technicians.

Regarding the reaction of teachers towards the statement "Students learn English best when a teacher gives notes, and asks students to copy the notes into their notebooks and explains to them properly" (Item No. 16), 33.6% agree with this statement while 55.2% do not agree with it. 11.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. There are still quite a large number of teachers who think that students learn best when a teacher gives notes, and students copy the notes into their notebooks which accompanied by explanations from teachers.

Regarding the reaction of teachers towards the statement "Reading is taught by asking students read aloud turn by turn in the classroom" (Item No. 17), 38.4% agreed whereas 44.8 disagreed. 16.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. Reading is a silent activity and has to be done silently (Nuttal, 1986). Nevertheless, there are still teachers (almost half) who still think that reading is done aloud and tend to follow the traditional way of teaching it.

Another important factor included in the study was to see how teachers react to the statement "Students need to be properly taught the rules of English language and memorize them not to deviate from the *correct form or rule*" (Item No. 18). Here, 48.2% of the teacher agreed with this statement while 26.4 did not and 24.8% neither agreed nor disagreed. Surprisingly, the majority of the teachers still believe that students need to be properly taught the rules of English language and memorize them not to deviate from the correct form or rule. Nevertheless, it is not the memorization of rules that promote the learning of the language but the meaning which out ways. Elsewhere in this paper, most of the teachers preferred grammar and vocabulary to other language skills and elements which support this view.

The teachers involved in the study were asked their feeling about the statement "The teacher has to translate everything into mother tongue to help students understand English fully" (Item No. 19). The results indicated that 21.6% of the teachers agreed with the statement while 65.6% disagreed with it and 12% of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. Even if the majority of the respondents have disagreed, the data imply that there are still teachers who believe that translating everything into mother tongue is proper to help students. The modern literature on language teaching and learning recommends the use of mother tongue when there is a need, particularly when explaining complex concept is required and when teaching some key words.

The last question in this category was to see teachers' current thinking about the statement "English skills should be taught in this order: listening, speaking, reading and writing"(Item No. 20). The analysis of teachers' responses about this indicated that 77.6% of the teachers agreed with the statement while 16.4% disagreed and 5.6% neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. The results here go with the findings on integration of language skills elsewhere in this paper. While the language skills need to be taught in integration, majority of the teacher indicated that language skills should be taught in some sequence, listening coming first followed by speaking.

I: How do you think teachers should teach to help students effectively learn English language? Why?

R_{13}: Teachers should teach in learner-centered approach, giving learners notes which are compiled from different books like "Grammar in Use". Teachers must help learners understand the meanings of words which are important in speaking and writing.

I: Why is it important to compile and give student notes from different books?

R_{13}: Giving students detailed and well organized notes from different books help students to be competent in their examinations and language use.

From the analysis made above, it seems that the belief of spoon-feeding learners by giving explanation bit by bit and teachers talking more in the classrooms seems dominating the current teachers' thinking and classroom practices. Many scholars (like Richards and Rodgers, 2001) indicate that the present classroom atmosphere should promote independent learning which help students develop self confidence. The results found here however make student only expect from their teachers than helping them learn on their own.

d) English language proficiency

Another important factor (Item No. 21) analyzed in this study was the teachers' feeling in relation to language proficiency "English has to be taught by native speakers to help students proficient in the language". In this case, 41.6% of the teachers agreed with the statement while 44.6% of them disagreed with it and 13.6% of them neither agreed nor disagreed.

Regarding the reaction of teachers towards the statement "A language teacher should have a native-like accent"(Item No. 22), 51% of the respondents agreed with the statement while 37.6% of them disagreed with it and 15.2% neither agreed nor disagreed. This kind of belief will become very dangerous as it might result in an adverse effect. It is of course impossible to have and not important to have a native-like accent. Intelligibility is at the center than having the native-like accent.

Regarding the reaction of teachers towards the statement "English is taught to produce a nativelike accent" (Item No. 23), 35.6% agreed with the statement while 44% did not agree with it and 10.4% of the

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respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

e) Motivation

Motivation is one of the different factors which affect the classroom practices. Thus, teachers were asked to indicate their feeling about the statement "Teaching English is an enjoyable business" (Item No. 24) and the responses have shown that 22.4% of the respondents agreed with this statement while 68.8% disagreed. 8.8% of the teachers neither agreed nor disagreed. Interview was made with those who did not agree with the statement where the following responses were obtained:

I: Is teaching English enjoyable to you?

R_1: No, from the very beginning teaching English language was not my first choice. My interest was to learn law but I did not score the required result in Grade 10. The only option I had at the moment was to join either Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVETs) or Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

I: Is teaching English enjoyable to you?

R_2: Yes, but my interest was to be trained in another field like nursing.

I: Why you prefer nursing?

R_7: You can have your own business if you are a trained nurse but you remain poor if you become a teacher like me.

I: Is teaching English enjoyable to you?

R_{14}: No, you know when I joined TEIs, my first choice was Civic and Ethical Education and I am trained in Civic and Ethical Education but I am teaching English.

The sample transcripts show that majority of the teachers teaching English at the moment in western Ethiopian schools do not enjoy teaching English for various reasons. First, English was not their preference of study but they studied it because they did not have any other option. Second, some of them had the interest to study other fields like nursing because they create opportunity to start their own business. Third, they are made to teach English irrespective of their training. It seems that different factors have affected their interest and motivation.

IV. Conclusions and Recommendations

English language is taught as a subject beginning from Grade 1 and is used as a medium of instruction beginning from Grade 9 in Ethiopian schools. Its teaching began with the beginning of the first public school in 1908 which has counted more than a century. Nevertheless, English language is one of the subjects where students are not capable enough in line with the level of proficiency expected from them. To address the challenges, the MoE (2002) has conducted a study which focused on identifying factors which affected the quality of teaching in Ethiopia. The findings of the study indicated that poor preparation of teachers is one among other factors. To address the poor preparation of teachers, the Ethiopian government suggested different professional development packages among which the English Language Improvement Program (ELIP), Induction, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and other workshops can be mentioned.

Despite the efforts made by the government, parents, teachers, and the government complain that there is dwindling in the quality of English language as a result of poor teaching practices. The findings of this present study have shown that English language teachers had mixed beliefs about English language teaching and learning approaches. This means that while there are teachers who dominantly use the behaviorist principles and traditional approaches, quite a few claim that they use the constructivist principles. The teachers' reactions tell the concerned bodies that something has to be done with teachers' belief system. Teachers' beliefs affect not only their teaching, but also filter new input, suggesting significant implications for the implementation of educational innovations and teacher development.

Thus, this study recommends that an intensive, well planned, organized and consistent preservice and inservice professional development programs must be in place to address teacher beliefs. These professional development programs should not be for mere launching of a particular program but it has to attain its purpose. Hence, it should provide on-going practices accompanied by support, feedback, and reflection while teachers practice the implementation of innovative ideas or approaches. Fullan (2001) and Richards (1998) suggest that teachers need more time, training, and on-going support to shift their classroom for an innovation to succeed and the training programs must help them articulate their beliefs and use them to reflect on their teaching.

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