

**Addis Ababa University
Institute of Language Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Program)**

**An Assessment of the Extent of English Language Teachers'
Involvement in Conducting Action Research (with
Particular Reference to Teachers Teaching at
Colleges of Teacher Education in
Amhara Region)**

**By
Mekuriaw Ayenew**

**July 2007
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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to find out the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research, with particular reference to teachers teaching at Colleges of Teacher Education in Amhara Region. In order to achieve this objective, relevant data were gathered from seventeen English language teachers, nine from Debre Markos and eight from Debre Birhan Colleges of Teacher Education. In addition, academic and research vice deans, and English language department heads, in the two colleges, were included in the study. Questionnaires, structured interview and document analysis were used to gather data. The data gathered were organized by using tables, and analysis and interpretation were made on each datum. The analyses were done by both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Based on the analyses and interpretations, it was found out that majority of the teachers had the interest and the confidence to conduct action research. The administration of each college was supportive of research activities. In this regard, there was provision of resources like finance and incentives even if not sufficient, computer and internet access, stationery materials, secretarial and printing service, moral support from each college for teachers' research activities. Shortage of time, work load, and lack of adequate action research skill were the main constraints for teachers to conduct action research whereas the supportive nature of college administration to research activities, the training teachers got from the Higher Diploma Program, the Research and Publication Office, the research finding presentations, teachers' level of qualification, teachers' teaching and research experience were facilitating factors of teachers' research activities. None of them had conscious effort to conduct action research and the extent of their involvement showed no improvement.

Therefore, it was recommended that in order to enhance their involvement in action research, training programs should be arranged frequently, there should be pre-planning of the activities that are to be carried out in a year, and it is better if teachers conduct their action research collaboratively because it can avoid, if possible, or minimize certain constraints.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Research is an activity which is conducted for the purpose of finding solutions to problems that exist in our surrounding. It is done deliberately and objectively either to find out new information or to strengthen the existing information in relation to the area under focus. It can be conducted in various disciplines; for example, in agriculture, health, education, and in other fields. In education, it is conducted to find solutions to problems that are associated with different educational aspects such as curricular issues, instructional process, educational administration, educational objectives, educational institutions, and other similar elements of education.

Even if any interested institution and/or individual can be involved in educational research, there are institutions as well as individuals that are more appropriate and effective than others for the effectiveness of its outcome because such institutions as well as individuals have a clear awareness and understanding of the problems that exist in their locality. In this regard, it is better if it is conducted by schools, colleges and universities as institutional entities and by teachers teaching at each level of these educational institutions.

A type of educational research which is conducted on a specific problem in a specific setting for immediate practical solution is action research (Nunan, 1989; Brumfit and Mitchell, 1990; Van Lier, 1988; Laws, 2003; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Elliott, 1991; Altrichter, Posch and Smokeh 1993). In this regard, it is carried out by teachers in their locality, especially in the classroom, with the principal aim of bridging the gap between theory and practice (Nunan, 1990; Van Lier, 1988; Crookes,

1993; Beasley and Riordan, 1981, cited in Nunan, 1990). In doing so, it enables teachers to expand their roles as examiners of the instructional process, and gives greater confidence and a sense of responsibility on their career (Beverly, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Elliott, 1991; Beasley and Riordan, 1981, cited in Nunan, 1990; Wallace, 1998).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Action research in language classroom, especially in foreign language classrooms, plays an important role in alleviating problems that are related to different elements of the language classroom. For example, it enables the language teacher to identify factors that promote or hamper language instruction (Van Lier, 1988; Nunan, 1989; Crookes 1993; Long, 1981, cited in Nunan, 1990; Brown, 1988; Onel, 1997) where the factors can be associated either with the teacher himself/herself, learners, instructional process, materials/resources or other related issues (Nunan, 1989, 1990; Lynch, 1990; Wallace, 1998). It also enhances the language teacher's reflection and facilitates his/her active participation in doing other kinds of research (Crookes, 1993).

Apart from these, conducting action research in classrooms of teacher education programs has a significant role for the educator, the student-teacher and the profession as well. For instance, it results in the development of the teacher-educator in his/her career (Van Lier, 1988; Walker, 1985, cited in Nunan, 1990), unlike other professions because there is a great gap between theory and practice in teaching; it narrows the gap (Van Lier, 1988; Walker, 1985, cited in Nunan, 1990; Wallace, 1998), and it gives much more autonomy to the student-teachers as they will be the people who are going to experience the problem; that is, teaching and classroom researching (Van Lier, 1988; Walker, 1985, cited in Nunan, 1990; McNiff, 1993; Berry and Loughran, 2002).

When we consider the particular case of language teaching specialization, educating student-teachers and making them competent language teachers is not as such easy and simple because, as Long (1990) stated, there is usually lack of common language background knowledge on the part of the would-be language teachers when they enter into institutes, a situation which demands greater effort to bring them into similar language competency. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for competent and proficient language teachers, especially teachers of worldwide languages like English, because there is a greater pressure to use such languages for international communication (Van Lier, 1988). In such cases, effective language teaching is found to be the most important factor in narrowing the discrepancy. Thus, to achieve this, extensive classroom research by the language teacher is the ideal tool. However, as Nunan (1989, 1990), Van Lier (1988), Beverly (1993), Crookes (1993), Lynch (1990), Long (1990) and Burns (1999) stated, action research in language classrooms is not yet widely practised even if there is a growing tendency of the attention given to it.

When we see the particular case of our country, English has been taught as an independent subject at schools and tertiary educational levels, and has been used as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary levels. However, it is a common phenomenon to observe students leaving schools as well as colleges and universities without adequately acquiring the necessary language skills and areas which they are expected to acquire; hence, their ability in expressing themselves and describing events, by using English, in classrooms as well as in real life situations is poor. Researchers like Tesfaye (1982) confirmed such situation. This inadequacy might be attributed to different factors: factors related to teachers, students, instructional inputs and others that directly or indirectly halt progress in English language proficiency. In order to

identify and alleviate such problems, extensive language classroom research activities should have been done so far.

Thus, when we come to the particular intent of this study, the aim was to examine English language teachers' extent of involvement in conducting action research with particular reference to teachers teaching at Colleges of Teacher Education in Amhara Region. The motive emerged from various reasons. Firstly, from the researcher's experience of facing different problems while he has been learning English as a student and teaching English for two years. In connection to this, the researcher did not see any teacher, even himself, involved in conducting action research at the institution where he taught.

Secondly, the present researcher did not come across extensive research conducted to find out English language teachers' extent of involvement in conducting action research at tertiary educational levels, in general, and Colleges of Teacher Education, in particular, except Cherie's (2003) research, a research conducted on English language teachers' involvement in action research at Kotebe, Nazareth and Awasa Colleges of Teacher Education. Even, at secondary school level, there is only one research work, conducted by Wondu (2006), on Addis Ababa secondary school English language teachers' involvement in action research. From this, it can be said that much research has not been done in the area. Even, these individuals recommended further research to be conducted on the area so that comprehensive information can be found about English language teachers' participation in action research. In addition to this, even if these individuals conducted research on the issue, conducting this research was necessary because language classrooms are diverse in their nature in that there are different variables that vary in accordance with the context of a particular language classroom. These context-dependent variables can include funding, training and

experience of language teachers and administrators, availability and accessibility of resources, the relationship between teachers and administrators, time, and other factors that vary from time to time and from place to place.

Thirdly, teacher-educators, especially teachers graduated in the field of education, have better orientation about research issues than teachers in other non-teaching specializations; hence, they have a more professional obligation to get involved in research activities because they are educating the would-be teachers who are going to face the real situation in their future career. In this regard, scholars like Berry and Loughran (2002), and McNiff (1993) remarked such professional obligation in such a way that because teacher-educators' practice is embedded within that of student-teachers who are going to do the same thing in their future classrooms, educators need to carry out personal inquiries in their own classrooms.

Lastly, when the researcher was assigned to present a paper on action research for the course 'Research Methods' in his first year of post-graduate education program, he came across controversial issues about action research while he was reviewing different literatures; that is, the necessity of conducting action research, on the one hand, and the constraints (internal and/or external to the teacher) that impede teachers from conducting action research, on the other hand.

Having all this in mind, the researcher raised the following leading questions to be answered at the end of the research:

- what is the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research?

- are there factors that hinder or enhance their involvement in conducting action research?
- what is their attitude towards conducting action research?
- have they the competence to conduct action research?
- what future steps should be initiated so as to promote and popularize their involvement in conducting action research?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to find out the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- to identify the factors that hinder or enhance their involvement in conducting action research;
- to assess the attitude they have towards conducting action research;
- to assess the competence they have so as to conduct action research;
- to identify the possible steps to be taken in order to promote and popularize their participation in action research.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study is hoped to have the following contributions:

- it can make teachers and other concerned bodies aware of the fact that conducting action research is not assigned to or imposed on someone else; rather, it is every teacher's duty to be carried out along with teaching;

- it can provide information to members of the colleges (especially to teachers, students, and administrators) as well as regional education officials about the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research;
- it can identify the hindering or facilitating factors of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research and thereby suggest the possible steps to be taken in response to the factors; and
- it can give insights to those individuals who have the interest to conduct further research in depth on the issue at hand.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was limited to the assessment of English language teachers' extent of involvement in conducting action research. In doing so, it focused only on English language teachers teaching at Colleges of Teacher Education in Amhara Region.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Time and financial were the main constraints which the researcher encountered in the course of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Action Research

Action research is becoming increasingly known as an approach which encourages practitioners to control their own lives and contexts (McNiff, 2002; Frrances, 2000). Because it is carried out by practitioners themselves, it is referred to as “practitioner research” and because it involves the practitioner to think about and reflect on his/her work, it is also called “self-reflective practice” (McNiff, 2002). In addition to these terms, it can also be called by names such as “collaborative research”, “emancipatory research”, “action learning”, and “contextual research” (O’Brien, 1998).

With regard to the nature of its definition, Reason and Bradbury (2001:1) explained: “There is no short answer to the question: What is action research?” Hence, to give a comprehensive definition of action research is difficult (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Due to this, different scholars defined it in different ways. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996), Hughes (1997), and Reason and Bradbury (2001), for example, explained it as a kind of research which involves action as an integral part of the research process. It is a participatory (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Bailey, 1998, cited in Burns, 1999), democratic process concerned with practical knowledge (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), and is usually possible with, for and by individuals and communities themselves (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Bailey, 1998, cited in Burns, 1999). It offers a valuable opportunity for teachers to be involved in research in the social contexts of classrooms and teaching institutions with a focus on daily instructional process (Burns, 1999; Curry, 2003; Johnson, 2002). It is seen as a means for creating meaning and understanding in problematic social situations, and improving the

quality of practices within those situations (Elliott, 1991; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Nunan, 1989; Laws, 2003; Burns, 2004, 2005; Curry, 2005). Wallace (1998), Allwright and Bailey (1991) and Ferrance (2000) have also explained it as a strategy which involves collecting and analyzing data on practice in order to arrive at decisions about what the future practice should be.

From the above explanations, we can say that action research is problem-focused, context-specific, and demands the involvement of practitioner(s) and aims at improving conditions for the practitioner(s) as well as the setting where it takes place.

2.2 Historical Background of Action Research

Reason and Bradbury (2001), Hunt (2005) and Masters (1995) stated that it is impossible to provide one concrete origin of action research; however, many writers trace its origin in the early 1940s with an invention by Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist in America (Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Burns, 1999, 2005; McNiff, 2002; Ferrance, 2000). Lewin was considered as the father of action research and the one who coined it (Burns, 2005; McNiff, 2002; Ferrance, 2000; Dick, 2002; Walford, 2001). He was concerned with social problems and focusing on participative group processes for addressing crises and changes within organizations (Burns, 2005; Curry, 2005; O'Brien, 1998). He valued action research as a way of learning about organizations in an effort to change situations in them and make them conducive environments to employees (Curry, 2005). He saw it as a spiral of steps each of which is composed of planning, acting, and fact finding (Burns, 1999, 2005; Dick, 2002; O'Brien, 1998).

Another major contributor for the emergence and development of action research was Eric Trist, a social psychologist, whose group, at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London, was engaged in applied social research in the 1950s (O'Brien, 1998; Curry, 2005; Baskerville, 1999; Burns, 1999, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2001). He and his colleagues were working initially for the civil repatriation of German war prisoners after World War II (O'Brien, 1998; Curry, 2005). They focused on large-scale, multi-organizational problems (O'Brien, 1998; Curry, 2005; Baskerville, 1999).

Both Lewin and Trist applied their research in and between organizations and emphasized professional-client collaboration with a stress on the role of group relations as the basis for problem-solving (O'Brien, 1998; Baskerville, 1999).

2.3 Characteristics of Action Research

As it is one kind of research, it shares a number of features with other kinds of research; however, there are certain features which distinguish it from others. Among the key features, the main ones are the following:

- **insider research:** it is a research which is not done by other people; rather, it is carried out by people who are directly involved in the context of the research on their own practice; hence, it is also called "practitioner research" (Walford, 2001; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Laws, 2003; Park 2001; Kemmis, 2001; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Denscombe, 2003).
- **integration of action and research:** it involves the combination of action and research; that is, when there is a research, it is always accompanied by immediate action in the

specific settings, there is no generalization of the findings to other settings (Amy, 1999; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Wallace, 1992, 1998; Allwright and Bailey, 1991). In this regard, it involves the finding of specific practical knowledge which is specific to that particular situation (Wallace, 1992; Greenwood and Levin, 2001; Walford, 2001; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). Hence, the idea of replication cannot apply to action research (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996) and does not involve the production of academic theory (Reason and Bradbury, 2001); instead, its aim is to understand rather than to predict (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996).

- **situational:** it is concerned with treating a problem in a particular situation and attempts to solve it in that situation (Walford, 2001; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Laws, 2003; Hermes and Zengerle, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999).
- **collaborative:** it demands some kind of co-operation or co-ordination between or among the participants of the research (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Anita, 1999; Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Bannigan, 2006).
- **participatory:** it involves individuals to participate and interact in the research process (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Gaventa and Cornwall, 2001; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999).

action research process (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Burns, 1999, 2005).

- **cyclic or loop process:** it is an ongoing or a recursive process which consists of a number of phases which occur in cycles where the researcher repeats the cycles until he/she finds a solution that satisfies him/her (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Zeichner, 2001; Chisholm, 2001; Martin, 2001; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Laws, 2003; Bannigan, 2006).
- **formative and summative evaluation:** it involves the making of immediate claims in the form of an ongoing evaluation, in each cycle, so as to check whether the researcher is on the line towards answering the research questions. Then, at the end of each cycle, summative evaluation is done and again the summative evaluation of one cycle can serve as the starting of another cycle (Johnson, 2002; Zeichner, 2001; Cohen and Manion, 1994; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996).
- **highly flexible:** it does not involve hard and fast methods; rather, it can easily be adapted in accordance with the specific setting in which it is conducted; that is, it is a loose, unorthodox or dynamic process (Johnson, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Burns, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Friedman, 2001).
- **involves no generalization:** because action research is concerned with the finding of solutions to specific problems in

- **emancipatory**: it involves equal participation of all individuals with no any hierarchy between or among them (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Reason and Bradbury, 2001).

2.4 Roles of Action Research

In educational context, action research has various roles; for instance, it results in teachers' professional development; that is, teachers' development in their practice (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000; McNiff, 2002; Zeichner, 2001; Johnson, 2002; Richards and Lockhart, 1994; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1992, 1998). It results in teachers' personal development; individual teacher's development of own profile (Garrido, et.al, 1999; Johnson, 2002). It increases teachers' self-esteem and self-confidence (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993). It empowers teachers to take control over their career (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Elliott, 1991; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Glanz, 1999; Hunt, 2005; Schostak, 1999). It increases their awareness of classroom matters (Zeichner, 2001; Hensen, 1996, cited in Johnson, 2002; Burns, 2005).

Action research also enables teachers to become agents of change (Hensen, 1996, cited in Johnson, 2002; Noffike and Zeichner, 1987, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). It helps them to be more flexible and open to new ideas (Oja and Smulyan, 1989, cited in Zeichner, 2001; Hensen, 1996 in Johnson, 2002). It supports them in coping up with the challenges and problems they face in their profession (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh 1993; Richards and Lockhart, 1994). In addition, it results in increased communication, collaboration and positive collegiality between or among teachers (Anita, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994; McNiff, 2002; Hunt, 2005).

It also results in interorganizational network (Chisholm, 2001; Cohen and Manion, 1994). It bridges the gap between theory and practice (Wallace, 1992, 1998; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Greenwood and Levin, 2001; Johnson, 2002). It democratizes research by bringing those who are usually the subjects of research to a position where they have equal rights and responsibilities in research process (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Hunt, 2005). It results in improvement and development of curriculum (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Elliott, 1991). It results in the innovation of new teaching methods by replacing the traditional ones (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; McNiff, 1993). It results in the collective development of the profession of teaching (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993). It makes important contribution to the advancement of educational research (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). It results in the overall improvement of the institution where participants are working (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Garrido, et. al, 1999; Glanz, 1999; McNiff, 2002).

2.5 Modes of Action Research

Action research can be conducted either individually or in collaboration with other people. In the case of education, it can be conducted by an individual teacher, group of teachers within the same institution, or a teacher or group of teachers with a researcher or researchers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Burns, 1999, Wallace, 1998; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). It can also be conducted by a teacher or teachers with individuals like advisers, sponsors (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), students (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1989), parents (Burns, 1999), administrators/principals (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998), colleagues in the same department,

colleagues outside the institution, colleagues with a different area of expertise, colleagues in other disciplines, and colleagues in other countries (Wallace, 1998).

From what has been said above, there are two main approaches of action research: the individual and the collaborative approach. Individual approach of action research does not involve any one else except the professional concerned (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Such approach of action research has advantages in that it is more flexible, less professionally risky and easier to implement (Wallace, 1998).

Unlike the individual approach, collaborative approach of action research involves combination of efforts from different people. This approach has various advantages; for example, it enhances motivation, saves time in that there can be allocation of tasks among members, empowers teachers (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999), enhances collegiality among the participants, breaks down teacher isolation (Burns, 1999), involves depth and breadth of the research; that is, the more the number of people involved in the action research project, the more data can be gathered in depth (in a single case study) and in coverage (several case studies)(Wallace, 1998) and this, in turn, can increase the validity, reliability and generalizability of the action research result(Wallace, 1998; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999).

In spite of these advantages, collaborative action research has certain limitations such as emergence of different and incompatible positions between or among the participants (Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1989), variation in commitment between or among the individuals in the groups (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Nunan 1989), difference in the level of status among the participants, and different work schedules in that

harmonization of time is difficult (Wallace, 1998). In order to avoid or minimize such problems, it is better to spend time to discuss about what is going to be done, the reason for doing the research, how to do the research, how much time is enough to accomplish the research, how often, when and where to meet (Wallace, 1998). It is recommended that action research is much more effective and productive if it is conducted in a collaborative manner (Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1989).

2.6 Steps in Action Research

There are several ways in which the steps in action research can be analyzed and different scholars suggest different number of steps to be accomplished while conducting the research. Some of them put these steps in an implicit manner whereas others put them in an explicit manner. In fact, because the process of action research is highly flexible (Burns, 1999) and the steps in action research process are meant to be a guideline (Johnson, 2002), different researchers can make their own interpretations of the appropriate steps to be followed and adapt them in accordance with the research topic or the existing situations (Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999), and there is no universally agreed order to the steps; that is, the researcher may skip a step or steps, rearranging their order or repeating a step or steps more than once (Johnson, 2002). The steps discussed below are presented based on the analysis made by Johnson (2002). His analysis of the steps is more or less similar to that of Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and Burns (1999), especially to Burns' (1999) analysis:

- **identification of the research problem:** this is to decide what to study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000; Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999). Usually, the research problem arises from the mismatch between theory and practice (Burns, 1999). The problem identified

should be redefined, evaluated and reformulated (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Johnson, 2002). This is a very open-ended phase of the action research process (Burns, 1999).

- **reviewing related literature:** this is setting the research problem in a theoretical context (Johnson, 2002). It involves examining or assessing what others have said in relation to the specified problem (Johnson, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994). Johnson (2002) suggested that revising related literature can be done either prior to data collection or along with reporting the data and making conclusions, or not to do the review literature at all in the action research process.
- **planning:** this is developing a plan for data collection and other appropriate research methods (Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999).
- **data collection:** at this stage, the procedures designed for data collection are put into practice (Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999). Johnson (2002) merged the data collection and data analysis processes into a single step from the idea that, as the researcher collects the data, he/she should analyze them by looking at themes and categories, but Burns (1999) suggested these activities to be accomplished as different steps. In fact, these scholars explained that the data collection at this stage is the beginning and it can proceed further in the research process.
- **reformulating the problem:** because action research is a dynamic and ever-changing process, reformulation of the research problem is possible as the researcher is collecting the data (Johnson, 2002).

- **organizing and analyzing the data:** this stage has already been started while the researcher is collecting the data, but this is the final step for the ongoing process (Johnson, 2002).
- **reporting:** this is presenting the whole research process and research findings (Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Burns (1999) presented this step in the form of three separate steps as reporting, writing and presenting, whereas Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) did not put it as a clear separate step except recommending that the action research process to be presented.
- **devising plan of action:** this is developing the action(s) to be taken based on the conclusion and recommendation that emanate from the findings of the whole research (Johnson, 2002). The researcher implements the action(s) and assesses what is happening or how effective the action(s) is/are, and based on the action(s), the action research cycle may or may not continue (Johnson, 2002). Ebbutt (1985), as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), stated that feedback, in the form of formative and summative evaluation, within and between each cycle of the action research process is very important.

2.7 Scope of Action Research

The situations where action research can be applied are very diverse; that is, it can be used in any setting where there is a problem associated with activities, people, institutions, and the like, and needs immediate change (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). It can be applied in areas like education (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 2005; Reason and Bradbury, 2006), social administration (Cohen

principals and supervisors in schools of the USA, and the movement was called “cooperative action research movement” (Zeichner, 2001). Coney (1949), cited in Walford (2001), and Corey (1953), cited in Zeichner (2001), argued that teachers can make better decisions if they conduct research. Similar to Lewin, Corey saw action research as a cyclic process (Zeichner, 2001). Even if he defined action research as a legitimate form of educational enquiry, Coney was unsuccessful in doing so (Zeichner, 2001; Burns, 1999) because action research was criticized for its inability to test hypothesis or to establish cause-and-effect relationships, its resistance to the basic techniques and procedures of research, and its lack of generalizability (Burns, 1999; Zeichner, 2001). The strongest argument against Corey’s argument for action research came from Hodgkinson (1957) and the proponents failed to defend the attack and resulted in the disappearance of action research from the USA until the 1980s (Burns, 1999; Zeichner, 2001).

2.8.2 Action Research Tradition in the UK

Following the decline of action research in the USA by the early 1960s, the idea of action research in education emerged in the UK in the context of school-based curriculum development (Zeichner, 2001; McNiff, 1993; Walford, 2001; Elliott, 1991; Burns, 1999).

According to McNiff (1993) and Zeichner (2001), two branches of action research movement developed at the same time. One branch was based at Centre for Applied Research in Education (CARE). At this centre, researchers developed a model to guide teacher-researchers when they carried out their research in their own classrooms (McNiff, 1993). The prominent figure for the establishment of this centre was Lawrence Stenhouse and, in fact, his successors like John Elliott (McNiff, 1993; Burns, 1999; Walford, 2001). Stenhouse (1975), as cited in Walford

Lawrence Stenhouse, John Elliott, Jack Whitehead, Jean McNiff, and Bridget Somekh were among the prominent figures for the emergence of educational action research in Britain (McNiff, 1993; Zeichner, 2001; Burns, 1999).

2.8.3 Action Research Tradition in Australia

There was also a participatory action research movement in Australia led by Stephen Kemmis, Robin McTaggart and their Australian colleagues (Zeichner, 2001). According to Grundy (1997), cited in Zeichner (2001), there were a number of political, social, and economic conditions that fostered the acceptability of the idea of teachers-as-researchers and producers of educational knowledge. In addition to the indigenous factors, the Australian educational action research was greatly influenced by and had close ties to the educational action research in Britain because Australian scholars like Stephen Kemmis spent time with John Elliott and his colleagues in the UK; however, the Australian movement developed its own practices and epistemology which distinguished it from the British movement (Zeichner, 2001).

2.8.4 Action Research Tradition in North America

In the 1980s, there was a new "teacher-as-researcher movement" in Canada, which was neither the derivative of the 1960s and 1970s collaborative British "teacher-as-researcher movement" nor the 1940s and 1950s co-operative USA "teacher-as-research movement" (Zeichner, 2001). This movement was supported by teachers' university colleagues and subject matter associations (Zeichner, 2001).

2.8.5 Action Research Tradition in Developing Countries

Educational action research has also developed in Africa, Latin America and Asia (Zeichner, 2001). This development could have a colonialist implication for the importation of action research models developed in the UK, the USA and Australia to these developing parts of the world, and arguments have been made about the importance of adapting external models or about developing indigenous models that can take into account the particular contexts in which the action research is used (Zeichner, 2001).

2.8.6 Action Research Tradition in Higher Education

According to Zeichner (2001) and Lincoln (2001), most of the action research traditions, mentioned above, have involved secondary school teachers. According to them, there has also been a growing tradition where college and university teachers have conducted their own research within the academy. Hence, in the 1990s, there has been a growing acceptance of action research as a method of self-study within colleges and universities, especially, among teacher-educators, and there was a tremendous growth in the publication of self-study research by teacher-educators (Zeichner, 2001).

2.9 Action Research in Teacher Education

Recently, there has been a growing tendency of action research focus in teacher education programs (McNiff, 1993; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; Maclellan, 1999; Nunan, 1989) from the idea that action research practice has different contributions in such contexts. Conducting action research in such programs enables teacher-educators to be aware of their own sense of the instructional process (McNiff, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Nunan, 1989), helps them to undertake their personal inquiries on

the learning of student-teachers who are in turn undertaking personal inquires since one's practice is generated by the other's (McNiff, 1993; Hermes and Zengerle, 1999; Johnson, 2002), helps them to integrate theory and practice (McNiff, 1993; Wallace, 1992; Rammani, 1987, cited in Nunan, 1989), enables them to develop their own theories of teaching, to gain more understanding of classroom, to make decision and use strategies for critical self-awareness and self-evaluation (Burns, 2004), helps them not only to prepare future teachers but also to continue to grow and develop as reflective practitioners (Curry, 2003).

It is also valuable for student-teachers in various ways in that it enables them to engage in academic discourses (Barnett, 1992, cited in Maclellan, 1999), enables them to transfer their learning from one situation to another related situation; hence, helps them to extend their experience of the real world (Maclellan, 1999), enables them to develop their own personalities (Hermes and Zengerle, 1999). Unlike the experienced teacher-educators who have subject area knowledge, learning theory, classroom management, pedagogical methods and other knowledge bases, student-teachers have shallow knowledge of these elements; action research enhances these knowledge bases by helping them to notice classroom issues which have not been previously noticed, to take information and make decisions quickly, and understand one thing thoroughly rather than many things partially at a time (Johnson, 2002). Through action research, student-teachers can be provided with a flexible means of professional development (Wallace, 1998). Involving them in action research redistributes power; and makes teacher-education program more relevant and goal oriented (Nunan, 1989). Moreover, action research helps student-teachers to develop their understanding of research methods (Burns, 2005).

Conducting action research in teacher-education programs is useful not only to educators and student-teachers but also to the profession (teacher education) and the institution as well. For example, it improves the overall teaching/learning process (Hermes and Zengerle, 1999; Johnson, 2002) and fosters the continued growth of the field of teacher education as a whole (Johnson, 2002). Action research is also an integral part of the development of the institution (Johnson, 2002; Curry, 2003).

2.10 Action Research in Language Teaching

The overview presented, in Section 2.8, above shows that action research has a relatively long history in education. However, as it is stated by Burns (1999, 2005), Nunan (1992) and Wallace (1992), its application in the field of language teaching is much more recent. The idea of involvement in action research by language teachers is in parallel with the growing interest in classroom-based research (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Burns, 2005; Van Lier, 1988) and learner-centered curriculum development (Burns, 2005). Nunan (1989) and Burns (1999, 2005) suggested that teachers are autonomous individuals in experimenting and developing curriculum through their own research work rather than servants of someone else's curriculum. Hence, language teachers' involvement in action research process provides a way to bridge the boundary between research and the language teaching profession because many research activities, conducted by outsiders to this profession, are not related to the professional concerns and interests of language teachers and their students (Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1989; Van Lier, 1988).

It also encourages language teachers to adapt a research orientation in their own classrooms and to engage in research in other projects (Nunan, 1989), enables language teacher-educators to become significant

instructional decision-makers, to guide their student-teachers in the process of generating and testing hypothesis, and helps student-teachers to become autonomous learners and researchers (Richards, 1990). However, in spite of the widespread advocacy of action research in literature, language teachers' extent of involvement is still limited (Burns, 1999, 2005) and little is known about how second language teachers view and carry out action research (Burns, 1999). Why is this so?

2.11 Common Barriers that Hinder Teachers from Conducting Action Research

In spite of the roles action research has, practitioners may not find it easy to conduct it in that there are a number of factors that impede them to participate easily. The barriers may be associated either with the practitioners themselves, the institution where practitioners are working, or other reasons. Different scholars suggest different factors which teacher-researchers encounter to conduct or while conducting action research; for instance, shortage of time (Johnson, 2002; Wallace, 1992, 1998; Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1989,1992; Crookes,1993; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993), lack of interest or motivation on the part of teachers (Walford, 2001; McNiff, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Wallace, 1992, 1998; Burns, 1999; Greenwood and Levin, 2001), problem of identifying the research area, especially teachers who are new to action research (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999; Nunan,1992), lack of research expertise (Friedman, 2001; Wallace, 1992, 1998; Nunan, 1989, 1992; Greenwood and Levin, 2001), difficulty of producing a written account of the research (Nunan, 1992; Friedman, 2001; Burns, 1999; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993), workload such as teaching many classes (McNiff, 1993; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan 1992).

There can also be incompatibility of ideas when action research is conducted by teachers and outside researchers in the case of collaborative action research because these two bodies have different orientations about academic settings especially classroom realities (Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), fear of reporting negative findings especially findings related to their work place (Nunan, 1992; Burns, 1999), disapproval of colleagues; that is, colleagues may deride teachers' attempts to investigate their classrooms by criticizing their effort as pointless (Burns, 1999), and lack of devotion on the part of teachers in the case of collaborative action research (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998).

Beginner teachers have a big difficulty to conduct action research because they have no rich stock of teaching experience from which they can consult alternative explanations of their practice; due to this lack of teaching experience, such teachers are usually dependent on sources like experienced teachers and readings other than themselves (MacLellan, 1999). There is also a feeling on the part of teachers in that they consider themselves as individuals having low status in the society, and powerless victims of the media and public opinion (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993). Due to this low self-esteem, they have low engagement in public venues on academic issues; that is, they internalize an attitude of passive citizenship and a culture of silence (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Wallace, 1998; Burns, 1999; McNiff, 1993; Nunan, 1989). They also regard conducting action research as the duty of other external academic researchers who have no knowledge and understanding about classroom situations; that is, they develop a sense of overdependence on external research experts (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Johnson, 2002).

There are also factors which are extrinsic to teachers but have a significant deterring influence on teachers' involvement in action research; for example, mismatch of the action research program with the setting of the action research (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Nunan, 1992; Burns, 1999; Crookes,1993), lack of resources such as finance, relevant books, incentives and other facilities like libraries and reading rooms (McNiff, 1993; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns,1999,2005; Nunan,1989,1992), and lack of opportunities to present their research findings; there is limited local support to publicize their findings (Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1989, 1992; Friedman,2001).

There can also be resistance from heads, principals or management bodies (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Garrido, et.al., 1999; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1992). Teachers may encounter active resistance from school and institutional administration even when they have the interest/motivation to conduct action research; for example, they are not given academic credits for conducting action research in a way other researchers are given (Jarvis, 1989 and Myers, 1985,cited in Burns, 1999), time is not set aside for their research activities, teachers' writing is not acknowledged for promotion purposes, and they are not given opportunities to conduct action research in large groups (Burns, 1999). Due to this management related problem, teachers reject the idea of conducting action research and they are heard saying " 'There is nothing that we can change. Everything is decided by the Ministry or the Inspectorate.' " (Wallace, 1998:23). Even, most educational institutions and administrations assume that teachers' professional development can be achieved through short-term trainings like in-service programs which are decided by administrators and are inefficient for such purposes as they do not promote immediate and critical changes in practice (Burns, 1999). In addition, teachers are considered, by administrative bodies,

and even they consider themselves as technicians whose job is to translate or implement others' curriculum decisions into practice, ignoring their role and capacity to inquire and explore their own practice (Burns, 1999). There is also temptation on the part of head teachers and classroom teachers about the possibility of change as a result of action research (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1992).

2.12 Possible Solutions to Barriers

In order to avoid at all, if possible, or minimize the constraints which practitioners encounter in conducting action research and enhance action research practice, some suggestions, as possible solutions, have been forwarded by a number of scholars. For instance, teachers need to have the commitment to devote time and effort (Walford, 2001; Garrido, et.al., 1999; Greenwood and Levin, 2001; Elliott, 1991) and change the attitude and behavior they have towards conducting action research (Johnson, 2002) so as to examine and achieve improvement in their own practice. They should not rely only on reading vicarious experiences as the main sources for their professional development because such kinds of experiences cannot enable them to develop deeper insights into their daily experiences; what is important is that they should develop their own theories of education from their own experiences by examining issues which they feel need improvement (Walford, 2001; McNiff, 1993). Teachers should also be open-minded and flexible to other people's comments (Walford, 2001; McNiff, 1993; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, 1988, cited in Burns, 1999).

Teachers' research will be successful if appropriately trained adviser or facilitator is available to them (Nunan, 1989, 1993) and teachers should be given adequate training about research methods of how to identify

problematic issues, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data, and presenting the result of the whole research (Nunan, 1993; Elliott, 1991). In case teachers are in short of time and other resources, and have a choice of research topics, then it is advisable if they choose one which can easily be handled with less expense of effort and resources (Wallace, 1998).

Educational authorities need to provide and arrange special time, finance, incentives, expertise and other necessary resources and materials for teachers in advance (McNiff, 1993; Cohen and Manion, 1994; Nunan, 1989, 1993; Wallace, 1998; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Elliott, 1991). This is because teachers' action research does not happen in its own accord in that it must be supported by the structure and personnel of each institution and the local authority and each teacher must do it and talk about it (McNiff, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999; Allwright and Bailey, 1991). Because teaching and educational enterprise as a whole is not the domination of one's will by other's, teacher-educators, students and administrators should not be taken as bodies existing on independent planes; there should be decentralized and mutual communication among them (McNiff, 1993). Teachers should also handle educational administrators sensitively and administrators need to understand that action research can play a role in teacher development, in giving teachers a renewed sense of purpose and direction (Allwright and Bailey, 1991). In addition, learners should also be handled sensitively so that they can play their own part and do not feel that research is being done on them rather than for them and with them (Allwright and Bailey, 1991).

Teachers and concerned bodies need to know that professional journals, workshops, conferences, and graduate courses are traditional ways of expanding teachers' knowledge but action research practice is the best

way to expand their knowledge base by linking theory and practice (Johnson, 2002). In this regard, they should be aware that action research could replace teacher in-service programs because in such approach of teacher development, teachers are gathered on a busy workshop to listen to someone to describe an approach or a methodology which is not related to teachers' real classroom situation (Johnson, 2002) and the idea that learning takes place only when a trainer stands in front of teachers and tells them things should be dispelled; what is important is to recognize and grant a value for teachers' action research which enhances learning which is more specific to each teacher's classroom situation and serves to improve teacher's professional status (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

In order for action research to be more successful, it should be carried out on collaborative bases because little can be achieved if one individual is involved in changing ideas and practices (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; McNiff, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1989, 1993; Allwright and Bailey, 1991). This form of action research is encouraged and emphasized because teachers' problems are shared with other teachers in the same school (Burns, 1999; Cohen and Manion, 1994), and it breaks down teacher isolation (Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998). This isolation break down can be achieved when teachers make use of colleagues', researchers' and other people's ideas, insights and findings, and in turn sharing their own ideas, insights and findings to others (Wallace, 1998). Collaborative action research can also result in dialogical communities which comprise teachers and their colleagues (Nunan, 1989; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; McNiff, 1993; Johnson, 2002; Wallace, 1998), teachers and other researchers (Nunan, 1989; Allwright and Bailey, 1991), teachers and administrators (Nunan, 1989; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), teachers and students (Nunan, 1989; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Cohen,

Manion and Morrison, 2000), teachers and parents, teachers and representative of the local community (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

In connection to collaboration, teachers are advised to form partnerships with researchers in universities and other research experts (Burns, 1999; Allwright and Bailey, 1991) because, according to Burns (1999), such relationships have considerable advantages; for example, unlike teachers, academic researchers are given time for research and have research expertise which can be shared with teachers, working with teachers brings academic researchers in a more closer in touch with classroom realities, it can minimize the problems and difficulties teachers may face during the research process by providing an accessible human resource and sources of research information, and it strengthens the dialectic between research and practice.

Professional or teacher networks are other mechanisms for establishing and sustaining a good organizational climate for action research practices (Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998). According to these scholars, teacher network is the formation of a linked community of practitioners who exchange skills and expertise and develop shared professional discourses. It can have various forms ranging from informal discussion between colleagues in the same institution to groups assigned by local, national and international professional associations, to formal networks where geographically and intrinsically dispersed teachers drawn to form a collective strength to support their own institution-based professional development (Candlin, 1996 in Burns, 1999). Like that of collaborative action research, it can promote research orientation by offering support in terms of human, knowledge, finance and other resources (Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998).

Finally, it is better if action research is disseminated or made public, and teachers need to be encouraged and they themselves need to do it (Walford, 2001; McNiff, 1993; Burns, 1999; Nunan, 1993; Wallace, 1998; Elliott, 1991).

2.13 Making Action Research Public

Everything in action research leads to a task in which the researcher discusses his/her findings and makes conclusions and recommendations based on the data collected (Johnson, 2002), and this is the final stage of the action research process (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993). In fact, this stage is followed by the plan describing the action to be taken by the researcher (Johnson, 2002). It is part of the action research discipline that invites corroboration or criticisms (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). Action research presentation or making action research public may not necessarily mean publishing in a journal (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996) and may vary in length and formality (Johnson, 2002).

Making action research public is situating the research in its context; that is, showing that the research is part of the real world and sharing the findings of the research with other people (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). It is an activity which is not necessarily left until the end of the action research project; it can also be done throughout the research process so as to check the researcher's perceptions about the outcomes and findings with other people in the intermediate level (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996). In presenting the research work to others, the researcher is saying that he/she is creating a new knowledge, and in doing so the researcher needs to consider to whom, how or in what way(s) he/she is going to present (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996).

2.13.1 Possible Audiences of Action Research Report

The possible audiences of action research report can be people in the organization and/or people outside the organization where the researcher is working. Audiences in the organization can include peers (McNiff, 1993; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996), the teacher-researcher himself/herself (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993), students (Johnson, 2002), heads, school boards, principals and administrators (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996).

The possible audiences of action research outside the school institution can include teachers in other schools (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993) as well as regional, branch and head office managers, continuing professional education organizers (McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996), the media (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993), researchers, course evaluators, parents, social and religious organizations in the local community (Johnson, 2002; Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993).

2.13.2 Ways of Presenting Action Research Report

Action research can be made public either in written or in oral form (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1996; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1989). Visual displays like diagrams, tables, videos, photographs, and the like can also be used as alternative ways to written or oral presentations or can be incorporated into written or oral forms to provide the audience a sense of direct access to the research context (Altrichter, Posch, Somekh, 1993; Johnson, 2002; McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead, 1993; Burns, 1999; Wallace, 1998; Nunan, 1989). Action research results can also be

presented in the form of exhibitions, computer networks (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993).

2.13.3 Advantages of Making Action Research Public

Why is there a need to make action research public? Making teachers' action research work public has many advantages to researcher(s), other people, the profession and the institution as well, for example, as Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993) mentioned, it prevents teachers' knowledge from being forgotten, increases the quality of reflection on practice, enables teachers to meet the requirements of professional accountability, enables them to play an active role in teacher professional development and initial teacher education, and enables them to reinforce their professional self-confidence; that is, by contributing professional knowledge base on educational matters and participating in public dialogue, they can raise their self-confidence and the status of the profession.

Johnson (2002) has also mentioned that presenting action research finding promotes conversation among the members of the institution and hence, can result in dialogical communities and smooth collegial relationships, helps students know what their teachers have been doing and what teachers found, helps parents know that teachers are always looking for the best situations to use in helping their children learn and grow, provides the local community and social gatherings with the latest trends in education and at the same time generates good public relation for the institution in which the teacher is working, and because educational decisions are usually made without considering the real classroom situation, it enables administrative bodies, at different levels, to make informed decisions. Similarly, McNiff, Lomax and Whitehead (1996) stated that it can help teachers express their feelings about the

process and progress of their inquiry, helps them listen questions from people who are outside the research and the questions may lead teachers to strengthen the convictions about the claims made, provides them with the opportunity to give their concerns to other people, creates friendship and collaboration with other people; that is, it creates networks.

Moreover, Johnson (2002) pointed out the special advantage of producing a written account of the action research in that it helps to clarify and organize teachers' thinking, maintains teaching license when there is a need for teachers to engage in some kind of periodic continuing education, documents teachers' development, and enables them to share their findings and ideas with others from a distance, particularly, if it is in academic journals. Likewise, Burns (1999) suggested that producing a written report of the action research process provides a record of the research for the teacher-researcher and other people, can serve as a reflective tool in the research process, offers a starting point for collaborative discussion, expands the collaborative base of action research by offering models and ideas to other teachers who wish to do action research, disseminates the research to a wide audience in the school and beyond the school, opens-up the research to feedback from others, provides a medium for developing personal theories of teaching, creates a sense of achievement, and provides a closure to the research.

2.14 Related Local Research Works

Cherie (2003) conducted a research on English language teachers' involvement in action research at Kotebe, Nazareth and Awasa Colleges of Teacher Education and he found that

- teachers' involvement in action research was insignificant;
- teachers had positive attitude towards conducting action research;
- lack of research skill and undermining the role of research as the most serious problems for teachers to conduct action research;and

- teachers emphasized relevant and adequate research courses to be given to them to enhance their research skills.

Wondu (2006) has also conducted a research on Addis Ababa secondary school English language teachers' involvement in action research and has come up with the following findings:

- teachers' involvement in action research was very limited;
- majority of teachers had no time and research skill to conduct action research;
- majority of teachers had no the interest to conduct action research in the future;
- majority of teachers did not take courses on action research and were not given training;
- teachers' working environments were not conducive to involve in action research; and
- teachers who conducted action research did presentations of their research findings.

Similarly, Aster (2004) conducted a research to assess factors that affect teachers, teaching at upper primary schools in Sidama zone, to carry out action research and she arrived at the following results:

- teachers had very little conscious effort to carry out action research;
- teachers' level of research competence was low;
- the availability of resources like books, journals, incentives and finance was limited;
- research courses which teachers have taken were not helpful to teachers to equip them with research skills; and
- teachers had shortage of time to conduct action research.

Likewise, Yibeltal (2006) conducted a research to assess factors that affect teachers to carry out action research (at Ambo General Secondary School) and he found heavy work load, poor library facilities, poor research culture, lack of incentives, lack of finance, lack of research knowledge, lack of recognition, lack of interest, and administration problem as the main factors affecting teachers' involvement in conducting action research.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive survey design was used because it would enable the researcher to get information about the current status of teachers' involvement in conducting action research. In fact, according to Burton (2000) and Best and Khan (1993), such kind of research design can also take into account past events as such events can have relations to the present situations.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study were English language teachers teaching at Debre Birhan and Debre Markos Colleges of Teacher Education. There were four Colleges of Teacher Education in Amhara Region; namely, Gonder, Dessie, Debre Birhan and Debre Markos Colleges of Teacher Education. Of these colleges, the two colleges were selected as research sites. Initially, the researcher wanted to conduct the research at Gonder and Debre Markos Colleges of Teacher Education. These colleges were selected by using systematic sampling technique. However, later on, the researcher changed one of the study sites, Gonder, to Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education because of financial constraint.

There were twenty English language teachers at the two colleges, eleven at Debre Markos College of Teacher Education and nine at Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education. Except for three teachers; two at Debre Markos and one at Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education, all the seventeen were taken as data sources. The three teachers were not present at the time of data gathering. One of the two teachers from Debre Markos College of Teacher Education went abroad whereas another one

was left due to maternity while the third one from Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education went out for teaching-practice observation for three weeks. The reason for taking all the available teachers was mainly due to the fact that their number was manageable enough; secondly, it was because of the fact that taking a large size sample can result in the finding of valid and reliable information (Collain, 1995; Best and Khan, 1993; Kumar, 1996; Laws, 2003; Asher, 1994; Bailey, 1994; Hird, 2003; Burton, 2000). Moreover, by using purposive sampling, English language department heads and academic and research vice deans in the two colleges were included in the study for the purpose of getting wider information.

3.2.2 Data Gathering Tools

The selection and use of appropriate data gathering tool in a given research depends on certain factors like the nature of the subject matter of the research, the nature of subjects or respondents of the study (Burton, 2000; Hird, 2003), and the availability of resources such as time and finance (Burton, 2000). Hence, taking such factors into account, the present researcher employed questionnaire, interview, and documentary analysis to gather information.

Three kinds of questionnaires were developed and administered; one questionnaire containing sixty-two items for teachers, the second containing twenty-nine items for department heads, and the third containing twenty-nine items for academic and research vice deans. Both close- and open-ended items were incorporated in each questionnaire. This was due to the fact that certain limitations related to closed-ended items can be compensated for by using open-ended items and vice versa. Each questionnaire was developed, administered, and collected by the investigator.

Interview was also used to gather information so as to substantiate the information obtained through the use of the questionnaire. Structured interview was used because it can provide uniform information to the investigator as it involves the use of pre-determined questions with the same wording and ordering of questions in the case of all respondents; that is, it involves the use of the same format or instrument for all interviewees (Kumar, 1996; Brewer, 2003; O'Leary and Dowds, 2003). Like that of the questionnaire, three kinds of structured interviews, one containing eight items for teachers, the second containing eight items for department heads, and the third containing eight items for academic and research vice deans, were constructed. A total of six teachers, three from each college, were interviewed. Each interview was conducted in a face-to-face manner. In this regard, the responses were taken in note-form. In fact, the researcher wanted to use audio-equipment but respondents resisted to give their responses in recorded form.

The researcher piloted the questionnaires to assess the clarity of instructions and items as well as the appropriateness of items so as to make necessary amendment(s), if any, on the instruments and, thus, increase their efficiency. Piloting was conducted at Nazareth College of Teacher Education. Necessary amendments were made on the questionnaires based on the feedback obtained in the pilot study. Then, the final copies were prepared and administered to the respondents of the actual study.

In addition to questionnaire and interview, documentary analysis was done in the two colleges to find out if there was any recorded or documented information about English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research. In this regard, the researcher made an assessment of documents in the Research and Publication as well as in the Higher Diploma Program Coordinating Office in each college.

Each data gathering tool, especially the questionnaires and the structured interview, were developed in accordance with the ideas assessed in the review of related literature and the research objectives.

3.2.3 Methods of Data Organization, Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathered were organized by using tables and analyzed by using quantitative and qualitative methods. Percentage as well as mean was used to analyze the quantitative data. The organization, analysis and interpretation of each datum were done simultaneously. Finally, based on the analyses and interpretations made, summary, conclusion and recommendations were given.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ORGANIZATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

As it is described in Section 3.2.3, in this part of the study, the data gathered are organized in tables, and analysis and interpretation are made immediately after the organization of each datum. The analyses are made by using quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data are analyzed by using percentage and mean. The qualitative data obtained through open-ended items of the three questionnaires, structured interviews and document analysis are presented in summarized form and analyzed in descriptive form along with the quantitative analyses of related questionnaire items.

Teachers' questionnaire had two sections. The first section contained three items focusing on teachers' background information and the second section contained sixty-two items designed to gather information to answer the basic research questions of the study.

In the first section, teachers were requested to provide information about their own profiles such as the college in which they were working, their qualification, and year of teaching experience. The information showing these profiles is presented in the following table.

Table 1: Teachers' Profile

College	Respondents									
	f	Qualification			Teaching experience in years					
		BA/BED	MA	PHD	< 5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-25	26-30
Debre Markos	9	8	1	-	1	2	1	2	1	2
Debre Birhan	8	3	5	-	2	-	2	1	2	1
Total	17	11	6	-	3	2	3	3	3	3

As it can be seen from the table, out of 17 respondent teachers, 8 (47.1%) of them were from Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education whereas 9 (52.9%) of them were from Debre Markos College of Teacher Education. Out of the total respondents, there were only 2 female teachers (11.6%), one in each college. In fact, in the questionnaire, teachers were not requested to provide their sex; however, later in the process of data gathering, the researcher found two female teachers among the respondent teachers. With regard to the teaching experience teachers had, it ranged from 2-29 years and in average 16.76 years. This indicates that 9 (52.9%) of them had a teaching experience greater than the average year of teaching experience. This in turn tends to imply that most of them had great deal of teaching experience which can have contributions on their extent of involvement in research and this is discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 14, 15 and 16. Concerning their qualification, 11 (64.7%) of them were first degree holders whereas 6 (35.3%) of them were second degree holders, and there was no teacher with a PHD degree. Like that of teaching experience, qualification can have its own contributions on the extent of involvement in research and this is also discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 12 and 13.

In the second section of the teachers' questionnaire, items were designed in categories with a focus on teachers' extent of action research participation, teachers' training and research competence, teachers' feelings about doing action research, modes of action research practised by teachers, nature of college administration and research resource availability, research finding presentation and items focusing on future directions. Each item category is presented in a single table followed by the analyses and interpretations made on it along with similar items from vice deans' and department heads' questionnaires in the following manner. In this regard, because the items incorporated in a single table

As it can be seen from the table, out of 17 respondent teachers, 8 (47.1%) of them were from Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education whereas 9 (52.9%) of them were from Debre Markos College of Teacher Education. Out of the total respondents, there were only 2 female teachers (11.6%), one in each college. In fact, in the questionnaire, teachers were not requested to provide their sex; however, later in the process of data gathering, the researcher found two female teachers among the respondent teachers. With regard to the teaching experience teachers had, it ranged from 2-29 years and in average 16.76 years. This indicates that 9 (52.9%) of them had a teaching experience greater than the average year of teaching experience. This in turn tends to imply that most of them had great deal of teaching experience which can have contributions on their extent of involvement in research and this is discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 14, 15 and 16. Concerning their qualification, 11 (64.7%) of them were first degree holders whereas 6 (35.3%) of them were second degree holders, and there was no teacher with a PHD degree. Like that of teaching experience, qualification can have its own contributions on the extent of involvement in research and this is also discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 12 and 13.

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are many in number, a single table is presented on more than one page in continuous manner.

Table 2: Teachers' Extent of Action Research Participation

N	Item	Teachers' responses									
		Yes		No		Total					
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
1	Have you ever been involved in conducting action research?	10	58.8	7	41.2	17	100				
2	If 'No' to Q.1, why not? Please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of training on how to conduct action research (2 teachers) • work load or over burden of routine activities (3 teachers) • lack of promotion for doing research (1 teacher) • time constraint(3 teachers) • lack of devotion (2 teachers) 									
3	If 'Yes' to Q.1, how often? Please specify the extent of your involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only once for the higher diploma program (5 teachers) • two times for the higher diploma program (3 teachers) • three times for the higher diploma program (2 teachers) <p>(one up to three action research works for the higher diploma program)</p>									
4	If 'Yes' to Q.1, for what purpose? (You can give more than one choice) A. improving the teaching-learning process B. development of curriculum C. promotion purpose D. enhancing college-community relationship	only A	A and B	A and C	only C	A, B and D	Total				
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
		5	50	1	10	2	20	1	10	1	10

As it can be seen from the table, out of 17 respondent teachers, 8 (47.1%) of them were from Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education whereas 9 (52.9%) of them were from Debre Markos College of Teacher Education. Out of the total respondents, there were only 2 female teachers (11.6%), one in each college. In fact, in the questionnaire, teachers were not requested to provide their sex; however, later in the process of data gathering, the researcher found two female teachers among the respondent teachers. With regard to the teaching experience teachers had, it ranged from 2-29 years and in average 16.76 years. This indicates that 9 (52.9%) of them had a teaching experience greater than the average year of teaching experience. This in turn tends to imply that most of them had great deal of teaching experience which can have contributions on their extent of involvement in research and this is discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 14, 15 and 16. Concerning their qualification, 11 (64.7%) of them were first degree holders whereas 6 (35.3%) of them were second degree holders, and there was no teacher with a PHD degree. Like that of teaching experience, qualification can have its own contributions on the extent of involvement in research and this is also discussed under Table 3 in the discussion of Items 12 and 13.

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		Yes		No		Total					
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
1	Have you ever been involved in conducting action research?	10	58.8	7	41.2	17	100				
2	If 'No' to Q.1, why not? Please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of training on how to conduct action research (2 teachers) • work load or over burden of routine activities (3 teachers) • lack of promotion for doing research (1 teacher) • time constraint(3 teachers) • lack of devotion (2 teachers) 									
3	If 'Yes' to Q.1, how often? Please specify the extent of your involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only once for the higher diploma program (5 teachers) • two times for the higher diploma program (3 teachers) • three times for the higher diploma program (2 teachers) <p>(one up to three action research works for the higher diploma program)</p>									
4	If 'Yes' to Q.1, for what purpose? (You can give more than one choice) A. improving the teaching-learning process B. development of curriculum C. promotion purpose D. enhancing college-community relationship	only A	A and B	A and C	only C	A, B and D	Total				
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
		5	50	1	10	2	20	1	10	1	10

5	If you have conducted a research, does your pervious experience have an impact on your current involvement in conducting action research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		12	70.5	5	29.4	17	100
6	If 'Yes' to Q.5, how? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helped to conduct other researches without any difficulty (4 teachers) helped to differentiate between conventional and action research (2 teachers) gave confidence and research skills (2 teachers) helped to be familiar with research methods and techniques (4 teachers) 					
7	Were there occasions you planned but failed to conduct action research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		7	41.2	10	58.8	17	100
8	If 'Yes' to Q.7, why? Please explain the reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> because of administrative work and teaching load (2 teachers) because of unplanned activities which interfere with regular activities (3 teachers) because of time constraint due to routine activities (4 teachers) lack of insufficient incentives (2 teachers) 					

Table 2 shows the items focusing on teachers' extent of action research practice and the responses given by them as well as academic and research vice deans, and English language department heads. As it can be seen from the table, out of 17 teachers, 10 (58.8%) of them were involved in conducting action research whereas 7 (41.2%) of them were not involved in conducting action research (please refer to Item 1). When they were further asked to explain their reasons, those who were not involved suggested lack of adequate training on how to conduct action research, shortage of time, work load due to over burden of routine activities, lack of promotion for doing research, and lack of devotion as

the main constraints impeding them to conduct action research (please refer to Item 2). In relation to teachers' extent of involvement, academic and research vice deans and department heads, all replied that teachers were not involved in conducting action research (please refer to Item 1 of Appendices II and III). They reasoned out that shortage of time, work load, and lack of action research skill as the main constraints for teachers (please refer to Item 2 of Appendices II and III).

In order to cross-check the issue, an interview was presented to teachers, academic and research vice deans, and department heads. To the interview conducted to teachers (please refer to Item 1 of Appendix IV) about the extent of their involvement in conducting action research, some of the interviewed teachers replied that they were not involved because of their hesitation on the outcome of action research, shortage of time, work load and lack of adequate research skill whereas others said that they were involved in doing action research but only for the fulfillment of the requirements of the higher diploma. Similarly, academic and research vice deans and department heads were interviewed about the issue (please refer to Item 1 of Appendices V and VI). One of the deans and the two department heads replied that English language teachers were involved only in conventional research but not in action research. Deans and department heads also explained that English language teachers were involved in doing action research in the higher diploma program which was being given to teachers in the colleges for 9-10 months.

In connection to teachers' extent of involvement in doing action research, teachers, academic and research vice deans, and department heads were also asked a question about the major problems which English language teachers encountered to conduct action research (please refer to Item 6 of Appendices IV, V and VI). The interviewed teachers explained that

among the main problems they encountered were lack of commitment on the part of teachers, work load, time constraint, and lack of adequate action research skill. Academic and research vice deans also stressed that time constraint, workload and lack of adequate action research competence as the main problems for English language teachers. Similarly, department heads explained that work load due to routine activities, and insufficient incentives for teachers as the main problems for teachers.

When those teachers who were involved in action research were further asked about how often they were involved, some replied that they were involved only once, others replied twice whereas others replied three times (please refer to Item 3). Still, these teachers explained that they did the action research in the higher diploma program (please refer to Item 3) and they did their action research projects on various issues as their responses to Item 4 indicate. Because they were requested to choose more than once, some of them gave more than one answer to this item (Item 4). Hence, out of 10 teachers, 5 (50%) of them replied that the purpose of their action research was to improve the teaching-learning process, 1 teacher replied that the purpose of his/her action research was to improve the teaching-learning process and development of curriculum, 2 teachers (20%) replied that the purpose of their action research was to improve the teaching-learning process and for promotion, 1 teacher replied that the purpose of his/her action research was for promotion, and the remaining 1 teacher replied that the purpose of his/her action research was to improve the teaching-learning process, development of curriculum and enhancing college-community relationship. This implies that almost all of them (90%) did their action research projects for the purpose of improving the teaching-learning process.

From the overall information stated above, it can be said that English language teachers were not deliberately involved in doing action research but only in the higher diploma training program to fulfill the requirements of the program. This lack of involvement was found to be associated with different problems such as time constraint, work load, lack of adequate action research skill, lack of commitment, and hesitation on the outcome of action research. In fact, these are among the constraints, suggested by different scholars, which teacher-researchers commonly encounter to conduct or when conducting research (please refer to Section 2.11). Local researchers like Cherie (2003), Wonda (2006), Aster (2004) and Yibeltal (2006) also found out lack of adequate research skill as a major problem for teachers (please refer to Section 2.14). In addition, Aster (2004) and Wonda (2006) pointed out shortage of time, and Yibeltal (2006) found out work load as major constraints for teachers to conduct action research (please refer to Section 2.14).

With regard to the impact of having research experience on their current involvement in conducting research, out of 17 teachers, 12 (70.6%) of them confirmed that research experience was useful for their research involvement whereas the remaining 5 (29.4%) replied that previous research experience had no any impact on their research involvement (please refer to Item 5). Those teachers who replied that research experience was useful were further asked about how helpful it was and they suggested that it was helpful in familiarizing them with research methods and techniques, in giving them confidence, in differentiating different kinds of research; for example, conventional and action research, and in making the research process easier (please refer to Item 6). This implies that previous research experience has a positive impact on one's current involvement in research and this in turn tends to reflect

With regard to the overall research competence English language teachers had, academic and research vice deans, and department heads replied that they had research skills (please refer to Item 3 and 4 of Appendices II and III) but in the interview conducted to them (please refer to Item 3 of Appendices V and VI), they stressed that English language teachers had better competence in conventional research than in action research. One of the deans added that it was for this reason that action research training is given to teachers in the higher diploma program as one component of the program.

The overall information stated above tends to imply that majority of English language teachers took research courses which were relevant to them. They also got the chance to participate in research training program even if the program was not frequent. Moreover, they were found to have good research competence not in action research but in conventional research.

Table 4: Teachers' Feelings about Doing Action Research

N	Item	Teachers' responses					
		Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
19	Do you have the interest in conducting action research?	15	88.24	2	11.76	17	100
20	If 'Yes', what is/are the source(s) of your interest?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • solving the problems in the teaching-learning process (11 teachers) • the training in which teachers participate (2 teachers) • getting promotion (2 teachers) • enhancing professional development (2 teachers) 					
21	If 'No', why not? please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because the results of previous research works were not put into practice (2 teachers) 					
22	Have you the commitment to conduct action research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		11	64.7	6	35.3	17	100

23	If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of action research skill (6 teachers) • work load, time constraint in that duties such as practicum, module preparation, continuous assessment, involving in different committee and others make teachers busy (7 teachers) 					
24	Do you have the confidence to conduct action research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		14	82.35	3	17.65	17	100
25	If 'Yes', what do you think the source(s) is/are?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the teaching experience (7 teachers) • the skill acquired from the training in the higher diploma program (6 teachers) • attending research presentation (1 teacher) 					
26	If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of adequate research skills (3 teachers) • lack of sufficient time and work load (2 teachers) 					
27	Do you believe that conducting research is the duty of other research experts but not of teachers?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		17	100	-	-	17	100

In Table 4, information about English language teachers' feelings about doing action research is presented. It shows the items and the corresponding responses given by teachers. As it can be seen from the table, teachers were asked about whether they had the interest in conducting action research or not (please refer to Item 19). Out of all respondents, 15 (88.24%) replied that they had the interest but the rest 2 (11.76%) replied that they had no the interest in conducting action research. When those teachers who had the interest were further asked about what the sources of their interest were, they explained solving the problems that exist in the teaching-learning process, the training in

which they participated, getting promotion, enhancing professional development, and finding new information as the main sources of interest (please refer to Item 20). On the other hand, the two teachers mentioned that they had no the interest in conducting action research because the results of previously conducted research work were not put into practice (please refer to Item 21). From this, it can be deduced that majority of English language teachers were found to have the interest in conducting action research and this is found to contradict with the idea suggested by different scholars (please refer to Section 2.11) and Wondu (2006) in that one problem of teachers in conducting action research is lack of interest; however, Cherie (2003) found out that English language teachers had the interest in conducting action research (please refer to Section 2.14).

Regarding the commitment English language teachers had in conducting action research, out of all respondents, 11 (64.7%) replied that they had the commitment whereas 6 (35.3%) had no the commitment to conduct action research (please refer to Item 22). When they were further asked to justify their reason, those teachers who had no the commitment to conduct action research explained that lack of action research skill, work load, and time constraint in that duties such as practicum, module preparation, continuous assessment, involving in different committee tasks as the main reasons for their lack of commitment (please refer to Item 23). This tends to reflect that the majority of English language teachers had the commitment to conduct action research; however, the information found in the discussion under Table 1 implies that one major problem for English language teachers was lack of commitment.

Teachers were also asked whether they had the confidence to conduct action research or not (please refer to Item 24). Out of the total respondents, 14 (82.35%) replied that they had the confidence but 3

(17.65%) had no the confidence to conduct action research. Those who had the confidence mentioned that the teaching experience they had, the skills acquired from the training in the higher diploma program, and attending research presentation programs as the sources of their confidence (please refer to Item 25). However, those who had no the confidence pointed out that lack of sufficient time, work load, and lack of adequate action research skill as reasons for their lack of confidence (please refer to Item 26). This implies that majority of English language teachers had the confidence to conduct action research.

Finally, in relation to their perception about doing action research, English language teachers were asked their belief about who the responsible body; that is, is that teachers or other research experts, for conducting research (please refer to Item 27). All of them replied that teachers are responsible but not of other researchers in conducting research to solve problems in their own area.

From all the information stated above, it can be said that majority of English language teachers were found to have the interest, commitment, and confidence to conduct action research. Teachers were also found to have the understanding that it is they who are appropriate and responsible in solving problems in their own area.

Table 5: Modes of Action Research Practised by Teachers

N	Item	Teachers' Responses									
		A		B		C		D		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
28	How have you done your action research? A. individually B. in collaboration with other people C. in both ways (A and B) D. not at all	-	-	5	29.4	5	29.4	7	41.2	17	100

29	If 'individually', why? Please explain your reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it gives freedom to do the research in one's own time and interest the problem is the researcher's own (1 teacher for each case) 											
30	If in 'collaboration', with whom? (You can indicate more than one choice) A. with teachers in your department B. with teachers in other departments C. with administrative bodies D. with students E. with other academic researchers	A		B		C		D		E		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
		9	90	1	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	100
31	If in 'collaboration', what benefit(s) have you got in your collaboration with others in conducting your research? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing experience and research skill (7 teachers) saving time (4 teachers) sharing of roles, support(6 teachers) the research process becomes easier (3 teachers) developing confidence (1 teacher) saving resources (1 teacher) 											
32	If in 'collaboration', what problem(s) have you encountered? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> arguments among the participants on a given issue (2 teachers) mismatch of timetable (6 teachers) lack of equal participation (6 teachers) 											
33	Is there any research coordinating body or group established to run research activities?	Yes		No		Total							
		f	%	f	%	f	%						
		17	100	-	-	17	100						
34	If 'Yes', how helpful is it to teachers to get involved in research activities? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> it follows up research activities (6 teachers) selects research topics and invites teachers to select, develop proposal and do research on topics in which they are interested (3 teachers) invites teachers to do research on any topic they like (3 teachers) arranges research symposium (6 teachers) provides stationery materials, and other kinds of awards for those who did good research (5 teachers) 											

In the above table, information about the modes of action research commonly practised by English language teachers is presented. As it is depicted in the table, out of 10 teachers who did action research, 5 (50%) of them did their action research in collaboration whereas the rest (50%) of them did individually as well as in collaboration with other people (please refer to Item 28). In this regard, those who were not involved in doing action research (41.2%) replied that they did not do at all (choice D). This is in fact what was found in their response to Item 1 under Table 1. This implies that all the 10 teachers participated in collaborative action research. Those teachers who did action research individually reasoned out that this mode of action research gave them freedom to do the research in their own timetable, interest and on their own problems (please refer to Item 29). Out of those teachers who did their action research collaboratively, 9(90%) of them replied that they did their research in collaboration with teachers in their department whereas only 1 replied that he/she did her/his action research with teachers in other departments, and none of them did action research in collaboration with administrators, students and other researchers (please refer to Item 30). The reason why they did not conduct action research with these individuals might be because they did their action research for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the higher diploma program where students, other research experts and administrators might not be involved in the program together with teachers: however, conducting action research in collaboration with research experts is suggested to have various advantages to teachers as well as the research they conduct (please refer to Section 2.12) and involving students in action research is also suggested to have many advantages to student-teachers (please refer to Sections 2.9 and 2.10).

Those teachers who did their action research in collaboration suggested some advantages which they got from their participation in collaborative

action research (please refer to Item 31). Among the benefits they got, saving time, sharing of roles, supporting each other, saving resources, developing confidence, getting the research process easier and sharing of experience and research skill were the main ones. However, when they were asked to explain if there were problems they encountered in doing their action research in collaboration, they suggested arguments among participants on a given issue, mismatch of timetable and lack of equal participation as the main problems (please refer to Item 32).

From what is stated above, one can say that collaborative action research was more practiced than individual action research among teachers, in this case in the higher diploma program.

Concerning about whether there was a research coordinating body or not, all the respondent teachers (100%) confirmed that there was research coordinating body in each college (please refer to Item 33). Academic and research vice deans and department heads also confirmed that there was a research coordinating body in each college (please refer to Items 8 and 10 of Appendices II and III). When they were asked how the research coordinating body was helpful to them in their research activities, teachers pointed out that it was helpful in following up research activities, in selecting research topics and inviting them to select, develop proposal and do research on topics in which they were interested, in inviting teachers to conduct research on any topic they liked, in arranging research symposium for research work presentation and discussion, and in providing stationery materials and other kinds of awards to those who did good research work (please refer to Item 34). In fact, two teachers pointed out that the research coordinating body was not that much helpful. In the same way, academic and research vice deans and department heads pointed out the different roles of the research coordinating body of which the main ones include motivating

teachers to conduct research, providing teachers with stationery materials, arranging research symposiums, and providing teachers with different research topics (please refer to Item 9 of Appendices II and III).

In this regard, the investigator made interviews with the Head of the Research and Publication Office at each college, mainly about the role of the office. According to the Head of the Research and Publication Office at Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education, the office was established before 49 years. According to him, when the college was at a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) level, it was called research committee but later when the institute was developed into a college level, the office has got its name as research and publication office. According to him, the office had different roles; for example, motivating teachers to participate in research activities, providing teachers with different research topics (the researcher also observed eight research topics posted on the board of the office inviting teachers to select and conduct research), arranging research symposium where selected, usually three best research works, were presented, inviting the college community to attend research symposium, inviting communities of other colleges to attend and even to present their research works in the research symposium, selecting three best research works and sending them to the regional education bureau for presentation and publication, publishing best research works in the college research journal, maintaining strong relation and coordination with the higher diploma program office and making discussions with the office on the issue of giving training teachers, and sometimes giving training to teachers in cooperation with the higher diploma program coordinators. He also explained that there is a kind of research networking with other colleges like Adama, Dessie, Debre Markos, Gonder, Abiy Addi Colleges of Teacher Education, and college of education of Addis Ababa University (the researcher also observed copies of letters sent from some of these colleges posted on the notice board of

the office inviting the college members to attend seminars of research presentations). Finally, when the investigator asked him on which type of research teachers were highly involved, he replied that teachers were involved in conventional research but no teacher from any of the departments was involved in conducting action research.

Similarly, an interview was conducted with the Head of the Research and Publication Office at Debre Markos College of Teacher Education about the establishment and roles of the office. According to the head of the office, it was established before three years and it had different roles in facilitating research activities; for instance, motivating teachers to participate in research, providing research topics to teachers, requesting teachers to submit research topics, developing proposal and conducting research on any topic, arranging research symposium, selecting three best research works for presentation, sending best research works to education bureau for presentation and publication, giving rewards to teachers who did good research, providing assistance to those teachers who conducted research in the nearby schools and working in link with nearby schools, other regional Colleges of Teacher Education and with governmental and non-governmental organizations. He also explained that, except in the higher diploma program, no teacher was involved in conducting action research. According to him, one reason might be because the regional education bureau officials were highly interested in the presence of extensive review of related literature in a given research work and the officials used this as one of the criteria for selecting research papers for presentation and publication at a regional level.

In connection to the above issue, the investigator also made contacts with the Higher Diploma Program Coordinators in each college to have some information about the program. According to them, the main objective of the program was to empower teachers in continuous

assessment, active learning, general teaching methodology and action research areas. According to the coordinators, teachers were given training on how to implement these areas of the teaching-learning process. With the particular case of action research, teachers were given theoretical ideas and then they were expected to produce practical action research project works so as to fulfill the requirements of the program. In this regard, teachers could do their projects either individually or in groups but mostly in groups. The coordinators explained that a single higher diploma training program lasts 9-10 months.

Finally, with the permission of the Research and Publication, and the Higher Diploma Program Heads, the investigator made an assessment on the research works done by teachers but no action research work was found in the Research and Publication Offices except conventional ones; however, he found papers of action research submitted to the Higher Diploma Program Coordinators' Offices.

The above information indicates that there was a Research and Publication Office facilitating research activities in many ways in each college and the Research and Publication Office in each college was found forming a kind of research networking with other institutions, which in turn enhances and strengthens the extent and advancement of research activities conducted at individual or institutional level, and many scholars suggest such kind of networking to exist for various advantages (please refer to Section 2.12). In addition, the Higher Diploma Program Office in each college was also playing an important role; for example, in giving training to teachers and working in cooperation with Research and Publication Offices on research issues.

Table 6: The Nature of College Administration and Research Resource Availability

N	Item	Teachers' Responses					
		Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
35	Do you think that the college administration including your department, are supportive of teachers' involvement in research?	13	76.47	4	23.53	17	100
36	If 'Yes', in what way(s)? Please specify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provides finance even if not sufficient (4 teachers) • provides materials used for research activity (8 teachers) • provides services like computer and secretarial (2 teachers) • provides incentives even if not sufficient (3 teachers) • provides printing service (2 teachers) • provides moral support (3 teachers) 					
37	If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because the administrative bodies are busy with extra work; hence, they do not give due attention to the effectiveness of research activities (1 teacher) • because research issues are mostly left to the research and publication office (1 teacher) 					
38	Is there any financial provision, by the college or any other higher body, for the purpose of conducting research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		15	88.24	2	11.76	17	100
39	Is/Are there library(ies) equipped with the necessary, relevant research reference materials?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		7	41.2	10	58.8	17	100
40	Are there facilities like internet service, computer service, staff room, enough offices, and the like which can enhance teachers' research activities?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		16	94.1	1	5.9	17	100
41	Have you ever been given incentives in response to your action research work?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		6	35.3	11	64.7	17	100
42	If 'No', why not? Please specify the reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • because the research was done for the higher diploma program (2 teachers) • because the research was not selected as one of the best three research works (1 teacher) 					

43	Do you have enough time to conduct action research?	Yes		No		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
		4	23.5	13	76.47	17	100

44	How many periods do you teach per week? _____periods.	9-12	13-16	17-20
		periods	periods	periods
		13	1	3

In Table 6, information about the nature of college administration towards research activities and research resource availability is presented. As it can be seen from the table, 13 (76.47%) of teachers replied that the college administration was supportive and positive to teachers' involvement in research whereas 4(23.53%) replied that the college administration was not supportive (please refer to Item 35). When those teachers who replied that the college was supportive were further asked how helpful the college was, they suggested that the college provided finance even if not sufficient, provided materials especially stationery materials, provided secretarial service, provided computer access, provided incentives even if not sufficient, and provided moral support to teacher-researchers (please refer to Item 36). On the other hand, those teachers who replied that the college was not supportive reasoned out that the administrative bodies were busy with extra work; hence, they did not give due attention to research activities, and they left the duty to the research and publication office (please refer to Item 37).

In connection to administration, teachers were interviewed whether the college administration was supportive or not (please refer to Item 4 of Appendix IV). The interviewed teachers replied that the college in which they were working was positive to research issues in that it provided them with stationery materials, secretarial service, and awards in the form of material and finance to those who did good research works. Similarly, academic and research vice deans and department heads in

each college were interviewed about whether the college/department was supportive to teachers' research activities or not (please refer to Item 4 of Appendices V and VI). They replied that the college was supportive in that teacher-researchers were provided with free access of computer, secretarial services, stationery materials, it provided awards in the form of certificates, money, gold and other materials like stationery for good teacher-researchers as incentives. From what is stated above, it can be deduced that the administration in each college was found to be supportive to teachers' involvement in research activities.

Regarding the availability of finance for research purpose, 15 (88.24%) of teachers replied that finance was available for research activities whereas 2 (11.76%) of them replied that there was no (please refer to Item 38). In fact, teachers in their response to Item 36 above noted that the amount of finance allocated for research purpose was not sufficient. In relation to financial provision, academic and research vice deans replied that there was financial provision for research purpose (please refer to Item 11 of Appendices II and III) but department heads replied that there was no finance allocated for research purpose (please refer to Item 11 of Appendices II and III). Department heads reasoned out that enough amount of budget was not usually allocated for research purpose either from the higher bodies like education bureau or from the colleges themselves (please refer to Item 12 of Appendices II and III). This tends to imply that even if the amount allocated was not sufficient, there was financial provision for research purpose.

Concerning whether there was library equipped with the necessary and relevant research reference materials or not, 7(41.2%) of teachers replied that there was whereas 10 (58.8%) of them replied that there was no library equipped with the necessary and relevant reference materials (please refer to Item 39). With regard to the availability of other research

facilities like internet and computer access, staffrooms, and enough offices, 16 (94.1%) of teachers replied that there were but 1 of them replied that there were no such facilities (please refer to Item 40). In relation to the availability of such facilities, academic and research vice deans and department heads replied that such facilities were available to teacher-researchers (please refer to Items 13 and 14 of Appendices II and III). From this information, it can be said that research facilities such as computer services, internet accesses, staffrooms and offices were available to teachers which is found to be in contradiction with the idea suggested by different scholars (please refer to Section 2.11) and Aster (2004) that lack of such resources is a common constraint of teacher-researchers to conduct research; however, libraries were found to be not well-equipped with necessary and relevant reference research materials. Different scholars also explain lack of good library facility as one of the problems teacher-researchers encounter to conduct research (please refer to Section 2.11). Similarly, local researchers Aster (2004) and Yibeltal (2006) found out such problem for teacher-researchers (please refer to Section 2.14).

With regard to the provision of incentives in response to teachers' research activities, 6 (35.3%) of teachers replied that there were incentives but 11 (64.7%) of them replied that there were no incentives given to teachers (please refer to Item 41). Some of those teachers who were not given incentives pointed out that they did their action research in the higher diploma program and others explained that their research work was not selected as one of the three best research works to be presented in the research symposium, conventional research in this case, as reasons why they were not given incentives (please refer to Item 42). As it is stated above, in their response to Item 36, Item 8 of Table 1 and Item 23 of Table 4, teachers explained that even if incentives were given to teachers who did good research works, incentives were not

sufficient. In relation to this, deans and department heads replied that teacher-researchers were provided with incentives (please refer to Items 15 and 17 of Appendices II and III) and the incentives were financial and material forms (please refer to Item 16 of Appendices II and III and their responses to the interview of Item 4 of Appendices V and VI). In fact, department heads in their response to the interview about the problems which English language teachers encounter (please refer to Item 6 of Appendix V, discussed under Table 1) explained that incentives were not sufficient. This implies that teacher-researchers who did good research works were provided with incentives in finance as well as in material forms but the given incentives were found to be insufficient.

In connection to administration and resource availability, teachers were asked whether they had enough time to conduct action research or not (please refer to Item 43). Out of 17 respondent teachers, 4 (23.53%) of them replied that they had time but 13 (76.47%) of them replied that they had no time to conduct action research, and 13 (76.47%) replied that their weekly teaching load had a negative impact whereas 4 (23.53%) of them replied that their weekly teaching load had no impact on their involvement in conducting action research (please refer to Item 45). The number of periods pointed out by teachers ranged from 9-22, and in average 12.6 periods per week (please refer to Item 44) and these periods were only for the weekly regular classes which were not in fact as such to be exaggerated to hinder teachers from conducting research and were normal to carry out along with research but the reason for time constraint or work load might be due to unplanned routine activities as it was explained by teachers and administrators themselves in the above discussions. Concerning about the arrangement of special time and teaching load for teacher-researchers, academic and research vice deans admitted this task as the responsibility of the department (please refer Items 18,19 and 20 of Appendices II and III); however, department heads

replied that the department could not make special arrangement of time and teaching load for teacher-researchers (please refer to Items 18 and 20 of Appendices II and III) because there was shortage of manpower and at the same time other teachers were not willing to share their colleagues' teaching loads (please refer to Items 19 and 21 of Appendices II and III). The information stated with regard to teachers' weekly time and load tends to reflect that even if their weekly teaching loads cannot be exaggerated, teachers were found to have time constraint to conduct action research. This time constraint was due to over load of unplanned daily activities.

In general, from what is stated above concerning administration and research resource availability, the administration of each college was found to be supportive to teachers' research activities in many ways. The availability of certain research resources and facilities was also found to be encouraging except that libraries were not well-equipped with necessary and relevant research materials, the incentives and finance provided were not sufficient, and a big problem of time constraint on the part of teachers due to routine activities.

Table 7: Research Finding Presentation

N	Item	Teachers' responses									
		Yes		No		Total					
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
46	Have you ever presented your research findings?	10	58.8	7	41.2	17		100			
47	If 'No', why not? please explain the reason(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • did not conduct research (5 teachers) • the research was not selected as one of the best three research works (2 teachers) 									
48	If 'Yes' to Q.46, to whom (You can indicate more than one choice) A. your department colleagues B. administrators C. students D. experts (research) E. people outside the college	only A		B and D		A,B, D and E		only E		Total	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
		3	30	1	10	1	10	-	-	6	60
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to the higher diploma program candidates (4 teachers) 									

49	If 'Yes' to Q.46, in what venue/setting have you presented your finding(s)? (You can give note than one choice) A. department meetings B. academic commission meetings C. college meetings D. public meetings If any other, please specify	only A		only B		only C		only D		Total		
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
		2	20	-	-	4	40	-	-	6	60	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at meetings of different schools (1 teacher) at the workshop of 'woreda' teachers (1 teacher) at the training in the higher diploma program(3 teachers) 										
50	If 'Yes' to Q.46, have you been provided with facilities by the college or the department for your presentation?	Yes				No				Total		
		f		%		f		%		f		%
		10		100		-		-		10		100
51	If 'No' to Q.50, why not? Please explain the reason(s)	-										
52	If 'Yes' to Q.46, what benefit(s) have you got from your presentation(s)? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> financial reward (3 teachers) stationery materials (2 teachers) higher diploma (1 teacher) promotion (1 teacher) constructive suggestions and comments (5 teachers) 										
53	If 'Yes' to Q.46, who motivated you to present your research work? (you can give more than one choice) A. your colleagues B. the department head C. deans of the college D. other people like researchers If any, please specify	A		B		A,B,C and D		Total				
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
		3	30	1	100	1	10	5	50			
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the research and publication office (5 teachers) the higher diploma program coordinator (3 teachers) 										
54	If 'Yes' to Q.46, what motivated you to present your research work? Please explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> finishing the higher diploma program (1 teacher) sharing research findings to others (1 teacher) getting comments on the research (1teacher) 										
55	Have you ever attended research presentations made by others?	Yes				No				Total		
		f		%		f		%		f		%
		14		82.35		3		17.65		17		100

56	If 'Yes' to Q.55, what benefit(s) have you got? Please specify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sharing experience (12 teachers) • getting information on how research is conducted (10 teachers) • getting solutions to some problems in the teaching-learning process (3 teachers)
57	If 'No' to Q.55, why not? Please explain the reason(s)	-

In Table 7, information about the extent of teachers' research result presentation is depicted. As it can be seen from the table, 10 (58.8%) of teacher respondents presented their research findings whereas 7 (41.2%) did not present (please refer to Item 46). Some of those teachers who did not present reasoned out that they did not do so because they did not conduct research, and others explained that the research they conducted was not selected as one of the three best research works (refer to Item 47). In connection to teachers' result presentation, academic and research vice deans and department heads replied that teachers presented their research findings (please refer to Items 22 and 23 of Appendices II and III).

When those teachers who presented their research were further asked to whom they presented, out of 10 teachers, 6 of them made choices of the given alternatives to Item 48. In this regard, teachers were given the chance to choose more than one choice to Item 48; hence, 3 (30%) of them presented their findings to their department colleagues, 1 of them presented his/her findings to administrators and research experts, 1 of them presented his/her findings to people outside the college, and the other 1 presented his/her findings to his/her department colleagues, administrators, research experts, and people outside of the college (please refer to Item 48). The remaining four teachers (40%) replied that they presented their findings to the higher diploma program candidates (please refer to Item 48).

Regarding the settings where they presented their research findings (please refer to Item 49), out of 6 teachers who chose from the given alternatives, 2(20%) of them presented their findings in departmental meetings whereas 4(40%) of them presented their findings in college meetings. The remaining four teachers who did not choose from the given choices of Item 49 explained that they presented their research findings at meetings of different schools, at the workshop of 'woreda' teachers and at the training in the higher diploma program (please refer to Item 49). In connection to research presentation settings, academic and research vice deans, and one of the department heads replied that English language teachers presented their research findings at college meetings whereas the other department head replied that they presented their findings at departmental meetings (please refer to Item 24 of Appendices II and III). Concerning the provision of facilities for teachers' research finding presentation, by the college/ department, all the teachers replied that they were provided with facilities (please refer to Items 50 and 51). In relation to this, academic and research vice deans, and department heads also replied that presenters were provided with facilities (please refer to Items 25 and 26 of Appendices II and III). They explained that the college arranged research symposium, provided them with materials like computers and overhead projectors (please refer to Item 27 of Appendices II and III).

Concerning the benefits they got from presenting their research findings, teachers explained that they got financial and material rewards, promotion, constructive comments and suggestion from the discussions made during the presentation (please refer to Item 52). When those teachers who presented their findings were further asked about who motivated them to present, half (50%) of them made a choice of the given alternatives to Item 53 and out of these, 3 (30%) replied that their colleagues motivated them, 1 of them replied that his/her colleagues,

department heads, deans of the college, department heads, deans of the college and other researchers, and the other (1 of them) replied his/her department head motivated him/her to present research findings (please refer to Item 53). Other teachers who did not choose from the given alternatives of Item 53 explained that the research and publication office, and the higher diploma program coordinators motivated them to do so (please refer to Item 53).

When they were again asked about what motivated them to present their research findings, teachers who presented their research explained that finishing the higher diploma program, sharing research findings to other people, and getting comments from other people motivated them to present their research findings (please refer to Item 54).

The information stated above indicates that majority of teachers were found to present their research findings in different settings to different audience. In doing so, they were provided with facilities for their presentations by the college/department, there were internal and external factors which motivated them to present their research findings, and the presentations they made were beneficial to them in many ways. In connection to this, different scholars suggest research findings to be presented to other people in that various benefits can be obtained (please refer to Section 2.13). The local researcher, Wondu (2006), has also found out that teachers who conducted research did presentations of their research findings (please refer to Section 2.14).

In relation to research presentation, teachers were also asked about whether they had the habit of attending research presentations made by other people or not (please refer to Item 55). Out of the total respondents, 14 (82.35%) replied that they attended whereas 31(17.65%) did not attend research presentations made by other people. When those who

Concerning the measures to be taken so as to enhance English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research (please refer to Item 61), they suggested that teaching load and other routine activities to be minimized for those teachers who want to conduct research, research fund to be allocated in sufficient amount, incentives and rewards given to researchers to be sufficient, research results to be put into practice, frequent training programs to be arranged, teachers not to expect others to solve their problems, teachers to have deep interest and commitment to conduct action research, there to have a clear and a definite plan for research activities in an academic year, action research not to be conducted only for the sake of promotion, extra-curricular activities not to be too much so that the teaching-learning process and research activities will not be affected (please refer to Item 61).

Similarly, teachers, academic and research vice deans, and department heads were interviewed about what to be done on the part of teachers and administrative bodies in order to enhance English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research (please refer to Item 8 of Appendices IV, V and VI). The interviewed teachers suggested that awareness should be given to teachers about the significance of action research, teachers should be committed, and frequent training programs should be arranged. Likewise, academic and research vice deans suggested that commitment is expected on the part of teachers and teachers should be aware of the fact that conducting research is part of their career. Department heads also suggested that adequate training should be given to teachers, promotion in the form of academic rank and salary increment should be given to them because teachers resisted to conduct research since they knew that their academic rank and salary would not increase even if they conducted research, publication of research works should be enhanced, research symposiums at college and regional level should be frequently arranged, and teachers should have

the commitment to conduct action research even if they were busy. Majority of the points suggested above are also suggested by different scholars (please refer to Section 2.12) as solutions to enhance teachers' involvement in research activities.

In teachers' questionnaire, teachers were requested to add whether there was any additional important point but not included in the questionnaire or not; however, none of them add a point (please refer to Item 62).

In order to check how much focus was given to action research in discussions that took place in meetings like departmental and college meetings, teachers, deans and department heads were interviewed about whether the issue of action research was raised or not (please refer to Item 5 of Appendices IV, V and VI). The interviewed teachers replied that the issue of action research was raised in department meetings especially towards the beginning of each semester but it was not that much practical. Academic and research vice deans also explained that action research was raised in their meetings. One of them suggested that active learning, continuous assessment and action research were the frequent agenda in academic commission meetings. Department heads also explained that action research was raised in their departmental meetings; however, one of the heads stressed that discussing about continuous assessment took the highest time in each meeting. This indicates that action research was raised in meetings but it seems that due attention was not given to its practicality.

Academic and research vice deans and department heads were also interviewed about the trend of English language teachers' extent of involvement in conducting action research (please refer to Item 7 of Appendices V and VI). They replied that there was no improvement; it was as it has been in the past.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The main objective of the study was to find out the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research with particular reference to teachers teaching at Colleges of Teacher Education in Amhara Region. In order to achieve this objective, the following basic research questions were raised:

- what is the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research?
- are there factors that hinder or enhance their involvement in conducting action research?
- what is their attitude towards conducting action research?
- have they the competence to conduct action research?
- what future steps should be taken to promote and popularize their involvement in conducting action research?

In order to answer these questions, relevant data were gathered from data sources. A total of seventeen English language teachers, nine from Debre Markos and eight from Debre Birhan Colleges of Teachers Education, were used as the main sources of data. In addition, academic and research vice deans, and English language department heads, in the two colleges, were included in the study so as to get wider information.

Questionnaire, structured interview, and documentary analysis were used to gather information. Three kinds of questionnaires were developed and administered. The questionnaire for teachers had sixty-two items whereas the questionnaires for vice deans and department heads, each had twenty-nine items. Both close-and open-ended items were incorporated in each questionnaire. Interview and documentary analysis

were also used to gather data to supplement the data gathered through the use of questionnaires. Three kinds of structured interview were used. Each structured interview had eight items. A total of six teachers, three from each college, were interviewed.

The data gathered were organized by using tables and the analysis was done by both quantitative and qualitative methods. Percentage and mean were used to analyze the quantitative data whereas descriptive analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data, and interpretation was made on each analysis.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the analyses and interpretations made on the data, the following results were found:

- **Teachers' training and research competence:** it was found out that majority of teachers took courses related to research in different educational programs and the courses they took were relevant in equipping them with research skill. Concerning their training, majority of them participated in in-service training programs but only in the Higher Diploma Program which was given for 9 to 10 months for a single round training. Teachers were also found to have better research competence in conventional research; however, their competence in the case of action research was found to be low and this was one of the reasons why training about action research was given as one component of the higher diploma program.
- **Teachers' feelings:** majority of them had the interest in conducting action research and factors such as solving

problems in the teaching-learning process, getting promotion, enhancing professional development, and the training in which they participated were among the main sources of their interest. Even if majority of them were found to have the commitment to conduct action research, lack of commitment on the part of teachers was frequently suggested by respondents (teachers, deans and department heads) as one of the hindering factors for teachers to conduct action research. Teachers also had the confidence to conduct action research. The teaching experience they had, the training given to them, and their attending research finding presentations were among the main sources of their confidence. In connection to perception, all teachers had the understanding that it is they who are appropriate and responsible for solving problems in their own context.

- **College administration and research resource availability:** the administration of each college was supportive and positive to research activities. In connection to administration, there was provision of finance and incentives even if not sufficient, computer access, internet access, stationery materials, secretarial service, printing service, moral support from each college for teachers' research activities. Even, administrative bodies participated in research activities which tends to reflect the open nature of the college administration to research activities.
- **Research finding presentation:** it was found out that teachers presented their research findings in different settings to different audience. Internal and external factors motivated them to do so. They got benefits such as getting promotion, getting

rewards, getting constructive comments and suggestions from their presentation. They also had the habit of attending others' research finding presentations which was also beneficial to them in sharing experience and developing confidence.

- **Constraints teachers encountered:** shortage of time, work load especially due to over burden of unplanned activities, and lack of adequate action research skill were sever problems hampering teachers from conducting action research. In addition, hesitation on the outcome of action research on the part of teachers, lack of promotion for doing research, lack of commitment on the part of teachers, insufficient provision of finance and incentives, and lack of library facilities with regard to necessary and relevant research reference materials were also found out to be constraints teachers encountered to conduct action research.
- **Facilitating factors:** the supportive and open nature of college administration to research activities, the training they got from the Higher Diploma, the Research and Publication Office, the research finding presentations made in the research symposium, their level of qualification, and their research and teaching experience were among the motivating factors for teachers to conduct action research.
- **Teachers' overall extent of action research involvement:** none of the teachers were involved in conducting action research deliberately; that is, they had no conscious effort to conduct action research and the extent of their involvement showed no improvement since the past; however, in the Higher

Diploma Program, teachers who got the chance for training in the program conducted action research but only for the purpose fulfilling the requirements of the program.

- In relation to the mode of action research practised by teachers, collaborative action research was more practised than individual action research by those teachers who did action research in the Higher Diploma Program and the collaboration was among themselves.
- There was a Research and Publication Office motivating teachers and facilitating teachers' research activities in different ways in each college. In connection to this, a kind of research networking existed between the colleges and other institutions. There was also a Higher Diploma Program Coordinating Office, in each college, playing an important role in giving training to teachers.
- **Future directions:** all the teachers were found to have the intention to conduct action research in the future. Different factors motivated them to do so; for instance, solving problems that exist in the teaching-learning process, the open and supportive nature of college administration, enhancing their research skill, getting promotion, and the discussions made during research finding presentations.

In order to enhance teachers' extent of action research involvement in the future, minimizing teaching load and other routine activities for those teachers who want to conduct research, allocating sufficient amount of finance and giving

sufficient incentives, putting research results into practice, arranging frequent training programs, developing deep interest and commitment on the part of teachers, avoiding the belief of expecting others to solve problems, devising definite and clear plans for research activities in academic years, arranging frequent research symposiums at college and regional level, enhancing publication of research works, considering action research as part of their career, and giving promotion to those teachers who did research in the form of academic rank and salary increment were among the solutions suggested by teachers, vice deans and department heads.

5.3 Recommendation

Based on the results found, the following measures are suggested to be taken:

- like that of the Higher Diploma Program, it would be better if additional training programs are arranged frequently in order to enhance teachers' awareness about action research and upgrade their action research competence so that their confidence will be much more reinforced to conduct action research;
- there should be pre-planning of the activities that are to be carried out in a year; even in a semester or in a month term. In doing so, there can be a possibility of carrying out each activity as per its plan in that one activity will not overlap over the other when it is implemented;
- because time constraint, work load, and lack of adequate action research skill were found to be among the main constraints which teachers faced to conduct action research, it would be better if teachers conduct their action research collaboratively

because it can avoid, if possible, or minimize these and other related constraints;

- finally, the investigator would like to suggest further research to be conducted at a regional level on the four Colleges or at a national level on Colleges of Teacher Education so that full information can be found about the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research.

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Appendix I
Addis Ababa University
Institute of Language Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Program)

Questionnaire for English Language Teachers

Dear Respondent;

The study is designed to investigate the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research with particular reference to English Language Teachers teaching at colleges of teacher education in Amhara Region. It is conducted for the partial fulfillment of the Master's of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The information obtained from you through the use of this questionnaire is of great importance for the success of the present study. Therefore, the researcher requests your genuine response to all the questions hereunder. You do not need to write your name on any of the pages.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and patience.

General Direction: Give your responses to the questions given under each section as per the instructions given.

Section 1: Background information

Instruction: For questions 1 and 3, fill in your answer in the blank space, and for question 2, put a tick (✓) mark in the appropriate box.

1. Name of your college: _____
2. Your current qualification: BA/BED MA PHD
3. Your teaching experience: _____ years

Section 2: Close-and open-ended questions

Instruction: Provide your answer by circling your appropriate choice.

For those questions that demand your explanation, give your answer in the blank spaces provided.

Questions related to the extent of action research participation

1. Have you ever been involved in conducting action research?

- A. Yes B. No

2. If your answer to Q.1 is 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s) _____

3. If 'Yes' to Q.1, how often? Please specify the extent of your involvement

4. If 'Yes' to Q.1, what was the purpose of your research? (You can give more than one choice)

- A. improving the teaching-learning process
- B. development of curriculum
- C. promotion purpose
- D. enhancing college-community relationship

If any other, please specify

5. If you have conducted a research, does your previous experience have an impact on your current involvement in conducting action research?

- A. Yes B. No

6. If your answer to Q.5 is 'Yes', how? Please explain _____

7. Were there occasions when you planned but failed to conduct action research? A. Yes B. No

8. If your answer to Q.7 is 'Yes', why? Please specify the reason(s)

Questions related to research competence and training

9. Have you taken any research course, especially courses related to action research? A. Yes B. No

10. If 'Yes' to Q.9, have you got them helpful in equipping you with the necessary research skills? A. Yes B. No

11. In what way(s) have you taken them? (You can give more than one choice)

A. in your pre-service education program

B. in your post-graduate education program

C. in the form of in-service programs like workshops, seminars, and the like

If any other, please specify _____

12. Do you think that your level of qualification can have an impact on the extent of your involvement in conducting action research?

A. Yes

B. No

13. If 'Yes' to Q.12, how? Please explain

14. Do you think that your teaching experience can have an impact on the extent of your involvement in conducting action research?

A. Yes

B. No

15. If 'Yes', how? Please explain _____

16. If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)

17. Have you ever participated in any in-service training programs like workshop, seminars, and the like to update your research skill?

A. Yes

B. No

18. If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)

Questions related to teachers' feelings

19. Do you have the interest in conducting action research?

A. Yes

B. No

20. If 'Yes', what is/are the source(s) of your interest? Please explain

21. If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)

22. Have you the commitment to conduct action research?

A. Yes

B. No

23. If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)

24. Do you have the confidence to conduct action research?

A. Yes

B. No

25. If 'Yes', what do you think the source(s) is/are?

26. If 'No', why not? Please explain your reason(s)

27. Do you believe that conducting research is the duty of other research experts but not of teachers? A. Yes B. No

Questions related to modes of action research practice

28. How have you done your action research?

A. individually

B. in collaboration with other people

C. in both ways (A and B)

D. not at all

29. If 'individually', why? Please explain your reason(s)

30. If 'in collaboration', with whom? (You can indicate more than one choice)

A. with teachers in your department

B. with teachers in other departments

C. with administrative bodies

D. with students

E. with other academic researchers

If any other, please specify _____

31. If in 'collaboration', what benefit(s) have you got in your collaboration with others in conducting your research? Please explain _____

32. If in 'collaboration', what problem(s) have you encountered in conducting action research? Please explain _____

33. Is there any research coordinating body or group established to run research activities? A. Yes B. No

34. If 'Yes', how helpful is it to teachers to get involved in research activities? Please explain _____

Questions related to administration and resource availability

35. Do you think that the college administration, including your department, are supportive of teachers' involvement in conducting action research?

A. Yes

B. No

36. If 'Yes', in what way(s)? Please specify _____

If any other, please specify _____

31. If in 'collaboration', what benefit(s) have you got in your collaboration with others in conducting your research? Please explain _____

32. If in 'collaboration', what problem(s) have you encountered in conducting action research? Please explain _____

33. Is there any research coordinating body or group established to run research activities? A. Yes B. No

34. If 'Yes', how helpful is it to teachers to get involved in research activities? Please explain _____

Questions related to administration and resource availability

35. Do you think that the college administration, including your department, are supportive of teachers' involvement in conducting action research?

A. Yes

B. No

36. If 'Yes', in what way(s)? Please specify _____

37. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s) _____

38. Is there any financial provision, by the college or any other higher body, for the purpose of conducting research?

A. Yes B. No

39. Is/Are the library (ies) equipped with the necessary, relevant research reference materials? A. Yes B. No

40. Are there facilities like internet service, computer service, staff rooms, enough offices, and the like which can enhance teachers' research activities?

A. Yes B. No

41. Have you ever been given incentives in response to your research work? A. Yes B. No

42. If 'No', why not? Please specify the reason(s) _____

43. Do you have enough time to conduct action research?

A. Yes B. No

44. How many periods do you teach per week? _____ periods.

45. Does your weekly teaching load have an impact on your involvement in doing action research? A. Yes B. No

Questions related to research result presentation

46. Have you ever presented your research findings?

A. Yes B. No

47. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

48. If 'Yes' to Q.46, to whom? (You can indicate more than one choice)

- A. your department colleagues
- B. administrators
- C. students
- D. experts (research)
- E. people outside of the college

If any other, please specify _____

49. If 'Yes' to Q.46, in what venue/setting have you presented your finding(s)? (You can give more than one choice)

- A. department meetings
- B. academic commission meetings
- C. college meetings
- D. public meetings

If any other, please specify _____

50. If 'Yes' to Q.46, have you been provided with facilities by the college or the department for your presentation?

- A. Yes
- B. No

51. If 'No' to Q.50, why not? Please explain the reason(s)?

52. If 'Yes' to Q.46, what benefit(s) have you got from your presentation(s)? Please explain

53. If 'Yes' to Q.46, who motivated you to present your research work?
(You can give more than one choice)

- A. your colleagues
- B. the department head
- C. deans of the college
- D. other people like researchers

If any other, please specify _____

54. If 'Yes' to Q.46, what motivated you to present your research work?
Please explain _____

55. Have you ever attended research presentations made by others?

- A. Yes
- B. No

56. If 'Yes' to Q.55, what benefit(s) have you got? Please specify

57. If 'No' to Q.55, why not? Please explain the reason(s)

Questions related to future directions

58. Do you have a plan to conduct action research in the future?

- A. Yes
- B. No

59. If 'No', why not? Please specify the reason(s)

60. If 'Yes', what initiates you? Please explain _____

61. What do you suggest to be done to enhance English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research?

62. Any other very important point not included in here. Please specify _____

Appendix II
Addis Ababa University
Institute of Language Studies
Department of Foreign Languages and Literature
(Graduate Program)

Questionnaire for English Language Department Heads

Dear Respondent;

The study is designed to investigate the extent of English language teachers' involvement in conducting action research with particular reference to English language teachers teaching at colleges of teacher education in Amhara Region. It is conducted for the partial fulfillment of the Master's of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). The information obtained from you through the use of this questionnaire is of great importance for the success of the present study. Therefore, the researcher requests your genuine response to all the questions hereunder. You do not need to write your name on any of the pages.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation and patience.

Instruction: Provide your answer by circling your appropriate choice. For those questions that demand further explanation, give your answer in the blank spaces provided.

1. Do teachers in your department get actively involve in doing action research?

A. Yes

B. No

2. If 'No', why not? Please specify the reason(s)

3. Do you think that teachers in your department have adequate research skills?

A. Yes

B. No

4. If 'No', what do you think the reason(s) is/are? Please specify _____

5. Have English language teachers been given training to update their research competence? A. Yes B. No

6. If 'Yes', how often? Please specify _____

7. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

8. Is there any research coordinating body in the department/college?

A. Yes

B. No

9. If 'Yes', what is/are its role(s) in facilitating research activities in the department/college? Please explain _____

10. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

11. Does the department/college allocate enough amount of money for research purposes? A. Yes B. No

12. If 'No', what do you think the reason(s) is/are? Please specify _____

13. Does the department/college provide materials and services like books, computer, internet, adequately equipped library sufficiently for easy access to teachers for their research activities?

A. Yes

B. No

14. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

15. Does the department/college give incentives to initiate teachers for their research work?

A. Yes

B. No

16. If 'Yes', what kind(s)? _____

17. If 'No', why not? Please explain _____

18. Does the department/college arrange special time for teachers when they are involved in research activities?

A. Yes

B. No

19. If 'No', why not? Please specify your reason(s)

20. Does the department/college make special arrangement of work load (teaching load) for teachers when they conduct action research?

A. Yes

B. No

21. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

22. Have English language teachers ever presented/made public/ their research findings?

- A. Yes B. No

23. If 'No', why not? Please explain _____

24. If 'Yes', in what kind(s) of venues? (You can give more than one choice)

- A. in department meetings
- B. in academic commission meetings
- C. in college meetings
- D. in public meetings

If any other, please specify _____

25. Does the department/college provide presenters with facilities?

- A. Yes B. No

26. If 'No', why not? Please specify _____

27. If 'Yes', what kinds? Please specify

28. Have you ever been involved in any research activity?

- A. Yes B. No

29. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

3. Do you think that English language teachers have adequate research skills?

A. Yes

B. No

4. If 'No', what do you think the reason(s) is/are? Please specify _____

5. Have English language teachers been given training to update their research competence? A. Yes B. No

6. If 'Yes', how often? Please specify _____

7. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

8. Is there any research coordinating body in the college?

A. Yes

B. No

9. If 'Yes', what is/are its role(s) in facilitating research activities in the college? Please explain _____

10. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

11. Does the college allocate enough amount of money for research purposes? A. Yes B. No

12. If 'No', what do you think the reason(s) is/are? Please specify _____

13. Does the college provide materials and services like books, computer, internet, well-equipped library for easy access to English language teachers for their research activities?

A. Yes

B. No

14. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

15. Does the college give incentives to initiate English language teachers for their research work?

A. Yes

B. No

16. If 'Yes', what kind(s)? _____

17. If 'No', why not? Please explain _____

18. Does the college arrange special time for English language teachers when they are involved in research activities?

A. Yes

B. No

19. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

20. Does the college make special arrangement of work load (teaching load) for English language teachers when they conduct action research?

A. Yes

B. No

21. If 'No', why not? Please specify your reason(s)

22. Have English language teachers ever presented/made public their research findings?

- A. Yes B. No

23. If 'No', why not? Please explain _____

24. If 'Yes', in what kind(s) of venues/settings? (You can give more than one choice)

- A. in department meetings
B. in academic commission meetings
C. in college meetings
D. in public meetings

If any other, please specify _____

25. Does the college provide presenters with facilities?

- A. Yes B. No

26. If 'No', why not? Please specify

27. If 'Yes', what kinds? Please specify

28. Have you ever been involved in any research activity?

- A. Yes B. No

29. If 'No', why not? Please explain the reason(s)

