

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

**TEACHERS' PROCESS OF PREPARING TEACHING AND LEARNING OF DEAF
STUDENTS AT ALPHA SPECIAL SCHOOL, ADDIS ABABA**

BY

SOLOMON GETACHEW

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION
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List of acronyms

ASL	American Sign Language
BSL	British Sign language
EthSL	Ethiopian Sign Language
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MOE	Minister of Education
NDCS	National Deaf Children's Society
NCLB	No Child Left Behind, act
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SE	Sign English
SNE	Special Needs Education
UNESCO	United Nation Education, Science and Culture Organization

Abstract

Teachers who educate deaf students should demonstrate competency in the preparation of the subjects they teach, as well as give additional support to their students. The main purpose of this study is to assess a teacher's' process of preparing, teaching and learning of deaf students at Alpha Special School, Addis Ababa. In order to achieve the objective of the study, 16 respondents participated in the study. The result of the study was analyzed qualitatively. The findings of the study indicated a lack of appropriate instructional strategies, lack of training opportunities, lack of attention to classroom preparation, and the absence of support and communication. All were found to be major problems. The study shows that half of the teachers who participated in this study did not have enough training in sign language, causing communication barriers between the students and teachers. The deaf students' learning and their relationship with their teachers was impeded by a lack of communication and preparation. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were proposed, that promote the development of a teacher's' preparation, sign language skills and student support.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background The Study

It is widely agreed that education is the most effective means to alleviate the challenges of a society. It is considered as a compulsory prerequisite for sustainable development in any country, developed or developing. The progress of one country increasingly depends upon the product of the educated mind, research, innovation and adaptation (UNESCO, 1997).

Thus, education had its own position in the development of human nature and it will also continue to do so in the future (Abraham, 2004). Throughout history, Deaf people have faced different problems in terms of perceptions and attitudes that have influenced the quality of educational opportunities (Marschark & Spencer, 2003).

MOE (2006), the special needs education strategy documents mentioned that, in Ethiopia, the education and training policy has paved the way in creating conducive environment for development and participation of children with disabilities. Based on this fact the MOE aims at the development of an education systems that is to be open to all learners regardless of poverty, gender, learning difficulty and impairment. Though MOE aim an education system to be open to all children still there is a gap in providing access to all children with special needs because of different factors (MOE, 2010a).

Then, the first modern Special Education school in Ethiopia was established in 1925 (MoE, 2012). Among Special Education schools, Alpha Special School for the Deaf in Addis Ababa was founded by Lutheran missionaries in 1967 (John & Sons, 2007).It is located in Bole sub-city. Currently, there are about 126 Deaf or Hard of Hearing students between the ages of 4 and 25 years of age currently attending. Though the school has classes only through the eighth grade.

The school has few facilities required for the appropriate education of the Deaf (Felekech, 2000). The school came under the Ministry of Education and continued to provide services as a special day school for the Deaf (MoE, 2012).

Ethiopia has made monumental changes in legislation and policy relating to Deaf education. There are many schools that provide education to Deaf students. What is lacking is an institutional program that has specific training and certification for educators of the Deaf. In order to progress, the field of Deaf education to progress it is pivotal for universities and colleges to take a leadership role in developing appropriate programs that provide highly qualified teachers to the various Deaf education programs throughout Ethiopia. Currently there are no institutions offering a degree in Deaf education in Ethiopia.

If Deaf children receive a good and suitable education, they are as capable as hearing children. They can be academically successful-doctors, lawyers, and lecturers. They can do any job the same as a hearing person, such as: carpentry, farming, and tailoring (UNESCO, 2000).

Thus, Deaf students are not hindered in any way from doing what hearing students can do. It is commonly perceived by hearing people that Deaf student's disability precludes them from being normal or as equally intelligent as their hearing counterparts. Deafness is not a learning disability and all Deaf students have the potential to achieve success, given the right support and access to education.

Recent developments in Deaf education are influencing teacher preparation programs, and institutions are facing challenges to meet the critical need for highly qualified teachers (Lenihan, 2010).

In this regard, the researcher assumed that teachers are effectively using appropriate teaching methodologies and arrange materials in the classroom to make lessons accessible to all Deaf students. The focus of this study, therefore, is mainly on teachers' process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf students in a classroom setting.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Deaf education is evolving at a high rate, new developments in pedagogy, innovations in technology, and at the same time there are a number of controversies related to how best to educate children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Hammond & Snowden, 2007). To effectively educate Deaf students, teachers play a pivotal role in the classroom. To deliver a quality lesson, teacher preparation plays a key role in the educational process. In low-income countries which have had little or no exposure to basic information about Deaf Education or Curriculum

development. This has led to teachers having no training or preparation. (Hammond & Snowden, 2007).

With this information in mind, it can be assumed that the poor classroom preparation may be attributed to insufficient competence and an inability for teachers' to develop appropriate educational materials (Busch, 2012). Which directly affects student achievement and success. The task we undertake here is to outline what teachers need to know before they enter the classroom and what supports they need when they first start teaching to ensure their development into the effective teachers (Hammond & Snowden, 2007). By taking this approach and identifying the barriers at the educator level this will lead to the improvement of Deaf student education.

In addition, many Deaf and Hard of Hearing children face specific barriers related to their impairment such as: difficulties in communication because teachers and children in the school do not know how to utilize sign language properly (UNESCO, 2009). Although many countries are trying to increase the opportunities for Deaf children to have access to education, the majority of the Deaf children are excluded from any kind of education in the income-poor countries (Golden & Joseph, 2000).

Based on literature, and what is currently seen in academia, there are many obstacles to Deaf education although there has been no systematic study to solve the core issues. Evidence indicates that a scarcity of special teaching resources, equipment, limited teachers preparation trainings and no Deaf education programs at the universities, are primary obstacles. Hence, a systematic study in the area of teachers' process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf students appears to be very important part for removing educational barriers. Thus, this study was designed to answer the following basic questions:

1. How and what do teachers do to prepare themselves for classroom teaching-learning?
2. What are the factors that affect teacher's preparations of lessons to be taught?
3. What modes of communication are being used between the teacher and Deaf students?
4. What materials do teachers provide to Deaf students during classroom teaching-learning processes?
5. What are the possible solutions to improve teachers preparation and support?

1.2. Objective of the Study

The study has the following general and specific objectives.

1.2.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess teachers' process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf students how affects the success or failure of learning objectives.

1.2.2. Specific Objective

More specifically

- To identify what teachers prepare for classroom teaching.
- To identify factors that affects the preparations success for classroom teaching-learning.
- To examine the modes of communication used by the teachers in the classroom.
- To identify materials do teachers provide to Deaf students during classroom teaching-learning processes.
- To identify the possible solutions to improve teachers preparation and support.

1.3. Significance the Study

This study has the following significance. These are:

- To identify areas needing improvement in teacher preparation and support.
- Improve communication skills and language development between the teacher and the deaf students in classroom settings.
- Identify factors that are challenging and/or barriers to implementing successful teacher preparation and support.
- Increase access and knowledge of appropriate educational activities for Deaf students.
- Suggest practical ways of modifying the communication process to meet the individual needs of different Deaf students in selected school classroom settings.
- Initiate others to researcher and to carry out more extensive studies in the area.

1.4. Delimitation of the Study

It is known that it is difficult to include all components in the area of the study. Thus, this study was delimited to teacher's preparation in classroom teaching processes and support provided for deaf students in actual classroom teaching-learning processes. On the other hand, the study is delimited to Alpha Special School for the Deaf in Addis Ababa specifically to those deaf students enrolled in grade seven and eight.

1.5. Ethical Consideration

In the processes of the study, a number of measures were taken to observe basic ethical standards. In this study necessary precautions were taken during the development of data collection instrument as well as during an interview with participants. The participants received necessary information about the purpose of the study, confidentiality of all information and his/her right to terminate if there is a feeling of discomfort. Before conducting an interview with the participants their voluntariness to participate was obtained from them. Participants were not asked their names during the interview and their names were not included in the analysis to ensure confidentiality.

1.6. Operational Definition

Basic terms used in this study are operationally defined as follows.

Classroom Teaching-learning Process: refers to a formal educational exchange and process that a teacher and students engage, during which time the support and preparation components are utilized.

Communication: is the act of conveying intended **meaning** to another person through the use of mutually understood **signs**, speech, writing, pictures, and gestures.

Deaf: refers to a group of people, with varying hearing acuity, whose primary mode of communication is a visual language and have a shared heritage and culture (Woodward, 1972)

Ethiopian sign language: is made up of an organized system of signs including gestures, mimes and facial movements, is usually used by the Deaf people, or the hearing who can communicate with Deaf people (ENAD, 2003).

Hearing loss: refers to may have problems understanding speech or certain sounds. An Overall term that includes all levels of hearing loss both for deaf and hard of hearing.

Sign Language: is a visual system of communication that can use a variation of sourced gesticulations.

Support: refers to the materials and instructional provision supplied by the teacher during actual classroom teaching-learning processes along with follow up feedback and clarification.

Teaching and learning: is the exchange of knowledge, ideas or concepts that are expressed between a teacher and students or a lesson or unit that is presented in an educational setting with goals and measurable outcomes.

Teachers Preparation: refers to teachers' processes of developing, preparing, the quality of a implemented lesson or unit in an educational setting with goals and measurable outcomes.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teachers Preparation

2.1.1. Concept of Teachers Preparation

Recently, some critics have questioned the role of teacher preparation as a key to teacher effectiveness (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013). Teacher preparation in Deaf students education is rich and reflects changes in society, developments in education, innovations in technology, and a number of controversies related to how best to educate children who are Deaf (Lenihan, 2010).

In order to guide student learning, highly effective teachers have command of the subjects they teach. They must know which concepts and skills are central to a discipline, and which are peripheral; they must know how the discipline has evolved into the 21st century, incorporating such issues as global awareness and cultural diversity, as appropriate (Bargas, 2013).

Effective teachers engage students in active learning, discussing, writing, evaluating, experimenting, and constructing models, papers, and products in addition to listening to and reading information, watching demonstrations, and practicing skills. They make their expectations for high-quality work very clear, and they provide models of student work that meets those standards. They also provide constant feedback that helps students improve as they continuously revise their work toward these standards. They design a well-functioning, respectful classroom that allows students to work productively (Hammond & Snowden, 2007).

2.1.2. Planning and Implementation of a Lesson

Teachers need the ability to observe carefully and objectively, with an eye to critical classroom variables. Teachers should be able to evaluate materials, organization, and methods in light of the objectives of a lesson and the students being taught. And teachers should be aware of alternative methods and techniques with which to approach teaching situations (UNESCO, 1997).

MoE (2012), stated that the following tips of planning and implementation the lesson in the classroom.

Explain learning expectations to the learner before beginning a lesson.

- Make sure you have the learners' attention before beginning a lesson.
- Include activities that reflect the learner's preferences and experiences.
- Limit the number of concepts presented at one time.
- Provide supplementary support to the learner.
- Ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to practice new skills.
- Ensure that generalization and maintenance activities are included.
- Modify expectation based on learners needs.

2.1.3. Classroom Structure

Organize the classroom so that all the children are sitting in a “U” shape. This allows the children to have visual access to one another, which will make it easier for children that are Deaf or Hard of Hearing to communicate with sign language, lip-reading can also be utilized when visual access is considered, thereby making it possible to participate more actively and fully in the discussions and classroom activities (UNESCO, 2009).

Effective classroom structuring requires attention to the following features: (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

- Creating a physical arrangement that eases communication flow, minimizes distraction and provides teachers with good access to students in order to respond to their questions and better control behavior.
- Making efficient use of classroom time, including transitions between various classroom activities.
- Ensuring that the nature and quality of student's interactions is positive.
- Clearly communicating appropriate behaviors for particular classroom activities.

Classroom teachers can also maintain a supportive climate within the classroom; it is possible for some students with hearing loss to become dependent on the teacher for positive and rewarding social interactions (Shilsinger, 1985).

2.1.4. Classroom Management

There is no evidence to support the assumption that new teachers will just “pick up” classroom management skills given the experience and time. Although surveys indicate that experienced teachers have fewer concerns regarding classroom management, such surveys may be less an

indication that teachers learn over time how to manage classrooms effectively and more a result of the fact that many teachers who did not learn classroom management skills simply have left the profession. Thus, improvement classroom management is critical parts of the solution (Oliver & Reschly, 2007).

The ability of teachers organize classrooms and manage the behavior of their students in critical to achieving positive educational outcomes (Emmer & Stough, 2001).

Research also attests to the fact that classroom organization and behavior management competences significantly influence the persistence of new teachers in teaching careers (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). New teachers typically express concerns about lacking effective means to handle the significant disruptive behavior of students (Browsers & Tomic, 2000). Teachers who have problems with behavior management and classroom discipline are frequently ineffective in the classroom, and they often report high levels of stress and symptoms of burnout (Browsers & Tomic, 2000). Disruptive classroom behavior is significant reason why teachers leave the profession (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

2.2. Support to Deaf Students

A Teacher of the Deaf should provide ongoing support and advice, organize training and should be available to the student should any concerns or difficulties arise during the learning process (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013). The amount and type of support that a Deaf student needs can vary greatly depending on the individual's needs and should be supported from different sources and modes. Support makes Deaf students independent as they are able to fully participate in the classroom learning, and be responsible for themselves as independent learners (Deaf Children & Deaf Foundation, 2005).

According to the National Deaf Children's Society (2015), "The effectiveness of the support and its impact on the pupil's progress and breaking down any barriers that they face should be regularly reviewed and evaluated. The school will have developed systems and processes for doing this. Key areas that are related to the pupil's deafness that may require consideration include the following.

- Levels of progress in areas of language and communication.

- Levels of overall progress and whether any gaps with other students are widening or narrowing.
- The accessibility of the subject content. For example, checking if the pupil is able to understand the language and concepts used in lessons or establishing where and when the student may experience most difficulty in hearing what is said.
- The effectiveness of communication support. For example, are the communication support worker able to interpret accurately and fluently what the teacher is saying.
- The effectiveness of technology.
- Any changes to the pupil's level of hearing.
- Their success in communicating with others, socializing and forming friendships.”

The teacher can provide support by previewing, pre-teaching and re-teaching assignments. This can be done several times for students that are struggling learner. Group teaching is another strategy for providing support but should be well arranged so that the learners is not overwhelmed by the number of instructors in some situations. In general the learner should be assured and feel comfortable looking to instructors is requested to help (MoE, 2012).

According to the National Deaf Children's Society (2013), a range of adaptations and strategies can be put into place to ensure that pupils can access the curriculum, develop their learning skills and minimize the impact of their deafness on learning. Through time you will become aware through a child's responses and development, which measures provide them with the best support. These are likely to include:

Use of visual aids: Visual aids can be used to support a child's listening and speech / lip-reading abilities in order to aid their understanding. They are helpful in illustrating new concepts and vocabulary and providing a context for a new subject or situation. They also make use of visual memory, which in Deaf children may be more developed than their auditory memory. It is therefore helpful if: Pictures, illustrations, objects of reference and artifacts are used to support what is being said. Everyone in the school should use the same system for symbols. Spoken instructions are also made visual by using pictures or by demonstrating what is expected. Areas of the room, storage boxes and cupboards are given picture labels and these are used around the

building, such as photos of other adults they may encounter. Use visual timetables and refer to them regularly (Little, et. al., 2015) (Marschark, Marc, et al. 2005)

Using photo diaries and experience books: A labeled pictorial record of what the child has been doing and learning:

- Helps the child recall activities, providing a prompt for practicing the language used,
- Provides a means of informing parents and enabling conversation at home
- Provides a way for parents to record activities at home to share with the school.
- General education teacher preparation programs have responded to this reality in a variety of ways including increasing content on students with disabilities as well as exposure to working with students disabilities and providing instruction to meet those needs (Little, et. al., 2015).

2.2.1. Adaptation and Modification Instructional Strategy

Deaf pupils are likely to require additional support if they are to make the same progress as other pupils of a similar age and cognitive ability. Adaptations and strategies will need to be put in place that manage and minimize the impact of their hearing loss, develop their learning skills, provide access to the curriculum and lead to higher levels of academic achievement (National Deaf Children's Society, 2015).

Adaptation or modifications of instructional strategies refer to changes in the way teacher provides instruction. The teacher should be aware of different learning styles backgrounds, experience and learning needs of learners when planning the lesson and using different teaching methods. Effective teaching means combining different teaching and learning strategies. Thus, the curriculum becomes more relevant and inclusive to both the teacher and to learner. It must be remembered that SEN are created when a curriculum is not accessible to all learners. By using different teaching approach and grouping the focus of learning from being teacher-directed towards being learner-centered can occur. This promotes the development of children as independent, self-directed learners and releases the teacher to attend to the needs of individual children and groups. Teacher with a wide repertoire of teaching methods (e.g. co-operative group teaching, cooperative learning, self-directed learning etc.) are well prepared to make a classroom a lively, challenging and friendly place to learn (MoE, 2012).

Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing benefit from this strategy while in the beginning stages of literacy development; however, this is an instructional technique that will benefit students with hearing loss throughout their academic career (Busch, 2012).

Research has identified several strategies that constitute effective teaching that can be applied to academic and behavioral instruction; special education and general education classroom; and individual, small group, and large group instruction (Hill, 2002).

2.2.1.1. Material Provided

If a child has a different first language than the majority of their peers, their teacher, and/or the learning material available in the school (UNESCO, 2009). It refers to individual and general material that is offered to the learner (MoE, 2012). The majority of children who are Deaf (profound hearing loss) are born to hearing parents. The school should therefore also attempt to provide instruction for parents on implications of deafness within the family (UNESCO, 2009).

According to MoE (2012), Adaptation/modification of instructional materials involves making changes to the equipment and/ or supplies to which a learner with SEN has access to learning during the lesson. Instructional materials can be adapted by selecting different type of materials or making adjustment to the current materials. For example;

- Adjust the readability level of written materials by e.g. providing large print texts, providing content similar to the unit currently under study through a lower grade level reading book or compressed text.
- Allow learner to take text verbally, provide class note to the learner, highlight and write directly in the book.
- Enhance critical features of the content within the materials themselves; e.g. worksheet can be changed to include fewer practice items or can be formatted differently to emphasize instructional information or directions, presentation of new vocabulary words in boldface, highlighted keywords in a reading passage, acronyms, and summaries of main ideas represent a few commonly used adaptations of this sort.
- Provide written and visual equivalents of spoken material (e.g. Sign language, transcripts).
- Provide supplementary aids.

Mbamba (1992), defines instructional materials as “any object or unit area of space so designed and organized deliberately to support and use teaching and learning operations”. He goes on explaining that they are designed, modified and prepared to assist teaching and learning operations. Educational materials commonly used in educational system are:

- Learning and teaching materials, which act as source and or channel that a learner draws knowledge and acquires skills.
- Laboratories

These may include equipment for science. Production technology books, manuals Programmed instruction educational media like radio, television sets etc. The teachers should possess the desired knowledge and skills which enable them to prepare instructional materials effectively (Hailemariam, 2014).

2.2.1.2. Feedback

Feedback is an essential element in assessing learning. The continuous feedback that learners receive during the learning process helps them to know if they are learning well, and also what actions they need to take to make progress. Children benefit from opportunities from formal feedback through group and class sessions. This helps learners to see for themselves what they need to do to improve and then to discuss it with the teacher (MoE, 2012).

Hattie (1987), reports that the most powerful single influence is feedback. Similarly, Black & Wiliam’s (1998) emphasizes the extraordinarily large and consistent positive effects that feedback has on learning compared with other aspects of teaching.

A teaching method, which places great emphasis on immediate feedback at each stage of a student’s progress through course units, the Personalized System of Instruction (PSI), has been demonstrated in many studies to improve student performance (Kulik et al., 1980).

Teaching meant giving feedback on essays and feedback is central to student learning. Until quite recently, for example, many science courses involved weekly problem sheets and laboratory reports, all of which were marked by teachers and returned to students within the week. In most forms of distance education, feedback on frequent assignments is the main interactive component of teaching and has placed great emphasis on frequent assignments, training and paying tutors to provide comprehensive feedback, and monitoring the quality of this

feedback. For some students this is their only contact with their tutor. They can cope without much, or even any, face-to-face teaching, but they cannot cope without regular feedback on assignments (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004).

Teachers also progress from “novice” to more “expert” thinking about teaching growing more able to deal with the many aspects of classroom life and to attend to the intellectual work of students. Experts in teaching like experts in other fields can quickly analyze complex situations and bring to bear many sources of knowledge about how to respond to them (Hammond & Snowden, 2007). Gibbs & Simpson (2004), stated that this issue concerns the relationship of feedback to what an assignment has been set for and what counts as a successful attempt at the assignment. Feedback can perform several functions. For example it can be used primarily to:

- Correct errors
- Develop understanding through explanations
- Generate more learning by suggesting further specific study tasks
- Promote the development of generic skills by focusing on evidence of the use of skills rather than on the content
- Promote meta-cognition by encouraging students’ reflection and awareness of learning processes involved in the assignment
- Encourage students to continue studying.

Brown et al. (1994) identified, there is two types of feedbacks; Summative feedback and Formative feedback. Summative feedback, which enables judgments to be made for progression and completion, needs quite clearly and overtly to relate to the assessment criteria and to be strongly, aligned to the curriculum objectives.

Formative feedback is crucial. It needs to be detailed, comprehensive, meaningful to the individual, fair, challenging and supportive, which is a tough task for busy academics. We must consider using the whole range of means available to us to make this possible, including computer-aided assessment and strategies for giving feedback efficiently such as assignment return sheets, assignment reports, in class collective feedback and other means.

2.2.1.3. Repetition

Use of routine allows the repetition of language and actions that help a child learn how to use

language. This enables a deaf child to: predict and be ready for what is coming next when they find it difficult to pick up on incidental cues, practice the same words or phrases in the same context over and over, understand the context of what is being said so they can begin to link new words and ideas to what they already know, follow a familiar pattern of events and so be independent (MoE, 2012).

2.2.1.4. Note Taking

Some Deaf students may require the assistance of a note taker who will record communications in the classroom for the Deaf student to read, either then or after the class is finished (D. Children & D. Foundation, 2005).

By taking notes the teaching assistant enables the deaf pupil to concentrate on the content of the lesson while information is recorded for them. The notes can be taken in an age appropriate way, for example with pictures for younger children used in post tutoring sessions or sent home for reinforcement (National Deaf Children's Society, 2015).

Note-takers work with individuals and adapt to their needs. They are trained people who are skilled in summarizing and taking notes in various situations such as lectures. Note-takers are very useful as Deaf people cannot watch a lecturer or interpreter and write notes at the same time (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013).

Note taking strategies should be taught and used often. Showing how to use three or four different note taking strategies will give the child the most use and facility with the strategies (Busch, 2012).

2.2.2. Mode of Communication

Communication refers to the process of sharing ideas and information. It is a process that is essential, and many say innate, for all human beings. One of the most difficult decisions that a family with a child who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing makes is choosing a communication method. Yet, researchers suggest that early communication development is positively related to language learning, and in turn a variety of other important developmental areas (Calderon & Naidu, 2000).

Communication is at the heart of everything human beings do; it defines and gives meaning to our emotions, beliefs, hopes, creativity, and life experiences. Without communication, a child is

lost. The effective development, understanding, and expression of language are fundamental to any educational experience and are particularly crucial for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Communication and educational growth depend on a language rich environment, one with ongoing, direct, and age appropriate language opportunities (California Department of Education, 1999).

Students without a hearing loss usually start school with well-developed speech and language. They have acquired language effortlessly since birth through listening to and overhearing those around them. They usually have a well-developed general knowledge base and are able to use questions and discussions to further develop their language and general awareness. This in turn will be used by their teacher to develop their learning. Students without a hearing loss usually start school with well-developed speech and language. Students with a hearing loss generally find it more difficult to acquire language and general knowledge and may start school delayed in these areas. However this is not a reflection of their potential or ability. They have less opportunity to learn how our language system works and it is more challenging for them to acquire new vocabulary, concepts and expressions. In addition, they may have limited exposure to incidental learning (Deaf Children & Deaf Foundation, 2005).

According to National Deaf Children's Society (2013), Deafness presents a very significant barrier to pupils acquiring language, communicating, making educational progress, developing socially and emotionally and developing independence.

Focus more on content than on grammar when assessing the writing of children who primarily use sign language for communication. Because the grammar of sign languages is very different from written languages, these children are in fact writing in a "second" language (UNESCO, 2009).

If a child's hearing loss and communication and language needs are not fully met, this can have a significant impact on their social and education development and emotional well-being (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013).

Even as teachers and parents, we often forget that communication includes movement and facial expression, as well as sound. It is therefore important that we as parents, caregivers, and teachers communicate in ways that seem natural for us, using all modes of communication: movement,

facial expression, sound and words (UNESCO, 2009).

The Deaf Children & Deaf Foundation (2005), defines that, “All deaf students are different and the communication chosen should suit the student’s individual needs, which can change over time.”

a. Oral communication

- Speech and listening with lip-reading (Hard of Hearing)
- Cued speech

b. Manual communication

- Signed English (uses signs with markers)
- Ethiopian Sign Language (has its own syntax)
- Signing in English (uses mostly Ethiopian signs, following English syntax)

c. Combined modes

- Simultaneous communication (sim-com) Speaking and signing at the same time
- Total communication, uses all forms of visual and acoustic communication (philosophy)

2.2.2.1. Sign Language

Ethiopian Sign language, which is made up of an organized system of signs including gestures, mimes and facial movements, is usually used by the Deaf people, or the hearing who can communicate with Deaf people. Just like spoken language, there are many different sign languages in the world. Like any other languages, sign language can be elaborated, codified and standardized (ENAD, 2003).

In general Sign language is a manual language used by people who are Deaf and hearing to communicate. It is a true full language with its own grammar. Although children face extraordinary challenges in learning a spoken language, they can easily learn sign language with appropriate exposure. Historically, however, sign language has suffered from several misconceptions, including the belief that it is not a true language. The notion that sign language is simply a primitive, visual representation of oral language that was similar to mime was first challenged by the pioneering work of William Stokoe at Gallaudet University. According to Stokoe (1960) each sign in ASL, analogous to the phonemes of spoken English, consists of three

parts: hand shape, location, and movement.

Sign language tends to depend mainly on the visual modality, many people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing report it to be a natural and easy way to communicate (with preference to American Sign Language). Therefore, the use of sign language with a student with no prior first language should not hinder the child in the future from accessing the English language when the child is ready to learn it. It is a challenge for everyone involved when the child is to learn two languages at the same time, as is the case when the child arrives to school without a language (Christine, 2009).

Sign language in general can be viewed as two extreme opposites. On one side we have EthSL in its most natural form with little to no influence from the local spoken language and on the other end we have a pure codified system of signs, Signed Amharic that match the spoken language exactly. Many of the basic signs are shared by both systems. It is how the signs are combined that makes the language syntax vary. Most Deaf people will function in the middle of the spectrum depending on who the Deaf person is talking with.

2.2.2.2. Signed English

Signed English (methodical signs) was devised for use in teaching literacy to Deaf children and can be used simultaneously with speech to help them understand the structure of English. Signed English (SE) is an exact representation of the English language through the use of signs, where a sign is used for every spoken word and has accompanying markers ex. “Running” would be a single sign in Ethiopian Sign Language but two signs in signed English (“run”, “ing”). It uses specifically developed signs; fourteen different "sign markers" to give guidance on important grammar and finger spelling. SE is a communication method and not a full language like BSL or ASL, but has been designed as a teaching tool to be used with or without spoken English. Its aim is to develop reading and writing comprehension (National Deaf Children's Society, 2013). More often than not many teachers never move from this style of signing or develop skills in EthSL. It is easier for them to just code their own speech than learn a new language. This can be a problem when some concepts are more easily understood in a visual representation (EthSL), that is where knowing EthSL can make the difference in student comprehension.

Because there is not always one sign for every word in EthSL. It can be difficult to discuss and

teach new vocabulary. Signed English does not have the functionality to be able to describe or create new signs like EthSL has. Because of its combinatorial function signs can be compounded to create new English words being taught.

2.2.2.3. Lip Reading

Lip reading is the ability to understand spoken language, in general what is said. Lip reading is difficult to learn depending on the age of hearing loss, but many Deaf children will naturally try to lip read when they are communicating. However it can be somewhat difficult for some Deaf children (pre-lingually deaf) to rely solely on lip reading to understand what is being said, as they in general pick up a small percentage of what is being said from just the lips alone. So lip reading would usually be used alongside other communication approaches and languages (National Deaf Children's Society,2013). Being that each child is unique, being able to move through the continuum of signing spectrum is an important skill for educators of the Deaf.

Most Deaf students will lip-read at some level and watch for facial expressions and other visual cues to supplement what they hear. It is extremely difficult to communicate through lip-reading alone as only about 30 percent of English language sounds are actually visible. Others are formed in the mouth or at the back of the throat so in reality it is very difficult to lip read (Deaf Children & Deaf Foundation, 2005).

2.2.2.4. Primary and Second Language Acquisition

It is more difficult to learn English through the sense of hearing alone. It would obviously be easier for the child with a mild hearing loss. Overhearing conversation or being able to listen to the television while talking with a friend are not likely options for a student who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Experience in both spoken and written language is usually lacking. Once in school, students learn the need and importance of both and how to use it. Incidental learning, defined as knowledge, vocabulary and language that hearing children pick up just by overhearing language in their environment is lacking in children who are deaf or hard of hearing. For this reason, students with hearing loss have gaps in their knowledge (Christine, 2009).

As the experience from some Addis Ababa administration Education office show that, they also have been trying to foster students' social and psychological developments through discussions orientation as to how deaf students interact with hearing peers whenever these students are

exposed to different social contexts. Deaf students have smooth and positive interaction with their hearing teachers. Almost all of the teacher respondents explained that the problem of teacher student interaction is apparent whenever new teachers who are not trained in sign language are assigned in the school. In addition, such a problem is evident when a student who is pre lingual Deaf joins the school for the first time. It becomes really difficult for a pre lingual Deaf student to adjust himself/herself to the existing social environment in the school for the student is not a fluent sign language user, which is a basic means of communication (Mogese, 2006).

Gradually, however, through teacher student and student-student interaction the students became better in using sign language and the communication barrier breaks and hence, social interaction between teachers and their deaf students becomes smooth and positive. The majority of Deaf student informants in the study indicated that they have excellent social interaction with their teachers (Mogese, 2006).

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

This section presents the methods of the study: the research design, participants and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, procedures of the study and data analysis.

3.1. The Research Design

The purpose of this study is to assess teachers' process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf students at Alpha Special School for The Deaf, Addis Ababa. The researcher employed a qualitative research design in its approach to describe the nature of existing conditions. A qualitative research design is useful in assessing the problem related to the topic thoroughly.

3.2. Study Site

The study area was Alpha Special School for the Deaf, which was established in 1967 G.C found at Bole Sub-city area, Woreda 02, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

3.3. Source of Data

To secure adequate and reliable information about the primary and secondary data sources because primary sources only can be very old and want a new resource that is why the researcher used secondary data in this study, information was gathered from the school administrators, selected key informant teachers, school principals, students and special need education professional.

3.4. Participant and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1. Participants of The Study

The total numbers of participants in the study were 16. Ten of them were Deaf students ranging in grade level from seventh to eighth, five male and five female students were interviewed. The students' ages ranged from 15 to 22 years. Four seventh and eighth grade teachers were also interviewed and participated in the focus group, (two female and two male). One male principal and one female Special Needs professional were also included in the study and selected to take part in the interviews.

The selection procedure was guided with input from the school principal.

Teacher selections were based on years of teaching experience. Two of the female teachers that teach seventh and eighth grade have a total of more than 25 years of teaching experience. One female teacher holds a degree. Another one holds a diploma and is currently pursuing her degree in a special needs education summer program in Addis Ababa University. Two of the male teachers hold bachelor's degrees but have less than 10 years of teaching experience.

In addition, one female holds a degree in Special Education and has 15 years of work experience.

The school's head principal hold a Master's degree and has eight years of work experience.

3.4.2. Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling techniques were used to select four (4) 7th and 8th grade teachers, ten (10) students, the one (1) school's principal and one (1) special need professional. Regarding teachers, most of them did not want to volunteers to participate in the study. Therefore, the researcher used the volunteerism technique to select the participants in the study. Similarly, the student samples were pursuing their grade seven and eight education during data collection. Among the total number of students in the selected school, 10 were selected by using random sampling technique. Grade seven and eight students were considered purposely since they were relatively more mature than their juniors and were thought to be able to participate more actively and give more clear feedback on their experience.

3.5. Instruments

The researcher used the following tools to collect the data: interviews, focus group discussions and observation were used to elicit data from the participants.

3.5.1. Interview

In this study a semi-structured interview was used because it is the most appropriate method of data collection to get in-depth information from the respondents. The interviews were conducted with ten (10) Deaf students, one (1) school principal and one (1) special need professional. The interviews with deaf students were conducted in Ethiopian Sign Language.

3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

To assess the teacher preparation and support, a total of four teachers from grades seven and eight participated in the focus group discussion. Notes were taken by the researcher.

3.5.3. Observation

To assess the existing problems of teachers process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf student and to collect information from the participants. The researcher were used an observation checklist sample. The teaching-learning processes of Deaf students in grades seventh and eighth classrooms were assessed through observation. A total time of eighteen minutes was spent in each of the two classes.

3.6. Procedure of Data Collection

In order to assess the questions and improve the qualities of the instrument for the research, a pilot test was conducted in the School. The purpose of the pilot test was to check whether the data collection instruments were properly calibrated. This was to discover any ambiguities and possible misunderstandings of the interview questions. Questions and concerns from the participants would also be included in the modification of the research instruments. Modification and omissions were made to some items such as not using video recordings during FGD, and taking video recording during observation and while asking questions from the questionnaires. This all was done before the undertaking of the actual study.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and observation were described, interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. All the data recorded during interviews and FGD were transcribed to describe the conditions in school compound. In doing so an analysis was made systematically that would affect the interpretation of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Result and Discussion

The purpose of the study is to assess teachers' process of preparing teaching and learning of deaf students at the Alpha Special School for the Deaf, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This section presents the findings of the study based on recent research. The analysis is presented in a thematic form based on the data collected through interview, FGD and observation. Sign

language was the main mode of communication used for assessing the overall situation during the data collection and teaching-learning processes. Thus, the results of the study are presented as follows.

4.1. Teachers' Preparation

Concerning teachers' preparation, some of Deaf students stated that during the interviews there are barriers that affect their access to education. One of the barriers is a teacher's lack of preparation for a lesson. As one student from the seventh grade responded, "I am not happy with my teacher because sometimes my teacher comes to classroom without having his teaching materials such as book, white chalk or marker." He added that the teacher sometimes borrowed the appropriate book from someone else in order to teach. Similarly, an eighth grade student indicated, "I do not have words to express the teacher's situation in classroom because of their lack of preparation before class and during the teaching and learning process."

On the other side, one seventh grade student said that "Some of our teachers frequently asked students what they have learned the last time in order to know what to teach in today's lesson." This is a good way of reminding the students about the previous lesson but the goal is different from remembering of the previous lesson rather it should be aimed at identifying today's lesson.

In this regard UNESCO (1997), stated that "Teachers need the ability to observe carefully and objectively, with an eye to critical classroom variables. Teachers should be able to evaluate materials, organization, and methods in light of the objectives of a lesson and the students being taught. And teachers should be aware of alternative methods and techniques with which to approach teaching situations." This is the standard that must be met.

Another topic an 8th grade student said, "Surprisingly there are additional faults in some of our teachers such as coming to our class without wearing their uniform, and beginning the lesson without expressing their greetings." It is clear that the students wish to see their teachers respect the school rules.

MoE (2012), stated that adaptation/modification of instructional materials involves making changes to the equipment and/or supplies to which a learner with SEN has access during the lesson. Instructional materials can be adapted by selecting different types of materials or making adjustment to the current materials.

Concerning classroom arrangement, teachers who participated in FGD said that their classroom arrangement is horizontal seating rows because students can learn efficiently that way. The teacher can see students directly and assess the students' activity during the class lesson. They tried to arrange students seating in the "U" shape for one year but their teaching and learning process had a very low result because students talked with one another and they were unable to teach them as well and sometimes they quarreled with their classmates. This can be attributed to a lack of language ability on the part of the teacher, thus leading to bad classroom management skills that are mediated by keeping the students in horizontal rows.

In this regard, UNESCO (2009) revealed that deaf students' classroom arrangement should be organized in such a way that all the children are sitting in a "U" shape. This way of sitting helps the children to see each other which make it easier for children with hearing impairment to use sign language, read lips and understand mime, thereby making it possible to participate more actively in discussions and classroom activities.

Moreover, during the classroom observation, the teacher did not pay attention to the deaf students' classroom arrangement and they sat in horizontal classroom seating arrangements. The seating arrangement was completely uncomfortable to deaf students and made it very difficult for them to discuss with one another, it deprived them of the ability to see other students' responses. When students in the front of the room respond or ask questions, the students that are behind them are not able to see what is being signed. It's not until another student or the teacher repeats what was said back that the other students in the back of the room that they get the information and then can participate. The same is true for the students sitting in the front, they are not able to see the responses of their class mates that are sitting behind them. Many times when a student in the back responds the students in the front will turn around to see, more often than not by that time the response was done and the student was not able to catch what was said. This is a major barrier to the teaching-learning process.

4.2. Factors Affecting Teachers Preparation

4.2.1. Inadequate Training Opportunities for Teachers

Teachers stated during FGD, that they were assigned to this deaf school after graduation from their respective colleges. None of the teachers had met a Deaf person before being employed at

the school and none had any specific training or experience relating to deaf education. The only preparation/training that was provided to the new incoming teachers was a very short and shallow workshop. Upon arrival at the school, the new teachers take a short orientation about Deaf students in general and their sign language use. These trainings/orientations were lead by selected Deaf teachers at the school. The orientation trainings lasted four days. After that the new teachers tried to develop sign language skills by interacting with deaf students and other staff while on the job. In addition, they would get a short term sign language training every year which was arranged by the school to improve their sign skills. This would encompass spending the whole day at the school with the school community.

So, the majority of FGD school teachers declared, “Weneed additional training about how to teach Deaf students because the short training given by Deaf teachers is not enough for us.” The drive and desire by the school teachers is evident in wanting continuous training and ongoing education to develop and deliver appropriate educational materials.

On the other hand, during an interview with the principal he stated, “There should be short-term trainings especially in the summer and at the first semester break.”

This would have a positive effect on the schoolteachers’ teaching-learning process. This highlights the core of the issue; there are shortages, lack of training opportunities for teachers at the school. This shortage of training opportunities for teachers has serious and detrimental effect on teachers’ preparation, support, teaching and student success.

Concerning this, Mogese (2006), suggested that “Deaf students can have smooth and positive interaction with their hearing teachers. The problem of teacher student interaction is apparent whenever new teachers who are not trained in sign language are assigned in the school.

The effective development, understanding, and expression of language are fundamental to any educational experience and are particularly crucial for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Communication and educational growth depend on a language rich environment, one with ongoing, direct, and age appropriate language opportunities (California Department of Education, 1999).

Once in school, students learn the need and importance of incidental learning, defined as

knowledge, vocabulary and language that hearing children pick up just by overhearing language in their environment is lacking in children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. For this reason, students with hearing loss have gaps in their knowledge (Christine, 2009).

In addition, Hammond & Snowden (2007), stated that experts in teaching like experts in other fields can quickly analyze complex situations and bring to bear many sources of knowledge about how to respond to them.

4.2.2. Lack of Teachers Attention to Classroom Preparation

At the Alpha Special School for the Deaf another major factor that affects teacher's preparation is the lack of attention to the process in general.

During an interview with the Deaf students, one of them said that most teachers did not express their greetings to the children when they arrive to teach in the classroom. Some of them showed no respect for teaching and sometimes they came to classroom late. Sometimes they came to class in a bad mood immediately after others classroom lesson so that their teaching strategies do not interest the students.

Students responded in this section that the teacher paid little attention to his/her students. It is assumed that without teachers' attention for his/her lesson preparation, the learning-teaching process will be difficult for students and the teachers also. One grade 8th student stated, "Most of our teachers have not seriously given attention to the subject matter they teach, they are trying to teach us without any preparation at all."

The opposite situation that some Deaf students experience gives them the ability to distinguish between successful teaching and learning and not so successful teaching, for instance students have stated: "In Amharic class sometimes the teacher instructed about the subject through good explanation and relating with other appropriate subjects. Also she sometimes reviewed the homework to identify students' wrong and correct responses. But the teachers of other subject teachers would not help the students as does the Amharic teacher."

On the other hand, the classroom observation results indicated that most of teachers had not given much attention to how to teach and did not develop a good rapport with the students. By not having a good teacher student relationship this had a negative impact on the teaching-

learning process and educational environment. In addition, the teachers often did not provide answers to students' questions. There were multiple instances where misunderstanding among the students occurred when the teacher responded to their questions.

According to Hammond & Snowden (2000), "effective teachers engage students in active learning such as discussing, writing, evaluating, experimenting, and constructing models, papers, and products in addition to listening to and reading information, watching demonstrations, and practicing skills. They make their expectations for high-quality work very clear, and they provide models of student work that meets those standards. They also provide constant feedback that helps students improve as they continuously revise their work toward these standards. They design a well-functioning, respectful classroom that allows students to work productively." This must be the standard at the school.

4.3. Mode of Communication Used During the Teaching and Learning Process

The majority of the teachers who participated in the FGD have had very little skill or formal training in Ethiopian Sign Language. The researcher observed the use of sign language communication during the teaching-learning process in the classroom. It was found that there is a wide discrepancy of sign language skills between the teachers and students. This was observed during the teaching-learning exchange in the 7th and 8th grade classrooms. A failure in communication occurred between students and teachers multiple times. This discrepancy in the appropriate use of sign language affected the teachers' ability to provide education and support to the Deaf students. When the students misunderstand the teacher that means the communication is not concise. Therefore teaching and learning is not progressing appropriately.

The problems faced by not being able to effectively use sign language correctly in the classroom are caused by the fact that teachers have not been provided with enough training in sign language. This is exhibited by the severe discrepancy between students' and teachers' awareness of sign language usage; this barrier affected the linguistic exchange and prevented them from providing successful support to Deaf students.

Indeed, these teachers faced serious communication problems when they first began to communicate with their Deaf students, as they explained. For a few of the teachers, it had been a

real challenge to develop effective communication with the Deaf students. Such a communication breakdown resulted, in misinterpretation of what a Deaf student wanted to convey to his/her teacher. Which lead to misunderstandings.

Consequently, such misunderstandings led to barriers between teachers and Deaf students. The difficulty becomes worse when teachers are trying to communicate with students who are pre-lingually Deaf.

Related to this, the school principal reported that the important things that Deaf students need from their teachers is a commitment to help Deaf students in such areas as academics and communications. He added that they frequently request support from the government for this situation and they had received a little support to provide a two or three day sign language training for regular teachers every year. All teachers are welcome to attend the trainings organized by the school administration in collaboration with the government and Deaf teachers. However, this inadequate amount of sign language training does not solve the discrepancy in the lack of ability to communicate clearly with students. This is one of the greatest challenges the school currently faces. Even though Deaf students do sometimes have smooth and positive interaction with their hearing teachers, the problem of a teacher's ability to provide competent support for Deaf students is apparent whenever a new teacher is not trained in sign language.

In addition, such a problem is evident when a student who is pre-lingually Deaf joins the school for the first time. It becomes really difficult for a pre-lingually Deaf student to adjust himself/herself to the existing social environment, especially when the student is not a fluent sign language user (Mogese, 2006).

According to teachers during the FGD, “Sometimes we communicate with students by using gestures, speech, etc. but we are not skillful with Ethiopian Sign Language yet because there are not enough words in the dictionary.” They added that they face many difficulties when they teach the Deaf students because the textbook words are difficult to express using sign language and take more time to be translated into other words. Thus, this shows that there is inconsistency in the use of sign language. Due to the absence of clear communication with the teachers in the classroom, students often had no access to lesson that their teacher had taught.

Concerning challenges of communication, Deaf students indicated that sometimes their teachers

taught only by writing thing on the chalkboard. In this regard, one of the participants from 8th grade indicated that some teachers have difficulty in communicating with students directly using sign language but some of others are able to communicate with the students. “We have many teachers for various subjects, some of them are Deaf teachers, and others are hearing teachers. Our Deaf teachers can communicate with sign language but some hearing teachers could not communicate and they actually teach us only depending on writing on the blackboard.” In this type of learning situation it is really difficult for pre-lingually Deaf students to achieve appropriate milestones in language development because they cannot understand the written language without sign language. This goes back to having a strong first language (sign language) to help build the second language (written English and Amharic).

Another participant from the 8th grade indicated that the teachers do not communicate only through standard sign language but they also use gestures. The student said, “Some teachers communicate with us via gestures and nonverbal communication because they do not know sign language well.” Some students try to communicate with reading the lips while speaking and some are able to read when he/she writes on the blackboard. The students also discuss with each other the lesson to help with understanding. This tends to be done in EthSL, because of that the teacher is unable to understand what is being said. So Basically the students who understand and have a higher level of sign language and written skills end up teaching the other less educated students.

According to one of 7th grade students, “We have teachers who are familiar and unfamiliar with sign language. Knowing the sign language is important because we cannot understand the lesson if our teachers do not know sign language well.”

Communication is the key to Deaf education and must be provided. “It defines and gives meaning to our emotions, beliefs, hopes, creativity, and life experiences. Without communication, a child is lost. The effective development, understanding, and expression of language are fundamental to any educational experience and are particularly crucial for Deaf and hard of hearing children. Communication and educational growth depend on a language rich environment, one with ongoing, direct, and age appropriate language opportunities” (California Department of Education, 1999). In addition, “if a child’s hearing loss and communication and language needs are not fully met, this can have a significant impact on their social and education

development and emotional wellbeing” (NDCS, 2013).

4.4. Teachers support

During the FGD a majority of teachers said that students asked about misunderstandings they had during lessons. They reported students said, “We cannot see your writing on the blackboard.” Teachers went on to say “during this time we tried to solve the problems. Sometimes we assumed that there were health related problems faced by students and we tried to discuss with them outside the class but they gave us more difficult questions that we could not manage.” This indicates that the teachers were unaware of the adaptation and modification of instructional strategies that was needed by learners in the classroom.

Similarly, one of the 8th grade students said that “half of our teachers giving us supports are not enough but it is better than nothing. I did not get additional professional support at my time at the school. The teachers merely brought educational materials that were related to the textbook. For instance, they brought to our class things such as a marker, pen and memo.” Moreover, a 7th grade student added “We faced many challenges when our teachers were teaching without the support of necessary materials that were mentioned in the textbook.” This shows that teachers did not provide the appropriate instructional materials that were needed in the classroom.

Adaptation or modifications of instructional strategies refer to changes in the way teacher provides instruction. The teacher should be aware of different learning styles, backgrounds, experience and learning needs of individual learners when planning lessons and using different teaching methods. Effective teaching means combining different teaching and learning strategies. Thus, the curriculum becomes more relevant and inclusive to both the teacher and student. It must be remembered that Special Education Needs (SEN) are created when a curriculum is not accessible to all learners.

According to MoE (2012), by using different teaching approaches and grouping the focus of learning from being teacher-directed towards being learner-centered, this promotes the development of children as independent, self-directed learners and releases the teacher to attend to the needs of individual children and groups. Teacher with a wide repertoire of teaching methods (e.g. co-operative group teaching, cooperative learning, self-directed learning etc.) are well prepared to make a classroom a lively, challenging and friendly place to learn.

4.5. Possible Solution to Improve Teachers Preparation and Support

Concerning possible solutions for factors that affect teachers' preparation the following points were raised by the participants of the study:

4.5.1. Teachers

The teachers argued that it would be better if the concerned bodies pay attention to the Deaf school teachers salary. Because of the extra skills and sign language that is needed the compensation should reflect that. They also need training in relation to different methods of teaching support Deaf children and help them to identify their problems and areas of need.

In addition, teachers believe that it would be preferable for teachers who know Ethiopian sign language to be assigned. The school must arrange continuous Ethiopian sign language training opportunities to the teachers and staff. Teachers are sometimes taught in short sign language training, however it is inadequate to improve their skill gaps. Thus, training should be provided continuously and with different levels to meet the different language levels of the teachers.

4.5.2. Principal

The school principal stated that the teachers who teach Deaf students in the classrooms should be trained in sign language before starting to teach deaf students because that training helps to support deaf students with clear communication. It is recommended that there should be short-term training offered especially in the summer and during the first semester break. Knowing sign language must be the first criteria for hiring teachers. The school principal should also have a good knowledge of Ethiopian sign language and that will help him/her to hire sign language competent teachers. Supporting school materials should also be available. The government should pay special attention in this regard. It is believed that the potential of Deaf students benefit the country at large.

4.5.3. Special Need Professional

The special needs professionals who are working in the school believe that, it will be successful

if the government gives attention to the resource room because it is very important to a teacher's preparation and support. There is a serious lack of use of Ethiopian Sign Language, Sign Language or signed English/Amharic in general in the schools, Ethiopian Sign Language is rarely used and the concerned authorities should promote Ethiopian Sign Language training opportunities for teachers along with Deaf cultural awareness for all staff and students.

4.5.4. Students

The majority of students believe that if their teachers improved their sign language skills that it would also improve the teachers' ability to clearly communicate. This will tremendously improve learning in the classroom. Students also expressed a great concern for the seating arrangement. Students were not able to follow conversations between other students and a teacher because it was not in their visual field. Goals and lesson outcomes were another concern of the students, it was expressed that the teachers' goals were not clear or conveyed at all to the students.

Another observation was the age of the students. It was very obvious that most of the deaf students were older than their hearing counterparts at hearing schools. There are several possible reasons for this. Such as, parents delay in sending their child to school, economic or social pressure to wait till a later date for enrollment. Regardless of the reasons, children are starting later and need to catch up in comparison with their hearing peers. Being that most kids that start late tend to be delayed in language development and have missed appropriate milestones of development. That is why it is crucial for teacher to be skilled in sign language to be able to deal with these unique challenges successfully.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data collected through interviews, FGD's and classroom observations, a number conclusion were made.

The finding of this study is that students expressed concern about their teachers' lack of preparation and the lack of support students received. As proved by the research, though there are some difficulties encountered by teachers, several challenges are also noticed. The major challenges are: lack of teachers' knowledge of Ethiopian Sign Language, lack of instructional strategies and poor attention towards their preparation of their lessons. This leads to unreliable support for Deaf students. Also, the school provided sign language training only for a short time with no follow up.

However, the use of the teachers' communication methods was rather severely limited. Failure in communication exists between Deaf students and teachers. It can be assumed that there is a shortage of sign language training opportunities. The major cause of communication barriers is caused by failure of the concerned bodies to make efforts to further develop specialized skills that are unique to the teaching and learning processes of Deaf students. The textbook for Deaf students' was adopted and utilized without maintaining uniformity in students reading level or course content. It is recommended that all stakeholders come together for proper textbook selection and implementation at the Deaf schools.

It is also recommended that the textbooks have a balance of pictures, illustrations and diagrams that help balance out and explain the text. This will help bridge the phonetic awareness to literacy development (Goldin- Meadow, S., & Mayberry, R. I. 2001).

As assessed above, this prevents the success of the teaching-learning process. Deaf students find it difficult to understand the subject matter being presented by the teacher. This caused the Deaf students not to properly understand the lesson when the teacher was instructing. The problems faced by students were caused by a communication breakdown that existed because of the lack of skills and experience in using Ethiopian Sign Language and the other forms of sign systems for teaching literacy and general education.

Similarly, the researcher assessed how sign language was utilized during instruction. This research discusses the teaching-learning process and its use of sign language. It was found that there are a wide array of obstacles to the use of sign language, by teachers were engaged in teaching. The research supports the fact that students found it rather difficult to communicate in the classroom with non-deaf individuals (teachers).

This study also shows the students' lack of visual access; teachers were not paying attention to the structure of the classroom and students were sitting in horizontal rows. This type of classroom structure made it very difficult for students to have discussions with other students and the instructor at the same time. This lack of visual access and understanding of Deaf space greatly contributes to the unsatisfactory outcomes that were observed during classroom instruction.

Teachers rarely used Ethiopian Sign Language; some teachers that had some basic skills used

signs to teach while others only utilized writing on the blackboard to communicate with the students. By only using writing and using no direct sign instruction to teach, this created another obstacle to basic communication in the classroom. Even though the school prepared short training opportunities for schoolteachers this was not adequate to resolve their skills gap in teaching. Language skills require a long time to development and maintain in order for one to become proficient.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following measures are suggested as a means of resolving the lack of teachers' preparation and support. The following points are recommended by the researcher.

- The school teachers for the deaf students must be skilled with Ethiopian Sign Language before being assigned as the selected school teachers.
- The school classroom environment should be arranged with seats in a “U” shape or in a configuration which enables all participants to be able to see one another, allowing full visual access to the learning environment.
- Even if the government has hired teachers for the Deaf, the school should implement a Ethiopian Sign Language training for the long term for skills development to improve the gap in teachers sign language abilities.
- School administration needs to take the lead be trained and knowledgeable on deaf education and best practices. To ensure that the teachers are held to a high standard of competency and signing skill
- The school principal should have a special responsibility in promoting the evaluation of a teacher's overall abilities in preparation and support.
- Sign linguists, sign language professionals, and fluent signers should construct a new Ethiopian Sign Language dictionary along with other documents clarifying the grammatical structures and variations.
- Sign language interpretation is an important component that is missing and not addressed in this paper but is of great significance as a secondary recommendation. By having interpreters at the university, this would allow more deaf to get teaching degrees and provide a more natural teaching-learning environment for Deaf students. Additionally,

by having interpreter in the classroom with a new teacher this can help during the transition from unskilled teacher to seasoned professional and not allow the communication breakdown.

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Appendix A

Addis Ababa University

Department of Special needs

Interview Guide for Deaf Students

The objective of this interview is to collect necessary information for educational research to assess teacher's preparation and support to deaf students.

Therefore, your contribution to the success of this study is highly valued, you are kindly requested to honestly respond to this interview question presented and the researcher would like to assure that your responses are strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part One: Background Characteristics of Students

1.1 Grade level _____

1.2 Age _____

1.3 Sex _____

Part Two

2.1 Schoolteachers preparation for classroom teaching-learning processes.

1. Can you mention your teachers preparation before starting the actual lesson in the classroom looks like?
2. Which kinds of preparation in the classroom your teachers used?
3. What about your teachers learning topic appearances looks like?
4. Do you think your teacher have different learning style backgrounds, experience and fulfill the learning needs of learners when planning the lesson and using different teaching methods? If yes try to explain or no how?
5. Do you think your teacher teaching strategies interest to you and other students? Why?
6. Can you explain me your teacher's arrangement of classroom settings before start the actual lesson?
7. What kinds of arrangement provided by your teacher in the classroom?
8. Which arrangements appropriate to you and which one is not appropriate if any?
9. What challenges did you face in the classroom when your teacher teaches the actual lesson?
10. Can you mention your teachers understanding students challenging and choosing their friendly place to learn? Explain.

2.2 material provision provided and Modes of communication between the teacher and deaf students during classroom teaching-learning processes

1. Do your teachers communicate with Ethiopian sign language? If No, How do you communicate with your teacher and how does the teaching learning process going on?
2. What are clearly communicating appropriate behaviors for particular classroom teaching activities your teacher used?
3. What continuously support does your teacher provide for students? Do you think these supports are enough?
4. Do you think that their guidance and help are important? Why?

5. Have you ever receive professional help and intervention from your classroom teacher?
What kinds of professional help and intervention you get?
6. How do you explain your teachers' competence and ability to arrange educational materials before start the actual lesson?
7. Which kinds of educational materials your teachers bring in the classroom? Please mention them?
8. Which educational material the best appearance your teacher used in the classroom?
9. Do you think these educational material provisions are sufficient? If not, explain why?
10. In your classroom there are visual and auditory clues available? If yes list them.
11. How do you explain teacher's effort to relate lessons with prepare lesson plan and education materials when teaching the deaf students?
12. How do you explain the ability of your teacher's teaching in finding ways and means to relate instruction with production?
13. How do you describe your interaction process with your teacher in the classroom when you are given group assignments, how do you do it?
14. What do you feel about your teachers teaching process in the classroom?
15. What challenges have you encountered with your teacher in the classroom?

Appendix B

Addis Ababa University

Department of Special needs

Interview Guide for the School Principals

The objective of this interview is to collect necessary information to assess teacher's preparation and support to deaf students.

Since your contribution to the success of this study is highly valued, you are kindly requested to honestly respond to the interview question presented and the researcher would like to assure that your responses are strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Interview Questions for school principals

- 1 What kinds of preparation your schoolteacher usually used before teach deaf students?
- 2 Do you think there are lacks of educational materials in your school? If yes,

what the influence by teachers preparation?

3 How do you explain your interest and tendency to provide the necessary assistance to teachers?

4 Do you think all teachers accurately communicate with students by Ethiopian sign language? If not, how do communicate when they teach deaf students?

5 What kinds of challenges deaf students face and trying to tell you about their teachers?

6 What do you think should be done to improve teacher's preparation and support to deaf students in your school?

Appendix C

Addis Ababa University

Department of Special needs

Interview Guide for Special Need Education Professionals

The objective of this interview is to collect necessary information to assess teacher's preparation and support to deaf students.

Since your contribution to the success of this study is highly valued, you are kindly requested to honestly respond to the interview question presented and the researcher would like to assure that your responses are strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Interview Questions

1. What kinds of support you provide to teachers for the deaf student?
2. What kinds of teaching aids and available materials the teacher applying to take from your resource room for early preparation?

3. Which educational material provision you provide to teachers for the deaf student?
4. What challenges you face to give educational material provision to teachers for the deaf in your school?
5. What methods you undertake to solve the problems mentioned above?
6. Are you giving sign language training for classroom teachers? If yes how long you give training for teachers?
7. Do you think this sign language training is important? Why?

Appendix D

Addis Ababa University

Department of Special needs

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) for Teachers

The objective of this interview is to collect necessary information to assess teacher's preparation and support to deaf students.

Since your contribution to the success of this study is highly valued, you are kindly requested to actively participate in this group discussion. This information will be strictly confidential.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Part One: Background Characteristics of focus group discussion participant

1.1 Teachers' Educational Status

- a. High school completed (grade 12) and had six months training
- b. Grade 12 completed and had 1 year training
- c. College Diploma
- d. Degree

e. Any other _____

1.2 Do you have any training in special Needs Education?

- a) Yes
- b) No

1.3 Year of experience _____

Part Two:

2.1 School teachers' preparation for classroom teaching-learning processes.

1. What arrangement do you make before you start to teach in the classroom?
2. Do you use action research before prepare your plan to teach?
3. Do you use abstract concepts of the given topic when you teach? If yes, explain why?
4. What activities do you include in your preparation that to reflect the deaf learner's preferences and experiences?
5. Do you organize your deaf students sitting arrangement in a "U" shape in the classroom? If no why?
6. What major challenges you face during preparation?
7. What challenges do deaf students face when you start to teach in the classroom?
8. What measures did you take to solve the problems you mentioned above?
9. What do you think should be done to resolve the challenges and improve teachers preparation and support in the classroom?

2.2 Material provision provided and communication process between the deaf teacher and deaf students during classroom teaching-learning processes.

1. Did you have been discussed day-to-day class activities with your students? If yes, explain.
2. What Educational support do deaf students get from you? Do you think the support is adequate?
3. Can you tell me some of the methods of communication with your student? Are you using sign language, gestures, speech, etc.?
4. Do you often face any misunderstanding while communicating with deaf

students? Which misunderstanding do you face?

Appendix E
Addis Ababa University
Department of Special needs
Observation Guide

Based on the following items, the researcher will observe teachers preparation and support for deaf students in the classrooms.

No	Description	Yes	No
1	Give and corrects exercise regularly		
2	Treats students as grown ups		
3	Clearly communication way		
4	Present lesson clearly and logically		
5	Teaching requires extended professional preparation		
6	Reflect a good care for the deaf students		
7	Deaf students and teachers interaction		
8	Encourage deaf students to work in groups and discuss		

	together		
9	Classroom structure		
10	Encourage deaf students interaction between their classmate		
11	The visual marks of language such as turn taking, control, asking for certification, eye contact greetings.		
12	Give answer students response are not correct		
13	Repeating the questions answer		
14	Note takers availability		
15	Check students attention before beginning the lesson		
16	Write the explanation on the blackboard		
17	Asking open ended questions		
18	Asking students repeat what others have said		
19	Gain the Deaf person's attention by wave or gentle touch on the arm of shoulder.		
20	Remember to establish the topic before the comment or question.		
21	Aware of the fatigue		
22	Clear and accurate classroom explanations		
23	Feedback to students that furthers learning		
24	Interdisciplinary connections in plans and practice		
25	Maps pictures, television, projector,		

