

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Department of Special Needs Education

**Practices of Special Needs Education Teachers in Teaching Sign Language to
Deaf Students the case of North Showa Zone of Amhara Region**

BY: Aynie Belete

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Deaf Students the case of North Showa Zone of Amhara Region**

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**This Thesis is submitted to the Department of Special Needs Education in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for MA Degree in Special Needs
Education**

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	i
Table of contents-----	ii
List of Tables-----	v
Abbreviations/Acronyms.....	vi
Abstract.....	vii
CHAPTER ONE	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Back ground of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	5
1.3 Objectives.....	6
1.3.1 General Objective of the Study.....	6
1.3.2 Specific objectives of the Study.....	7
1.4 Significance of the Study	7
1.5 Delimitation of the Study	7
1.6 Limitation of the Study.....	8
1.7 Definition:.....	8
CHAPTER TWO	
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	
2.1. Deafness and Sign Language.....	9
2.1.1 Brief Historical Background and Concept of Deaf Education.....	9
2.1. 2. Brief Historical Background and Concept of Sign Language.....	11
2.2 Instructional Contents of Sign Language	13
2.3 Methods of instruction and mode of communication in deaf education	15
2.3.1 Mode of Communication in Deaf Education.....	15
2.3.2. Methods of Instruction in Teaching Sign language to Deaf Students	16
2.3.2.1 Bilingual/Bicultural Method in Teaching Sign Language	17
2.3.2.2 Signing Naturally in Teaching Sign language	18
2.4. Instructional Materials Use in Teaching Sign language	19
2.5 Support of Teacher Training for SNE Teachers	20
CHAPTER THREE	24
Research design and methodology	24
3.1 The Research Design.....	24

3.2 Research Site	25
3.3 Study Population.....	25
3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques	25
3.5 Instruments for Data Collection.....	26
1. Questionnaire.....	27
2. Observation	28
3. Focus Group Discussion	29
3.6 The Reliability and Validity of the Items	29
3.7 Procedures of Data Collection	30
3.8. Methods of data analysis	31
3.9 Ethical Considerations	32
CHAPTER FOUR	33
Result	33
4.1. Demographic Characteristics of SNE Teachers.....	33
4.2 presentation and analysis	34
4.2 .1 Instructional Contents of Sign language in Special needs Unit of Primary Schools.....	35
4.2.2. Instructional Strategies in Teaching Sign Language.....	39
4.2.2.1 Sign language taught as a subject in different grade level of education.....	39
4.2.2.2 Singing system SNE teachers use in teaching Sign language to deaf students.....	40
4.2.2.3 Mode of communication in teaching Sign language	41
4.2.2.4 Active learning methods in teaching Sign Language.....	42
4.2.3. availability of adapted educational material in teaching sign language	43
CHAPTER FIVE	51
DISCUSSION	51
5.1. Instructional contents of Sign language in teaching deaf students in special needs units of primary schools	51
5.2 Instructional Strategies of Sign Language in Teaching Deaf Students in Special Needs Units of Primary Schools	52
5.3 Availability of Adapted Educational Materials in Teaching Sign language.....	54
5.4 Support of CTE Training for SNE Teachers in Teaching Sign language.....	55
CHAPTER SIX	57
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	57
6.1 Summary	57
6.2 Conclusion	58
6.3 Recommendations	58

List of Table

Table 1: Description of SNE teachers' by sex, experience, and qualification, level of education and Hearing situation _____	33
Table 2: Instructional contents of sign language _____	35
Table 3: Grade level of ETHSL _____	39
Table 4: Availability of adapted educational material _____	43
Table 5: Performance level of SNE teachers _____	46
Table 6 : Gender difference in knowledge and skill in Sign language _____	50

Chart

Chart 1: Singing system _____	40
Chart 2: Mode of communication _____	41
Chart 3- Active learning Methods _____	42

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess the practices of SNE teachers in teaching Sign Language to deaf students. To conduct the study, descriptive survey method was employed. The study was conducted in special needs units of primary schools in North Shoa Zone of Amhara Region. Among the 66 special needs unit of primary schools found in the Zone, 35 of them were selected through cluster sampling technique as sample schools. The main instrument of data collection was questionnaire. Four basic questions focusing on the instructional contents, the types of instructional strategies, the availability of adapted educational materials and CTE's training support in teaching Sign Language were formulated. Frequency, percentage, mean and t-test were utilized to analyse quantitative data gained through the questionnaire. The qualitative data gathered through FGD and observation were by narration. The finding of the study revealed that the basic contents of Sign Language were missing from the major linguistic part of the (curriculum). Despite the presence of such as Ethiopian finger spelling, American Sign Language finger spelling and number sign and sign vocabulary. With regard to SNE teachers' use of the instructional strategies, the result of the study indicated that Signed Amharic signing system was found to be the dominant instructional strategy. Moreover, absence of Sign Language text book and teachers' guide, SNE teachers' inability to teach Sign Language as a subject and as a medium of instruction, inadequate training support by CTE's were investigated as major problems in teaching Sign Language in the sample schools. A strict analysis of the result reveals that SNE teachers to improve and strength their knowledge and skills of teaching Sign Language to deaf students. Finally, recommendation were forwarded based on the major finding so as to minimizing problems encountered and maximizing the provision of quality Sign Language education.

Key words: Sign Language

Abbreviations/Acronyms

SNE Special Needs Education

UNESCO United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CRPD United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

USAID United States Agency for International Development

MOE Ministry of Education

FDRE Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

ASL American Sign Language

CTE College of Teachers' Education

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Back ground of the study

According to Cummins (2000), communication is at the core of everything human beings do. In line with this, the California Department of Education (1996), stated that the effective development, understanding, and expression of language are essential to any educational practice and are particularly vital for deaf children.

Moreover, language instruction to deaf children requires the highest level of capability at the earliest age levels in order to improve neural plasticity providing the child the best opportunity to develop age suitable language development (Fitzgerald & Associates of the Ministry of Education, (2010). In the light of this, Easter brooks & Stephenson (2006), stated that learning a first language such as Sign language with regular exposure to skilled primary language simulations has been identified as one of the best practices in supporting literacy development among deaf children.

According to Gregory (1996), evidence supports the use of a bilingual educational approach that supports the use of a learner's primary language to develop skills in the learner's secondary language even though the curriculum has various objectives beyond just language development .Since using a learner's primary language in instruction demands conceptual understanding through joining the gap between the learner's experiences and the process of learning (Vicar, 2003). It is important to explore how the bilingualism approach could be generalized to other school learning objectives/subjects. Smith (2010) indicated that a lack of consistent instructional approaches and an inadequate exposure to a learner's primary language has led to hindered language development and an inadequate capacity in interpreting abstract content.

In addition to this, Tangs, Lam, Lee, & Chan (2004) stated that natural Sign language could be a stronger, supporting language for deaf children development of cognitive, conversational and social skills; and more significantly, for the development of reading and writing skills in a spoken language. Today many linguists have accepted the importance of mother tongue in assisting the learning of a second language. Several studies such as (Cummins, 2000; Drasgow, 1998, Easter brooks & Stephenson, 2006), have shown that learning of a mother tongue assists learning of literacy skills in the second language.

According to Wakumelo & Miti (2010), deaf children learn Sign language by learning ideas in Sign language and not using spoken languages used by the community they live in. This is especially the case for deaf students born of hearing parents since they are disadvantaged of any form of language during the most critical phase of language development. In fact, they need a longer time to learn their natural language to compensate for the period when they had no access to any significant language which they were supposed to use in making concepts. Other countries such as Sweden have accepted this need and have included Sign language as a subject (Chupina, 2006).

Moreover, UNESCO (2009) indicated that the right of deaf children to take education in a national Sign language was already addressed in 1994 when the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (paragraph 21 on page 18) was adopted. Similarly, it was agreed in two articles of the United Nation Convention on the Persons living with Disabilities (CRPD, 2000); Article 24.3(b) of the CRPD ensures the right to learn Sign language and encourages linguistic identity of the deaf community; Article 24.4 of the CRPD requires teachers of deaf children to be skilled in Sign language (World Federation of the Deaf, 2008).

However, according to United States of American Agency for International Development (USAID) Evaluation Report (2004), many deaf children arrive at schools with little or no ability in a language

around the world. One of the main challenges in teaching Sign Language to deaf students is that the teachers are not skilled in Sign language (Fitzgerald & et al., 2010). People and Language Report (2005), underlines teachers with no knowledge of Sign language or how to teach deaf students are assigned to deaf schools or to classes with deaf students. Hearing teachers of the deaf may delete main signed information when speaking and signing to deaf children of school age (Sherry, 2012). These scholars clearly indicated that deaf children who learn sign at school may experience inaccurate information during Sign language instruction.

USAID evaluation report (2004), indicated that the problem of teaching Sign language has got many ways and scopes. The one is teachers who are involved in teaching deaf children are not experts. The other is the way deaf children are educated Sign language determines their chance of developing usual receptive and expressive language skills. Even in developed countries, the problem associated with non-exposure to language at the critical period for language learning and inappropriate methods like signed spoken languages are used in teaching Sign language to deaf children (Miller, 2002 cited in Whitbread, 2006). The findings of the researches conducted on the practice of SNE teachers in teaching Sign language have shown that it is inhibited by the lack of skilled teachers, the deaf community was disregarded from education thus more or less uneducated (Chimdi, 2014; Endale, 2005; Ruth, 2012, Alemayehu, 2003). The same scenario was common in Ethiopia when schools challenge to enroll deaf students. The result is that deaf people are not aware of their right, and also do not have access to information both in their immediate environment and the world at large. This is due to the fact that deaf people have not been educated in Sign language.

Unfortunately, schools have difficulty addressing their students' special educational needs. The studies have shown that these special schools and special classes are understaffed, under resourced and also have a scarcity of instructional materials. As the evidences indicate, the existing SNE training

program, either Teacher Education College or Universities seems, to have some problems in having modern concepts in the instructional contents and methods, media and facilities that support teachers to serve those pre- service and in- service teachers trained (MOE, 2012).

Therefore, in order to improve the education of children with disabilities in general and deaf children in particular a coordinated effort concerning the government, stakeholders, professionals as well as other concerned organization is important. As indicated in the National Special Needs Education program strategy (MOE, 2012), the preparation of skilled SNE teachers is of vital importance in supporting students with special needs, more specific for deaf students.

In addition to what have been mentioned above, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopian (FDRE) proclamation no 351/2003 indicates the right to educational support and the right to learn using Sign language which is expected to be implemented by both public and private institution. It also emphasizes education for the deaf to be provided using Sign language. Hence, educational programs for deaf children in special needs unit of primary schools have expanded in Ethiopia (MOE, 2006).

According to Ruth (2012), the process of teaching deaf students using Sign language in Ethiopia is challenging and this is because of two main reasons. The first is lack of appropriate Sign language for technical and scientific terms. The second one is related to the immaturity of level of the language and the shortage of Sign language vocabulary, which forces teachers to create their own sign to conduct the teaching process for deaf students that may differ from school to school. Because of this, deaf students coming from various regions find learning process challenging and at times involve in arguments and disagreement with SNE teachers. The researcher accepts that it is meaningfully influenced by an American culture.

Moreover, in special needs units of primary schools for the deaf where the policy has been practiced, what teachers have been teaching are the local languages of the community such as Amharic. Deaf children want to learn Sign language. What actually happens in class is that SNE teachers use signs to teach a specific local language of the area. This is simply a manual demonstration of the local language of that area.

In spite of the fast expansion in the field of special needs education in Amhara Region, there are problems of teaching Sign language to deaf students. To be more specific, the basic reasons that initiate the researcher to conduct research on this area are directly linked to her working experience as Sign language instructor at Debre Birhan College of Teachers' Education (CTE). The researcher had a chance to have firsthand information and observations on the actual practice of Sign language training and teaching both at College and special needs unit levels. Primary SNE teachers are lacking with skills and knowledge of teaching Sign language to deaf students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many deaf students in Ethiopia have in difficulties Sign language which affect their academic performance and ability (Ruth, 2012). More important fact in the suitable and proper way of Sign language instruction for the deaf students may be the way of teaching which emphasizes the role of SNE teachers in the educational process of the deaf and therefore this factor has been involved in the study. A casual observation also indicates that given a choice, SNE teachers' graduates from Debr Birhan College of Teachers' Education are usually reluctant in teaching Sign language for deaf students because they are not well prepared with Sign language skills.

Therefore, this study tries to assess practices of SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools .The study pays special attention to curricular issues such as

instructional contents, teaching strategies, availability of adapted educational materials and CTE's training support for SNE teachers do. Thus, the study propose to the following basic questions:

- 1 .What instructional contents do the SNE teachers use in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools?
2. What types of teaching strategies do the SNE teachers use in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools?
3. How available are adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools?
4. How supportive is CTE's training for SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools?
5. Is there significant difference between performance of male and female SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools?

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

The purpose of the study was to assess SNE teachers' actual practices of teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools. Special attention was paid to the challenges which may influence practices of SNE teachers in teaching Sign language and the opportunities which help them to recognize the matter of improved teaching.

1.3.2 Specific objectives of the Study

To achieve the main purpose of the study, the following specific objectives had been set:

- To find out what instructional content of Sign language SNE teachers use in teaching Sign language to deaf students.
- To find out the types of instructional strategies being used in teaching Sign language to deaf students.
- To assess the availability of adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language to deaf student.
- To assess the support of CTE training for SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to deaf students

1.4 Significance of the Study

- This study is expected to provide information for SNE teachers and government experts at different levels, SNE instructors in CTE to know the current practices of SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to revise the current curriculum of Sign language in special needs units of primary schools.
- It tells SNE teachers about different teaching procedures and mechanism to modify and adapt instructional processes to meet the needs of Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools.
- It can help as a facilitator for other researchers who want to conduct further research on the area of teaching Sign language.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

Delimitations of the study is usually concerned with the nature and limit of the problem, the individuals to be studied, and the actual setting of the study. This study, therefore, is delimited to

instructional contents, teaching methodology, availability of adapted teaching and learning materials, and support of CTE's training for SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools. Geographically, the study was delimited to some selected special needs units of primary schools in North Showa Zone of Amhara Region, in the year 2008 E.C.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

It is clear that research work can not completely be free from limitation. Hence, some limitations were also detected in this study. The main limitation of this study is that the results do not provide information that connects Sign language instruction with higher level of instruction. It is not known whether or not SNE teachers are aware of higher level Sign language instruction and how to apply the method in Sign language subject. One tangible limitation was that some of SNE teachers changed their job and left the schools, and as the result so the number of participants were reduced. Another limitation was lack of current and appropriate literature on the topic, especially on Ethiopian condition. There is serious shortage of books or lack of updated related literature in the area. Further limitation of the study is that at the present time there are no additional data sources such as expert interview investigative what is needed in a comprehensive curriculum, instead the focus of this study is on perceived gaps in current available curricula. In spite of the short comings, however, attempt was made to make the study as complete as possible.

1.7 Definition:

Practice: refer to use of curriculum in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs unit of primary schools.

Sign language: It is a language mostly used by most Ethiopian pre-lingual deaf students.

Special needs education teachers: Teachers who are teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools.

Deaf students: It includes all levels of hearing loss both deaf and hard of hearing students.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Deafness and Sign Language

2.1.1 Brief Historical Background and Concept of Deaf Education

The group of individuals with hearing impairment is greatly varied. Deafness is defined in different views which have their own associated considerations for definition. From a pedagogical point of view the most important aspects to differentiate specific groups are the remaining abilities of hearing and verbal communication ability (Marschark & Elizabeth, 2011). For the purpose of this study deafness is defined based on pedagogical view.

The studies have shown that the academic performance deaf students remain poor. For instance, Biggs (2004), indicated that in China most deaf children leave school, regardless of whether they attended deaf or mainstream schools with an academic achievement below that of their hearing peers, and an inability to communicate confidently in any language, whether Sign language, oral or written communication. Similarly, in Kenya, Global Deaf Connections (2010), reports that only a small percentage of deaf children attended schools getting inadequate resources. This report indicated that most of the teachers in these schools do not know Sign language. On the other hand, according to a survey by World Federation of the Deaf (2008), made on 19 countries in Southern and Eastern African countries on the status of Deaf education, only 10 countries had a policy or law on Deaf education. In general terms, the survey revealed that teachers were not fluent in Sign language as result deaf students were unable to complete secondary education. Moreover, the respondents provided various opinions on the current levels of literacy, of which the common opinion was that deaf students were illiterate even though they have completed their education (Allen, 2008).

In fact, in Ethiopia, there was no exact figures regarding the number of deaf people. However, it is roughly estimated that up to 1 million persons with hearing impairment live across the country. In line with this, the failure to identify the exact number of children who need special education particularly deaf children has also been a problem in our country in general and in the Amahara Region in particular. Despite there are the special classes, boarding schools and special schools in Ethiopia, teaching of Sign language is still in a poor state, only a few of deaf schools functioning throughout the country (MOE, 2012).

The very concept of special needs education (SNE) in its modern sense is new to the Ethiopian education system, even at the level of institutions of higher learning. Introduced education of the deaf in Ethiopia dates back to the 1970s reported to have been introduced by American Missionaries (Endale, 2005). Following the introduction of the 1994 Education and Training Policy, significant changes have been made in the expansion of SNE service (MOE, 2012). The strategy's strong emphasis on inclusive approach makes it more in line with the current international trends in education (MOE, 2012).

In Ethiopia, Sign Language has its source in American Sign Language (ASL) with some effects from Nordic countries and native local signs. In the first National Amharic Sign Language dictionary, 80% of the signs are derived from the "Talk to the Deaf", which is a book by the author of "Joy of signing". Because of this, most of Ethiopian schools of deaf and deaf students use the "Joy of signing" when they teach and learn signed English. This 352 pages long guide contains about 1525 signs and 26 manual alphabets (Riekehof, 1987 cited in Ruth, 2012). Missionaries, with the use of American Sign Language, managed the beginning of Sign Language establishing schools for the deaf in Ethiopia. Currently there are the special classes, boarding schools, special school, and mainstreaming schools (MOE, 2012).

In summary, the definitions of deaf highlighted above indicate that the focus of deaf education is still in a deprived state is, the academic performance and progress rates for deaf students remain poor and attended schools getting inadequate resources. In addition to the above, teaching of Sign language is still in a poor state in Ethiopia.

2.1. 2. Brief Historical Background and Concept of Sign Language

Wherever societies of the deaf exist in the world, Sign languages expand. Previously many people thought Sign languages were simply manual representations of spoken languages while others thought Sign language was just a collection of meaningless gestures and therefore tried to suppress it in various ways.

Most African countries have imported American Sign Language (ASL). As a result it has been observed that the majority of African deaf people use ASL. The lack of official recognition of national Sign languages affects educational opportunities of deaf people. In Ethiopia, deaf people have fewer educational opportunities because Sign Language is not recognized by the government and the right to education in that language is not secured (<http://wfdeaf.org/databank/policies/education-rights-for-deaf-children>).

Even though most deaf people are using Sign language in Ethiopia, it is not pure Sign language. This has happened because sign language education was started by missionaries that came from different countries who were teaching their own Sign language. In addition, the “*U*” which was the only textbook for sign language students in Ethiopia, was prepared by those Ethiopian scholars who had learned sign languages of different countries. Hence, in preparing the textbook, they used most of the signs from sign languages of those countries they had been educated rather than the Sign language in

Ethiopia. This book was prepared before 36 years since then no research was done about its effectiveness (Hailu, 2003 cited in Ruth, 2012).

Currently, the Ethiopian National Association of Deaf prepared a manual dictionary of Ethiopian sign language, which may help to replace the existing sign languages used in schools, so that Ethiopian deaf students can learn by their native language. However, sign Language in Ethiopian is its origin in American Sign Language (ASL) with some influences from Nordic countries and indigenous local signs (Hailu, 2003 cited in Ruth, 2014).

Sign language and speech language are differently organized. Signed language (visual-manual) and vocal language (aural-oral) are restricted by many different articulators and perceptual requirements. Signed languages have evolved within a completely different biological medium, using different set of articulators and received by another perceptual system. Articulation is done by for parameters of a sign, shape, location, movement and orientation of the hand, which are analogies to phonetic features of spoken language, articulated by a speech organ: tongue, teeth lips, etc. (Almayehu, 2000)

In general, Sign language is a manual language used by people who are deaf to communicate an actual language with its own grammar, have every linguistic component to be classified as a true language. Sign Language is one of the under-researched languages of Ethiopia although it has over a million users of the Deaf community. Not much is recognized about the language, the use and current status (chimidi, 2014) .Moreover, he emphasis a large number of deaf students are attending their education no matter how the type of Sign language that is used is in question i.e. due to mixing Sign language with local languages. It has also been difficult to minimize the challenges of deaf students in education in Ethiopia for lacking the basic knowledge and information about Sign language. The existence of a sign language grammar is still unnoticed by many people, including teachers and other people working with deaf. From this, one can imagine that the status of sign language in Ethiopia is

still very low, and the preparation of sign language, as a natural language was not strengthened by evidence from linguistic research: there are no sign language skills among teachers, school administrators, family members and among those people working with deaf people in several places. Due to these factors, many deaf children have not acquired and developed sign language skills as they should (Almayehu, 2000)

2.2 Instructional Contents of Sign Language

According to National Deaf Children's Society, (2013), Deafness presents a very significant barrier to learners acquiring language, communicating, making educational progress, developing socially and emotionally. It stress content than on grammar when assessing the writing of children who primarily use sign language for communication because the grammar of sign languages is very different from written languages (ibid,2013).

As Gallaudet University (2014) stated that respect for and understanding of Deaf culture should be cultivated in the classroom. Some of the Deaf cultural values and behaviors that can be taught include introductions, leave-taking, and conversational turn-taking, and language code-switching, criteria for acceptance or non-acceptance in the culture, folklore, group norms, identity, and so forth. Moreover, Sign language is a manual language used by people who are deaf to communicate an actual language with its own grammar (Yule, 1996). In line with this, Gallaudet University (2014) reports that the components of sign language are not phonemic (sound) combinations and movement that form words at spoken language, but rather phonological combinations (i.e. hand shapes, movements, orientation of the palm and location) that form signs. Professional linguists have studied many Sign languages and found them to have every linguistic component to be classified as a true language.

In addition, according to the World federation of the Deaf (WFD) Policy on Education Rights for Deaf Children and the European Union of Deaf(EUD) Education Position Paper, Sign language is

considered as a fully operating language with its own syntax, morphology and structure. It is capable of functioning as a language of communication and instruction in all settings from educational to political. This fact has been accepted and enacted into Article 2 of the convention of the right of person with disabilities (CRPD) which defines sign languages as equal to spoken languages (World Federation of the Deaf, 2008). Similarly, as Gallaudet University (2014), indicated that Sign languages are not exact translations of spoken languages. It is a formal language with socially agreed on and rule-governed symbol system that is reproductive in nature. Another key point to note is that sign language is neither international nor related to spoken language and each country has its own sign language(s).

In Ethiopia, instructional contents of ETHSL for deaf students in special units of primary schools vary across regions, schools, students and teachers in applying sign language (Ruth, 2012).

Sign language program should include a holistic introductory course about sign language and deafness. Sign language linguistics course should be offered soon after students have begun to acquire syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic concepts in the sign language classroom. It should include a discussion of the basic phonological and morphological aspects of sign language, which are, visual/gestural rather than aural/oral. It is also important for sign language students to be aware of the major sociolinguistic issues in the Deaf community (Gallaudet University, 2014).

In summary, instructional contents of Sign language in Ethiopia to deaf students to be include deaf culture, basic phonological and morphological aspects of sign language, to be aware of the major sociolinguistic issues in the Deaf community and a holistic introductory course about sign language and deafness.

2.3 Methods of Instruction and mode of Communication in Deaf Education

2.3.1 Mode of Communication in Deaf Education

Deaf people use a number of communication methods which differ when the receiver is a deaf or a hearing person. As Moors (1996), deaf children are concerned, the basic approaches to communication are oral, manual and total communication. Total communication is a combination of many means of communications – sign language, voice, finger spelling, lip-reading, writing, gesture, and visual pictures. According to some evaluations, total communication is not effective in teaching deaf students because the effort to sign and speak at the same time results in a worse quality of sign language. Not only that, some people believe that total communication results in deaf children failing to develop fluency in either spoken or sign language because of the deficient use of both (ibid,1996). Generally for many years it was thought that total communication would meet the needs of deaf children who need sign language and voice. Now, as scientific evidence continues to pile up that sign language is the natural language of deaf children. However, bilingual bicultural accepted most professional (ibid, 1996).

Manual communication can use two different ways to present a word finger spelling and signs. Finger spelling in sign language is the way in which letters of alphabet are made on the hands (Yule, 1996) Communication through finger spelling alone would not be part of sign languages. The second way to present a word or a concept is through a sign, which represents a complete idea.

On the other hand, regarding to oral communication, Signed Amharic is the same concept as signed English and it essentially is a means of producing signs correspond to the words in an Amharic sentence, in Amharic order. In many ways, signed Amharic is used to facilitate interaction between the deaf and the hearing community. However signed Amharic is neither Amharic nor Sign language since

it doesn't follow structure of any of the two (Endale, 2005). The main ways teachers communicated in classroom instruction were speech and written communication, seldom signing. "Oral speech", reading and writing were the main mods of classroom instruction used by the teachers. Having rudimentary training in a sign system (signed, Amharic), teachers were forced to teach in an oral dominated approach, which is not totally perceptible by deaf students through their auditory or visual channels (Almayehu, 2003).he emphasis that in the class room while teachers used speech very frequently, deaf students used to sign in the classroom instructional interaction to express their thoughts. However, unless objects were referred to, teachers had difficulties in understanding the sign of the deaf students.

In general, sign language is the natural language of deaf children. However, bilingual bicultural accepted most professional mode of communication for deaf students in teaching Sign language.

2.3.2. Methods of Instruction in Teaching Sign language to Deaf Students

Methods describe conceptually the instructional process, that is not only how information gets from the teacher to the learner but also how the learner, use it, interact with it, receives guidance and is given feedback (Azeb, 1994).This implies deaf students demand appropriate instructional material method that can help them to grasp information. They are also required to actively engage in the process.

Basically, method in teaching concerns the way teachers organize and use techniques of teaching, subject-matter, teaching tools, and teaching materials to meet teaching objectives. Because teaching method includes selecting content and instructional materials as well as teaching procedures, it determines to a large extent what students actually learn (Clark And Starr, 1982) cited in Azeb (1984). The implication here is that contents presented to deaf students should be delivered using a method

that helps to meet the objectives. Selecting contents that matches to deaf students demand is mandatory in order to help deaf students learn.

2.3.2.1 Bilingual/Bicultural Method in Teaching Sign Language

Regardless of the degree of hearing impairment, one teaching procedure that has been recommended to teach sign language is Bilingual Bicultural method .It is the most recommended and recent method of teaching deaf students. This method involves the teaching of sign language as a subject and a written language (Moors, 1996). With this approach, written languages like Amharic are taught through Ethiopian sign language. Bilingual advocates often present Jim Cummins'1989 linguistics interdependence theory in support of a bilingual approach to education. According to the linguistic interdependence theory, if one already has a language base, it is easier to acquire a second language (Vicar; 2003). The bilingual approach requires Sign language to be used as the major instruction language together with spoken languages in written form. Cummins (1989), mentions linguistic interdependence among these aspects and he asks whether the knowledge of a sign language may help the students to learn reading and writing in a spoken language. The implementation of bilingual/bicultural approach requires capacity of qualified hearing and Deaf teachers.

As (Pritchard, 2005 cited in Mulonda, 2013), stated that bilingualism is one of the main educational goals for deaf learners in Norway. Through bilingualism the learners can gain access to the curriculum and the social cultural values and beliefs of the Deaf and the hearing communities. The right deaf children to be taught in and about Sign language was confirmed by legislation. Norway Sign Language lessons are not a supplement, but an addition to the ordinary curriculum subjects. Bilingualisms' say, deaf children have the right to "their own language" i.e., sign language used by deaf people within their own community. Since sign language is to be the deaf child's "mother-tongue." Bilingualism

emphasize that information and education should be offered primarily through sign rather than oral language (Johnson et al. 1989 cited in Almayehu, 2003)

In general, instructional Strategies of Bilingual/Bicultural method are used different methods to teach Sign language. Among these strategies Signed Amharic, Cued Speech, and more fingerspelling are to be clarify differences between Sign language and printed Amharic.

2.3.2.2 Signing Naturally in Teaching Sign language

Other teaching procedures recommended for use deaf students relate directly to sign naturally. This approach places major emphasizes on the communicative purpose of speech functions of a language: introducing people to one another, requesting information, extending an invitation, directing someone to do or not to do something, describing a book, and so forth.

Sign language is to be taught as the natural language and as a school subject stated officially in the national curriculum. Studying Deaf culture and Deaf history are also part of the necessities set in the curriculum. All this requires a well-established academic research in Sign language itself, in first and second language and other areas of successful bilingual approach (Smith, 2010)). As Kathleen Eilers-Crandall, 2000cited in Mulonda, 2013) mentions linguistic interdependence among these aspects and she asks whether the knowledge of a sign language may help the students to learn reading and writing in a spoken language.

In Sweden, Chupina (2006) reports that Swedish Sign Language became the language of instruction as well as a taught subject itself in 1995. Since then, special education schools and mainstream schools use the same curriculum which includes Sign language as a subject. The deaf students at school study Sign language along with lessons in written Swedish. Classes of hard of hearing students also learn Sign language and spoken language as well as Swedish. This contributes to good literacy for all

Swedish hard of hearing and deaf students. Deaf Students learn grammar at school and they can compare Swedish Sign Language with written Swedish. They learn about grammar and the differences in these languages. Generally, Education of the Deaf requires competent teachers in Sign language including native Sign language users and the learning materials used need to be bilingual and culturally appropriate.

Most language acquisition and teaching theorists now support a holistic view of second language learning in which teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of students rather than to any dominant language methodology. It implies that before deciding which approaches to use, ETHSL teachers, like all second language teachers, should learn who their students are and why they want to learn the language.

Provide an enriched language environment that promotes a wide range of meaningful experiences with opportunities for receptive and expressive through-the-air and written language. who can effectively provide not only the vocabulary to label objects but also a language model for expressing concepts and ideas, using the child's primary mode of communication. Remember that language precedes literacy. A child will not understand language expressed in print until he or she understands that language presented orally or through the air. <http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>.

Generally, no instructional strategy, however differentiated, will be effective if the student does not comprehend your communication attempts. It is in the light of the above that it is important to find out how Sign language is teaching for the students with deafness in Ethiopian.

2.4. Instructional Materials Use in Teaching Sign language

The availability and usage of instructional materials have a great role in the process of teaching and learning. According to Dilnesaw (2009), instructional materials include materials with which students

and teachers relate for the purpose of teaching. In addition to this, Aggrawal (1997) cited in Dilnesaw (2009) suggested that effectiveness in learning lies not in reading and listening, but in action; performance and involvement using different instructional materials. As a result, for the application of active-learning method of teaching successfully, different instructional materials must be available and used. To be truly effective Sign language programs should have high-quality video recording and replay facilities, a video language lab prepared with a large collection of Sign language and Deaf culture videotapes, and facilities for students to view tapes on an individual basis. Other materials required are much the same as those needed in any language program like Texts, Videotapes, Objects and picture, Flash cards and Computers.

2.5 Support of Teacher Training for SNE Teachers

In its broadest sense, teaching is a process that facilitates learning. Teaching is the specific application of knowledge, skills and qualities designed to provide unique service to meet the educational needs of the individual and of society. The optimal of learning activities whereby the goals of education are comprehended in the school is the responsibility of the teaching profession. (UNESCO, 2000)

Basically, good teaching is the same whether it occurs in a general or special education classroom. The major elements are the same for any teaching situation. What happens during teaching may differ across various settings, but often there are obvious unities as well (Dilnesaw, 2009). As outlined by his research, “active teaching behaviors” include clear communication of instructional demands, active engagement of students, frequent observing of progress, and regular provision for direct feedback.

As Smith (2010), in a study evaluating newly trained teachers of the deaf, found that while they were typically active and eager to attempt to challenge new ideas, they often lacked the skills necessary for the successful maintenance and development of individual education plans. He also suggested that

improvement of training programs for teachers of the deaf could be focused in improving the sign language skills of pre-service teachers of the deaf.

On the other hand, learning has clearly a broad concept and can occur in variety of situations including independent activity, one-to one tutoring sessions, and small group arrangement. If learning is the gaining of knowledge and skills, it can apply to many different populations and can be assessed in observable and measurable ways (Polloway & Patton, 1997).

However, their focus on Sign language still remains limited. Hence it can be said that even if the 2011 Education Act emphasizes the use of Sign language in the education of deaf students the graduate teachers from teacher training institutions still join the teaching service with very limited skills in Sign language and general interaction deaf children.

The special needs education training program is intended to train teachers currently working in the primary schools to upgrade their knowledge base and professional skills in the field of SNE so that they can properly address the diverse needs of children with disabilities in general deaf children in particular (MOE,2012).

According to FDRE MOE special needs/inclusive education situational analysis report (2012),indicated different universities and colleges have started new teacher education programs on special needs education. Core curricula have been modified for children with disabilities and manuals are being prepared on disability specific curriculum at the federal level. As some evidences (MOE, 2012) indicate, the existing SNE training program seems to have some problems in having current concepts in the curriculum, diversified and current teaching methods, media and facilities that enable teachers to serve those whom they are trained for.

In addition, Sign language training is been given as a subject in BA level in one Addis Ababa university. At teacher training level, in Amhara Region the only institution of SNE teacher training that has long been providing training on some basic skills like braille and Sign language at diploma level was Debre Brhan CTE .Recently, however, there is a growth in the number of teacher training college offering SNE training in Amhara Region. But Sign language is not given the importance it rates in the curriculum. In fact Sign language which is supposed to be taught as a language is simply taught as a component of special education suggesting a medical view of deafness.

The curriculum of the SNE training program was then, designed by the central government to have three different packages of major courses for cluster trainees, and one major and one minor package of courses for linear trainees. Colleges are, then, given the mandate to choose their own combination from different options available. The college choose the following sets of courses for its own training program in the SNE unit: SNE as major and Biology as minor for the linear stream trainees, and SNE, Biology and Civic & Ethical Education as composite major for those in the cluster stream. There are also some common courses being offered such as Education, Language, Physical Education and ICT.

In line with direction given by the regional education Bureau, the organization of course has now changed. The course breakdown is basically made to follow the general framework outlined by the ministry of education. The new SNE course organization then was prepared and is operational as of last year to meet the requirement of the new course breakdown, which is particularly designed to be more focused and relevant to the very job teacher trainees are supposed to do in their respective schools. So, trainees are now required to take just one major, not three composite majors as has it been the case earlier.

At Debre Brhan CTE the Department of Education offers diploma programs that focus on all disabilities in line with the Ministry of Education policy of inclusive education. The training by Debre

Brhan CTE is general SNE and there is no specialization in content although most of the content is on theoretical aspects of inclusive education. However, recently there have been some efforts by Debre Brhan CTE to strengthen their component on sign language education. This is manifested in their staffing of three instructors offer Ethiopian sign language as a course with curriculum modification.

In general, SNE teachers lack both the linguistic and communicative competence in Sign language in order to effectively teach the deaf students. There is therefore need to match policy documents and statements with action on the ground.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discuss the research method, the sources of data, the site of the study and population, sample size and sampling technique, data gathering tools and procedures of data collection and the methods of data analysis.

3.1 The Research Design

In this study descriptive survey research design was employed. Because the major objective of this study was to collect actual data to describe the practices of SNE teachers in teaching sign language to deaf students as it exists at present. It is also relevant to gather detailed information concerning the current status of practices of the teachers. Moreover, descriptive survey research design makes possible prediction of the future on the basis of findings on main conditions. In line with this, Jose & Gonzales (1993) state that descriptive survey research gives a better and deeper understanding of a phenomenon which helps as a fact-finding method with adequate and accurate interpretation of the findings. Similarly, Cohen (1994) describes that descriptive survey research design helps to gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing condition. Regarding survey research Kothari (2004) stated that, it is a method of securing information concerning an existing phenomenon from all or selected number of respondents of the concerned universe.

The reason why descriptive survey was used is because it enables to describe events and it is suitable for educational research. Furthermore, it assumed that the nature of the problem needed wide description and investigation. Different instruments of data collection such as questionnaire, observation and focus group discussion used together relevant data on the basic question of the study. Since focus group discussion facilitates the investigation qualitative data, it was employed SNE

teachers in special needs units of primary schools, SNE Zone experts and SNE College instructors. Moreover, observation check list was utilized and the data were triangulate

3.2 Research Site

The study was conducted in North Showa Zone of Amhara Region. The main reason for selecting the zone for the study was that the researcher had been working for many years and still have close working relationship with most of the SNE teachers. Hence, the researcher believed that adequate information could be easily fetched out. Moreover, expenses like allowances and transport fees will be minimized.

3.3 Study Population

All SNE teachers working in special needs units of primary schools in North Showa Zone of Amhara Region were taken as of population. According to North Showa Zone of Amhara Region Educational Statistics Annual report (2015), there were 66 government first cycle special unit needs of primary schools with 207 SNE teachers in 2015/2016 Academic Year. Thus, this provides the approximate size of the population of this study. The educational Statistics Annual report of North Showa Zone Education Office (2015) served as the sampling frame for this study.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

North Showa Zone has twenty four Weredas. The Weredas are geographically dispersed. For the purpose of this study, they were grouped into four clusters based on geographical land scape. Two of the four clusters were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The lottery method was used to select two of the four clusters. This was the first stage of sampling. In the second stage of sampling, in each selected clusters, the number of SNE teachers were considered before deciding the number of sample schools to be selected. This was done to have a fairly proportional number of sample schools from each clusters and thus a fairly representative sample of SNE teachers.

Thus, in cluster 2, and 3, there were 18 and 17 first cycle special needs units of primary schools with respectively. As a final stage and following the rule of cluster sampling, all SNE teachers were targeted. Thus, the sample size of 109 SNE teachers in North Showa Zone were included the expected sample size.

The SNE teachers of the selected special needs units of primary schools were considered to be important in this study because they are the ones currently engaged in the teaching and learning process. They know the challenges they encounter in the education system. They have the experience regarding the state of teaching sign language to deaf students, they may be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of instruction, they may also have some views on instructional contents and methods which they were implementing.

In addition to this, in order to increase the validity of the study, Sign language instructor in Debre Birhan CTE and a Zonal SNE expert were included in the study using availability sampling technique. Because they are also fully aware of the scope and depth of the Sign language syllabus at college level they are the ones who provide Sign language training to SNE teachers to help them teach sign language to deaf students. The sample size at the end, however, was only 79. This was because the data collection took place in February and March 2008 E.C. Many SNE teachers were not in the school. One of the reasons for their absence at that time was that they were assigned as regular classroom teachers in other primary schools due to shortage of teachers. Besides, some have already changed their job. In short, the sample comprised 79 SNE teachers who were selected using cluster sampling technique.

3.5 Instruments for Data Collection

To obtain adequate and relevant data for the study and triangulate it, the researcher selected and employed questionnaire, focus group discussion and observation check list.

1. Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire in each scale was to collect data from SNE teachers about teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools. The questionnaire was administered to SNE teachers' composed 42 items (41 closed ended and one open ended).

The closed ended type of questionnaire was organized around three sub scales. A 42-items with three subscales were used for this investigation. The three subscales were designed to assess:

1. Instructional contents that SNE teachers use in teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools.
2. The availability of adapted educational material that SNE teachers use in teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools. Both the instructional contents of sign language and the availability of adapted educational materials subscales consisted of items with forced choice format (that is either 'yes' or 'no').
3. The second sub scales were designed for instructional strategies to be rated on the basis of multiple choice items.
4. The third subscales were constructed for CTE's training support for SNE teachers' to be rated based on the five -point scales ranging from very poor to very good

First, items were developed based on review of the literature. This was followed by teaching at college. This helped the researcher to include additional items in the questionnaire. 61 items were developed in the second stage, each of the 61 items were examined thoroughly for clarity. Redundant items were discarded whereas some items which lacked clarity were revised. After this examination,

42 items including one open ended item were qualified for inclusion in the first draft of the rating scales.

2. Observation

Observation checklist was prepared and used to collect actual information and the data of questionnaire, FGD and Structured observation were triangulated. According to Best and Kahn (2003) observation is a mechanism in which the researcher observes what is happening in the real classroom situation. The main advantage of this method is to reduce bias of reported responses and to see practice that could not be gained through questionnaires.

A check list for observation were also employed inside the classrooms and resource centers in two special needs units of primary schools and Debre Birhan CTE. It was employed to establish and collect information that may not have been captured through the questionnaires or focus group discussions.

The observation focused on the components of the instructional contents in teaching sign language subject by observing the actual teaching and learning process. Moreover, it also focused on types of instructional strategies to use in teaching sign language in the class room and availability of adapted instructional materials in the resources center and in the class room. In addition to, the CTE's training curriculum of sign language course observed through the prepared observation checklist to record the presence and absence of activities and the materials listed in the checklist. Because the real instructional activities are manifested while teachers teach and students learn. In the 2 primary schools with special needs units an intensive on-site observation was conducted one time in each school to get valuable information. The amount of time to be spent in each school varied based on the programs and services offered in a specific school, and the engagement that occurred with school principals.

3. Focus Group Discussion

FGD guide was the second data collection instrument. The purpose of FGD guide was to obtain information well discussed to validate some of the data obtained through questionnaire and to capture some information which may not have been captured in the questionnaires. It focused mainly on the basic research questions of the study which were not answered by the questionnaire.

It was held with SNE teachers from special needs units of primary schools, college Sign language instructors and SNE expert from Zone and Wereda education office who were concerned and participated. The main issues include instructional contents and strategies of Sign language and availability of adapted educational materials for teaching Sign language. The guide consisted of 4 items and 6 persons participated in the focus -group-discussion. Each FGD took 2 hours.

3.6 The Reliability and Validity of the Items

After review of the literature, development of an item pool, comments by professional and review of experts, the final draft of the scale was prepared in English because each item pool developed from American Sign Language curriculum and adapted to Ethiopian context. To ensure validity of instruments, initially the instrument was prepared by the researcher and developed with the consultation of Sign language instructors in the department of special needs education, (Debre Birhan CTE), who were involved in providing their inputs and suggestions that might help in refining the items. The experts agreed that the subscales had very good face validity. The English version questionnaires were checked and corrected by English subject specialist teachers from Debre Birhan CTE. The English version was then translated to Amharic by the researcher and checked by Amharic subject specialist. The Amharic version and the English version were then distributed among

professional in the field of Ethiopian sign language (instructors in the department of special needs education at Debre Birhan CTE).

Moreover, to identify vague and ambiguous items and modify the short coming of the instrument, piloting the instrument was carried out with 38 third year SNE students in the department of special needs education because they have experienced teaching sign language in special needs units when they were at the practicum site for a period of the pilot study and they were not included in the main study. Based on respondents' response addition, omission and modification of questions were undertaken. Following this, the researcher examined the comments and incorporated them. Those comments which were found to be of paramount importance. The subscales were revised and prepared.

A reliability test was conducted to check the consistency and accuracy of the measurement scales. The reliability was generally good. The reliability for each group of items were checked and it was 0.75, 0.68, 0.72 and 0.78 regarding instructional contents, instructional strategies, availability of adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language and performance level of knowledge and skill of SNE teachers to acquiring CTE Sign language training respectively.

3.7 Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher had gone through a sequence of data gathering procedures. These procedures help the researcher to get accurate and relevant data from the sample units. Thus, after receiving letters of authorization from Addis Ababa University, the researcher directly went to sample schools to pilot test the data gathering instruments. At the end of all aspects of the pilot test, the researcher has communicated with Wereda education offices and the principals of respective schools for consent. After getting the consent of participants, the

researcher introduced her objectives of the study. Then, the final questionnaires were administered to sample SNE teachers in the selected special needs units of primary schools. The participants were allowed to give their own answers to each item independently and the researcher was close to the participants to assist and supervise them. Finally, the questionnaires were collected and made ready for data analysis. The reliability of the main study based on each group of items was 0.78, 0.74, 0.77 and 0.79 regarding instructional contents, instructional strategies, availability of adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language and performance level of knowledge and skill of SNE teachers to acquiring CTE Sign language training respectively.

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

Depending on the nature of the basic question and variable treated, different tools of data analysis were employed. The data were analyzed and interpreted using simple basic quantitative statistical techniques such as percentages, averages and frequency tables because it is appropriate to interpret data obtained through questionnaires. Frequencies and percentage were used for questions related to each Sign language subject level to determine the curriculum utilized and the respondent's level of agreement as to whether or not the curriculum provides sufficient instructional contents and strategies. The same approach was utilized to determine the frequency of utilization of adapted educational materials for each Sign language subject as well as for questions related to active learning methods. Mean, percentage and t-test were employed on the questions related to the performance of SNE teachers in teaching sign language to deaf students. In brief, independent sample test and one sample t test were employed in analyzing the data. For observation and focus group discussion qualitative analysis was used and triangulated with the quantitative findings. Finally, the findings were presented. Based on the major findings conclusions were drawn and recommendation were forwarded.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In considering matters of ethics, the researcher obtained a letter from the Addis Ababa University which was used to carry out the research. All ethical considerations were taken into account while collecting data from respondents. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study to the participants. The participants were asked to take part in the study on a voluntary basis and their confidentiality was assured.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT

The purpose of this research was to assess practices of SNE teachers in teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs unit of primary schools located in North Showa Zone of Amhara Region. This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data gathered from the field. It presents the findings of the study on all the fundamental questions which were under investigation. It contains two major parts; the first part presents back ground information about the respondents. The second part deals with the results of findings from the data gathered through the questionnaire, focus group discussion and observation.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of SNE Teachers

Table 1: Description of SNE teachers' by sex, experience, and qualification, level of education and hearing situation

No	Characteristics		Sex					
			M		F		T	
			No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	Level of education	Diploma	42	53.16	31	39.24	73	92.41
		Degree	1	1.27	5	6.33	6	7.59
2	Qualification	special needs	43	54.43	36	45.57	79	100.00
3	Hearing situation	Deaf	3	3.80	2	2.53	5	6.33
		Hearing	40	50.63	34	43.04	74	93.67
4	Experience teachers as	0-5	28	35.44	24	30.38	52	65.82
		6-10	9	11.39	7	8.86	16	20.25
		11-15	4	5.06	2	2.53	6	7.59
		Above 16	2	2.53	3	3.80	5	6.33

As illustrated in the above table, the total number of respondents invited to respond to the questionnaires were 79. Among these 43(54.4%) were males and 36(45.6%) were females. All respondents were SNE teachers. There are 28(35.4%) male and 24(30.4%) female SNE teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience and 9(11.3%) male and 7(8.8%) female SNE teachers with 6-10 years of teaching experience, 4(5%) male and 2(2.5%) female SNE teachers with 11-15 years of teaching experience in teaching sign language to deaf students. The rest 2(2.5%) male and 3(3.8%) female SNE teachers with above 16 years of teaching experience in teaching sign language to deaf students.

Regarding the level of education and qualification, it could also be observed that 43(54.4%) males and 36(45.6%) females of the participants had special needs qualification .41(51.9%) males and 31(39.2%) females were diploma holders in special needs education. Whereas 2(2.5%) male and 5(6.3) female teachers have first degree in special needs education. Hearing situation of the respondents: The majority of the respondents were hearing respondents. The figure shows that out of 79 (40(50.6%) males and 34(43%) females) were hearing individuals and the rest 5(3(3.8%) males and 2(2.5) females) were deaf.

4.2 Presentation and Analysis

This part of the study is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the data obtained from the respondents in relation to practices of SNE teachers in teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools of North Showa Zone of Amhara Region. The closed-ended questionnaire was responded to and responses interpreted using frequency, percentage, and mean scores and t-test. Finally, the data obtained from the focus group discussion and observation were briefly narrated, and analyzed qualitatively and the data collected through the questionnaire was triangulated

4.2 .1 Instructional Contents of Sign Language in Special Needs Unit of Primary Schools

Given the fact that the study is descriptive survey design, it is necessary to examine SNE teachers used the curriculum in teaching Sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools. The descriptive statistics pertaining to SNE teachers used the instructional contents in teaching Sign language to deaf students are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Number of Observation, Mean, Median, Minimum and Maximum Pertaining to Score on the Instructional Contents of Sign Language

Maximum possible score: Linguistic of Sign language of sign language 8: Finger spelling= 6:
Communication skill of Sign language =6: Holistic introductory components of Sign language =6

Variable	No items	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Linguistic components of sign language	4	79	4.81	5	3	7
Finger spelling	3	79	5.65	6	4	6
Communication skill of Sign language	3	79	3.24	3	2	6
Holistic introductory components of Sign language	3	79	3.44	3	3	5

The Linguistic components of Sign language subscale consisted of 4 items in forced –choice format to which the respondents say “yes” or “no”. The subscale was designed to assess linguistic components of Sign language contents comprises as an instructional contents of Sign language subject in special needs units of primary schools.

Considering the SNE teachers individually, however, the scores varied from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 7, with a median score of 5 and the mean score of 4.8. 76.59% of the respondents stated

that, they were missing from Sign language subject whereas 23.41% of the respondents responded that they were included in the Sign language subject.

A one sample t test was further run to see if the mean score of the sample is significantly different from half of the maximum possible score (that is 6). This examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 4.8) is less than a score of the expected mean ($t=51.31$, $df=78$, $0<.001$).

This was also confirmed by the data gained from the FGD of course, most of SNE teachers believed that the sign vocabulary contents that were being offered in special needs units of primary schools were sufficient enough to teach Sign language to deaf students.

The researcher also employed classroom observation on the instructional contents of Sign language in special needs units of primary schools. There appears to be some serious teaching of Sign vocabulary from ‘የምልክት ቋንቋ ለጀመሪያዎች’ በሆላኦና መስማት የተሰናዥውትምህርት ቤት የተዘጋጀ and “the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary and “ሀ” book (የአሜሪካ የምልክት ቋንቋ መስማትና መናገር ለተሰናዥው-1ኛ መጽሀፍ) but beyond that, there is no Sign language to talk about. In zero Grade which is pre-school, deaf children were mainly taught iconic signs which imitate the real actions of the activity. These kinds of signs were taught in a dramatic way to an extent that it looked almost like a play. At this stage, there were no attempts to teach them how these words or actions are written.

The finger spelling components of Sign language subscale consisted of 3 items in forced –choice format to which the respondents say “yes” or “no”. The subscale was designed to assess finger spelling components of Sign language contents comprises as an instructional contents of Sign language subject in special needs units of primary schools.

Considering the SNE teachers individually, however, the scores varied from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 6, with a median score of 6 and the mean score of 5.6. 26% of the respondents stated

that, they were missing from Sign language subject whereas 89.03% of the respondents responded that they were included in the Sign language subject.

A one sample t test was further run to see if the mean score of the sample is significantly different from half of the maximum possible score (that is 4.5). This examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 5.6) is greater than a score of the expected mean ($t=95.19$, $df=78$, $0<.001$).

Regarding finger spelling, from FGD the data also indicated that the deaf students were taught the Ethiopian Sign language alphabet, American Sign Language finger spelling and number sign by using pictures. The data gathered through class room observation also indicated that deaf students in special needs units of primary schools were made to learn sign vocabulary and finger spelling.

The communication skill components of Sign language subscale consisted of 3 items in forced –choice format to which the respondents say “yes” or “no”. The subscale was designed to assess communication skill components of Sign language contents comprises as an instructional contents of Sign language subject in special needs units of primary schools.

Considering the SNE teachers individually, however, the scores varied from a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 6, with a median score of 3 and the mean score of 3.2. 70.05% of the respondents stated that, they were missing from Sign language subject whereas 29.95% of the respondents responded that they were included in the Sign language subject.

A one sample t test was further run to see if the mean score of the sample is significantly different from half of the maximum possible score (that is 4.5). This examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 5.6) is greater than a score of the expected mean ($t=95.19$, $df=78$, $0<.001$).

With respect to communication skill, the results of FGD revealed that the communication skills of SNE teachers and deaf students were not sufficient for the teaching and learning process of Sign language. Personal observations by the researcher also revealed that there a communication gap between SNE teachers and deaf students understanding in , there was a gap in understanding both the general communication and subject related concepts.

The holistic introductory components of Sign language subscale consisted of 3 items in forced –choice format to which the respondents say “yes” or “no”. The subscale was designed to assess holistic introductory components of Sign language contents comprises as an instructional contents of Sign language subject in special needs units of primary schools.

Considering the SNE teachers individually, however, the scores varied from a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 5, with a median score of 3 and the mean score of 3.4. 85.24% of the respondents stated that they were missing from Sign language subject whereas 14.76% of the respondents responded that they were included in the Sign language subject.

A one sample t test was further run to see if the mean score of the sample is significantly different from half of the maximum possible score (that is 4.5). This examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 3.4) is less than a score of the expected mean ($t=45.36$ $df=78$, $0<.001$).

Regarding to holistic introductory contents of sign language, from their responses from FGD one can conclude that contents related to the deaf culture, visual preparation and socio linguistic awareness were not incorporated as the contents of Sign language in special needs units of primary schools.

4.2.2. Instructional Strategies in Teaching Sign Language

4.2.2.1 Sign language taught as a subject in different grade level of education

Table 3: Grade level of ETHSL

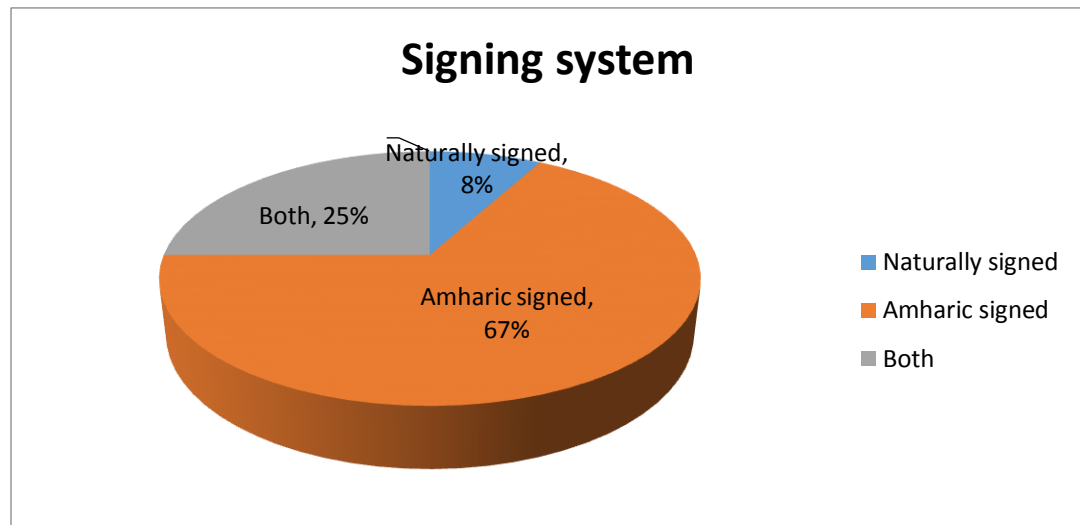
Grade level of ETHSL	up to grade 4		. Up to grade 8.		Up to grade 10.	
	No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
If Sign language is to be introduced as a taught subject, how far should students with deafness learn it?	29	36.71	44	55.696	6	7.6

As can be clearly seen in table 3 above, SNE teachers' responses to the question regarding the extent to which deaf students learn the Sign language ranges from up to grade 4 to grade 10, i.e. 29(36.7%) of the respondents confirmed that they teach Sign language up to grade 4; 44(55.7%) of them replied that they teach at up to grade 8 and 6(7.6%) of them ascertained that they teach it up to grade 10.

During the focus group discussions, some respondents further revealed that Ethiopian sign language is taught as a subject up to Grade 8 for all students with deafness in all special needs unit of primary schools of Amhara Region. One respondent claimed: "In Amhara Region, Ethiopian sign language was not considered as a mother tongue of children with deafness like other local language which is found in the region such as Awgni, xamtanga, oromipha and Argobgna .Due to this, sign language used as a medium of medium of communication of only in the first cycle of primary schools but other local languages are used. The researcher also employed classroom observation on the use and teaching of Sign language in both special units, it was learnt that Sign language was time tabled up to Grade 4.

4.2.2.2 Singing System SNE Teachers use in Teaching Sign Language to Deaf Students

Chart 1: Singing system



As indicated in the above chart, the respondents were asked which signing system they use when teaching Sign language to students with deafness. 6(8%), 53(67%) and 20(25%) of the respondents said that they use sign naturally, Signed Amharic and, both respectively. This implies that the majority of SNE teachers use signed Amharic rather than sign naturally. From the data one can understand that the majority of the special need education teachers' use Amharic signed to present lesson in the classroom to students with deafness. Contrary to this only 8% of the stated that they use natural signing.

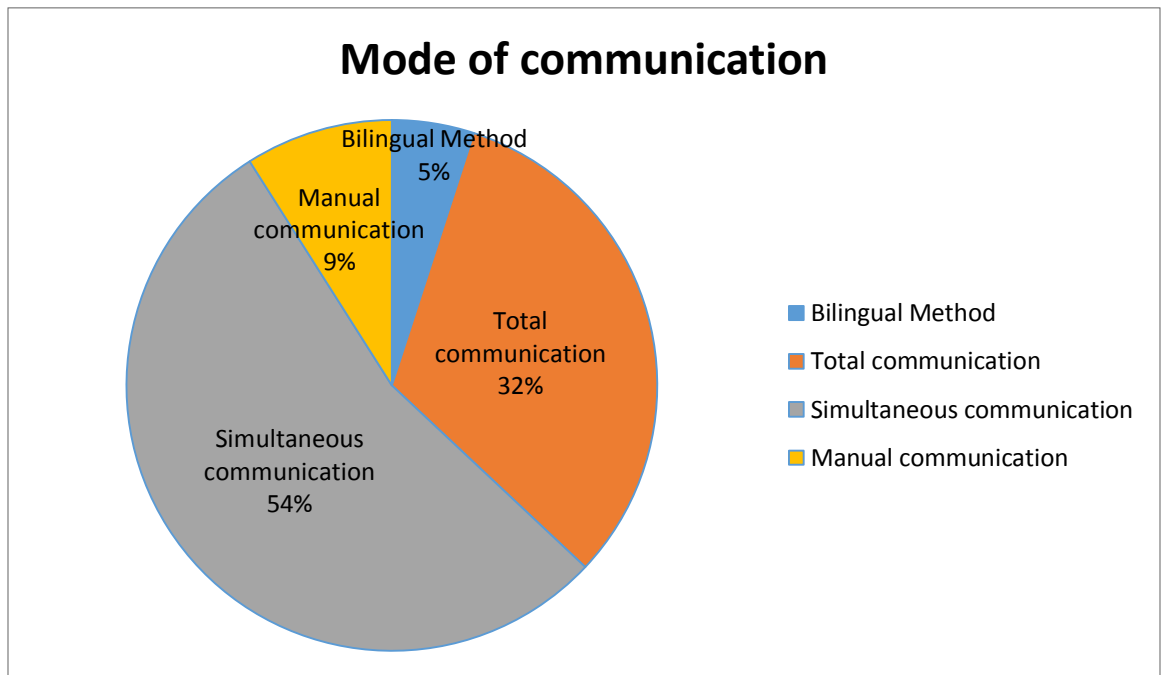
On the focus group discussion, SNE teachers came up with various reasons were given for the use of Signed Amharic. Some SNE teachers said that it was difficult to explain some concept by using sign naturally due to their limited sign naturally skills. However, others SNE teachers said that there was a need to use both at times. One SNE teacher commented that, “ልጆቹ እውቀት እንዲጨምሩ ተፈሪላቸው”

ምልክት አጠቃላይ ሁግን ፈተና እንዳይወድቁብኝ የ አሚርኛ ምልክት አጠቃላይ ሁ” which is to mean (For understanding purposes, I use Sign language and for the sake of child promotion I use Signed Amharic).

The researcher also carried out classroom observation on the instructional strategies of Sign language in special needs unit of primary schools. Sign language is primarily taught as a mode of communication to facilitate the teaching of the Amharic language and other academic subjects like environmental science, mathematics and aesthetics. There is no attempt whatever to teach the deaf students about the rules of Sign language.

4.2.2.3 Mode of Communication in Teaching Sign Language

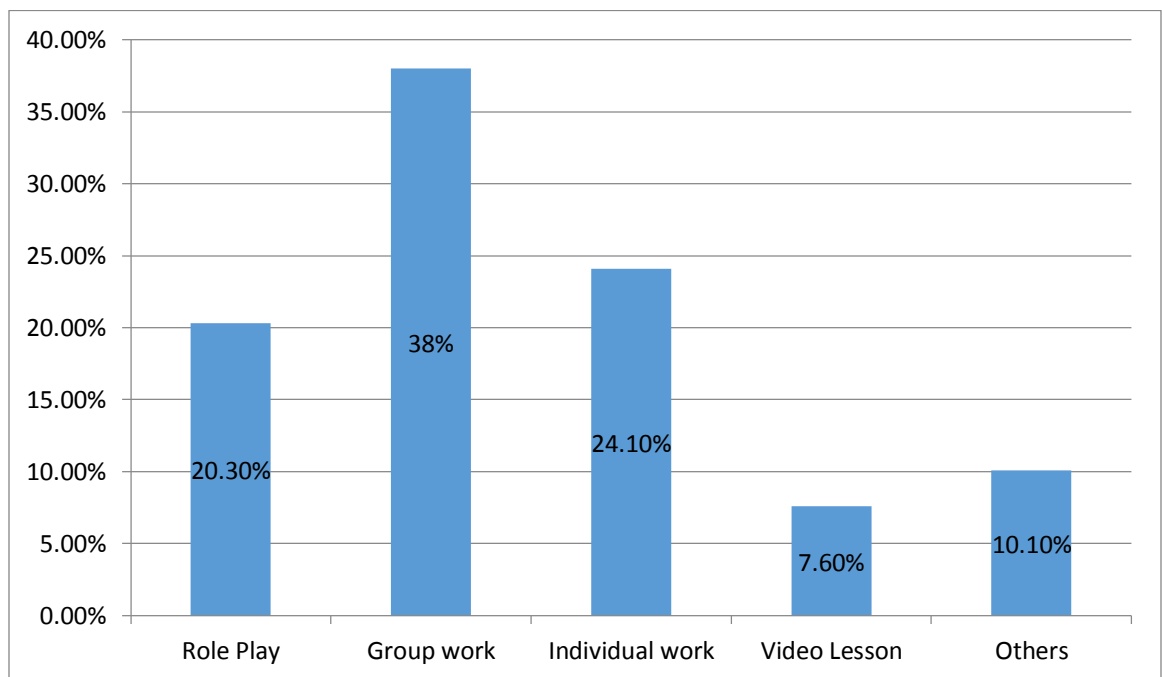
Chart 2: Mode of communication



As illustrated in the above chart, the respondents were asked which mode of communication they use in teaching Sign language. 4(5%), 24(32%), 43(54%) and 8(9%) of the respondents said that they use bilingual/bicultural method, total communication, simultaneous communication and manual communication respectively. The focus group discussion held with SNE teachers revealed various reasons for the use of simultaneous communication. Some SNE teachers said it was difficult to explain some concept using sign naturally and bilingual/bicultural methods as they lack of knowledge and skills. Hence, there was a need to use simultaneous communication (both speech and sign) at times. However, from FGD one SNE teacher gave this view, “we also use total communication for teaching Sign language because the students did not understand the concept in one method of communication”. Personal observation of the researcher in the class room revealed that SNE teachers in both schools teach Sign language by using both speech and sign simultaneously.

4.2.2.4 Active Learning Methods in Teaching Sign Language

Chart 3- Active learning Methods



The data in Chart 3 clearly show the respondents' reaction to the active learning methods used in teaching Sign language. Accordingly, 16(20.3%) ,30(38.0%), 19(24.1%), 6(7.6%) and 8(10.1) reported use of role play, group work, individual work, video sign and other active learning methods respectively. From the data, one can infer that group work was frequently used whereas video lesson was a least used method. The observation made in the classroom also went in line with the responses to the questionnaire. SNE teachers use participatory active learning methods in a group work.

4.2.3. Availability of Adapted Educational Material in Teaching Sign Language

Table.4 Availability of adapted educational material available to supplement Sign language teaching

NO	Items	Yes		No		T	
		No	(%)	No	(%)	No	(%)
1	Availability of other sign language books (pupils' activity books and story books)?	71	89.87	8	10.13	79	100
2	Availability of Teachers' guide	-		79	100.00	79	100
3	Availability of Sign language dictionary	22	27.85	57	72.15	79	100
4	Availability of Sign language Students' text book?			79	100.00	79	100
5	Availability of Sign language posters, manual books and guides and concrete objects that convey meaning	30	37.97	49	62.03	79	100
6	Availability of charts, models and word sign cards	72	91.14	7	8.86	79	100
7	Availability of visual teaching aids like videos in Sign language and electronic libraries, machines like pure tone audiometer	3	3.80	76	96.20	79	100
8	Availability of human resources who are competent in Sign language	32	40.51	47	59.49	79	100

Table 4 illustrates the availability of adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language to deaf students. The respondents were asked whether there are enough sign language student text books and

teachers guide in teaching Sign language to the deaf students or not. All of the respondents responded that there were no any students' text book and teachers' guide of Sign language in the special needs units of primary schools.

On the other hand, the responses of the respondents given to other sign language books and word sign cards revealed that there are enough other Sign language books and word sign cards in their schools. For instances, the responses given to item one indicates that 89.9% of the respondents confirmed the presence of enough sign language books. Moreover, the majority (91.1%) of respondents confirmed the presence of word sign cards in their schools. The respondents were asked whether there are Ethiopian Sign language dictionary and picture cards in teaching Sign language to the deaf students, or not. The majority of the respondents responded that there were no adequate Ethiopian Sign language dictionary and picture cards in their schools. For instances, the responses given to dictionary indicates that 72.2% of the respondents confirmed the absence of Ethiopian Sign language dictionary. In addition to this, 62%o of the respondents confirmed the absence of picture cards in their schools. From this one can infer that the target schools have not available Ethiopian Sign language dictionary and picture cards.

The respondents were asked whether there are visual teaching aids and human resources who are competent in Sign language in teaching deaf students, or not. The majority of the respondents responded that there are not adequate visual teaching aids in their schools. For instance, the responses given to visual teaching aids indicates that 96.2% of the respondents confirmed the absence visual teaching aids. Besides, the responses of the respondents' forwarded to human resources also show that 59.5%o of them confirmed the absence of human resources who are competent in Sign language in their schools. From this one can infer that the target schools have not available visual teaching aids and human resources.

Observations by the researcher also revealed that the two schools did not have enough Sign language materials. At Atse zeraykob special needs units of primary schools, investigations revealed that only the ‘ሀ sign book for students with deafness for Grades One to four and ‘የምልክት ቋንቋ ለጀሚያዎች’ በሆላኦና መስማት የተሰናቸው ጎምህርት ቤት የተዘጋጀ and “the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary, (የአሜሪካ የምልክት ቋንቋ መስማትና ማገር ለተሳናቸው ሰዎች መጽሀፍ) were available. At Hidasie special needs units of primary schools, only ‘የምልክት ቋንቋ ለጀሚያዎች’ በሆላኦና መስማት የተሰናቸው ጎምህርት ቤት የተዘጋጀ ‘were found.

During the focus group discussion, Some SNE teachers complained that the Ethiopian Sign Language dictionary had some signs that were different from what the students were actually using. Besides, the dictionary does not provide a clear guide on how to use signs.

Others also said that the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary has limited entries of signs to help the advancement and teaching of Sign language in schools. An examination of the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary revealed that there are only about 1200 signs in the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary. One of the SNE expert put it this way:

“The main challenge faced by SNE teachers is lack of subject related Sign language dictionaries for reference purposes to the subjects they teach. Also, there is no consistent use of Sign language use in the schools each tends to use its own sign language.”

One of the college instructors said that, lack of Sign language materials, absence of teachers’ and students’ text books and failure to use the Sign language were some of the curriculum challenges faced by SNE teachers when teaching deaf students.

The SNE expert from Wereda education office summarized the challenges which the teachers faced as follows: “Firstly, they have no teaching materials that have been prepared in Sign language so that the

deaf cannot learn better. Secondly, most of SNE teachers of deaf students do not know Sign language, and lastly SNE teachers lack motivation in terms of special education allowance. There is more work involved when one is teaching deaf students as compared to teaching hearing students.”

The class room and resource center observation revealed the fact that there was a problem in teaching sign language both as a subject and as a medium of instruction. This was because resource centers were not well equipped with sign language materials for both SNE teachers and deaf students.

4.2.4 SNE teachers' perceived performance level of knowledge and skills acquired from CTE training.

Table.5 Number of Observation, Mean, Standard deviation and t-value pertaining to Score on the performance level of knowledge and skills acquired from CTE training.

Variable	No. of items	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
linguistic characteristics of Sign language	4	79	9.36	1.84	78	45.22	.000
Holistic introductory course of Sign language	4	79	10.03	2.38	78	37.35	.000
Finger spelling of Sign language	3	79	8.65	1.74	78	44.077	.000
Communicative skills of Sign language	3	79	6.74	1.63	78	36.640	.000

The examination of the mean score for the knowledge of linguistic characteristics of Sign language subscale indicated a poor performance level which is discouraging. The mean score for the knowledge

of linguistic characteristics of Sign language subscale is 9.36 with a standard deviation of 1.84. Comparing the obtained mean(9.36) for SNE teachers knowledge of linguistic characteristics of Sign language with that of the expected mean (12, which assumes an average “good”), one can see that the obtained mean score is significantly less than the average.

Going one step further the analysis, the one- sample t-test procedure was repeated for an expected mean that is half way between the average position (12) and that of agreement (20). In other words, the obtained mean score (9.36) was compared with 12. Here also, the obtained value is significantly less than the test value ($t=45.22$, $df=78$, $p<.001$). Further examination of SNE teachers' ratings of each items also indicates that the great majority of SNE teachers rated most items poor level.

Thus, accordingly to the obtained ratings, SNE teachers appeared to low performance level of knowledge of linguistic characteristics of Sign language. Similarly, the FGD made with SNE teachers, showed that they had serious problem with regard to areas of grammatical knowledge of Sign language. On the contrary, from the data obtained through observation, it was that both at primary and College levels Sign language books or Sign language module comprise only sign vocabulary.

The second subscale pertains to the holistic introductory course of sign language .This examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 10.3) is significantly below than a score of 12($t=37.35$, $df=78$, $p<.001$). A one sample t-test computed for holistic introductory course of sign language indicated that the obtained mean ($t=37.35$, $df=78$, $p<.001$) was significantly below the average mean.

Further examination of SNE teachers' ratings of each items also indicates that the great majority of SNE teachers rated most items poor level.

Thus, accordingly to the obtained ratings, SNE teachers appeared to low performance level of knowledge of holistic introductory courses of Sign language. This was also confirmed by the data

gained from the FGD i.e., it showed that most of SNE teachers believed that awareness of deaf culture was not adequately treated in CTE curriculum.

The Class room observation of the researcher revealed that classrooms were not equipped with a variety of media necessary for instructional activities of Sign language subject. Moreover, there were no stimulating classroom for the deaf students.

The third subscale pertain to the finger spelling of sign language. The examination of the mean score for Finger spelling of Sign language subscale similarly indicated a satisfactory performance level. The mean score for Finger spelling of Sign language subscale is 8.65 with a standard deviation of 1.74. comparing the obtained mean for SNE teachers skill of signing finger spelling with the expected mean (9, which assumes an average position, “good”).one can see that the obtained mean score is slightly below than the average position($t= 44.07$, $df=78$, $p<.001$).

A one –sample t-test was further run to see if the mean score of the sample is slightly different from half of the maximum possible score (that is, 9).this examination showed that the sample mean score (that is, 8.65) is slightly below than a score of 9($t= 44.07$, $df=78$, $p<.001$). Further examination of SNE teachers’ ratings of each items also indicates that the great majority of SNE teachers rated most items poor performance level.

Thus, accordingly to the obtained ratings, SNE teachers appeared to low performance skills of signing finger spelling of Sign language. The above data was also confirmed by the data of observation. Similarly, during FGD session, the participants revealed that they had adequate performance in using Ethiopian finger spelling which can be used for teaching Sign language.

The fourth sub scale pertains to the communicative skills SNE teachers often employ to teach sign language. Comparing the obtained mean (6.74) with the expected mean (9), which assumes an average “good”, one can see that the obtained mean score is significantly less than the average ($t=36.64$, $df=78$, $p<.001$). A one sample t-test computed for communicative skills indicated that the obtained mean ($t=36.64$, $df=78$, $p<.001$) was significantly below the average mean. Further examination of SNE teachers’ ratings of each item also indicates that the great majority of SNE teachers rated most items poor performance level.

Thus, accordingly to the obtained ratings, SNE teachers appeared to low performance skills of communicative skills of Sign language. In line with the above data analysis, from the FGD made with SNE teachers, it is reported that some SNE teachers have serious problem with regard to the interactive, receptive and self-expressive skill of Sign language due to a limited exposure to SNE teachers teaching in actual class room situation during the practicum programme. This idea was also supported by the qualitative data gathered through observation. It was learnt that the course in the college curriculum were more of sign vocabulary and it lacked interactive, receptive and expressive skill components of sign language. It also revealed the existence of gap between SNE teachers and deaf students in understanding both the general communication and subject related concepts.

Generally, from the result of the finding, it can be concluded that there is no gap in level of education and qualification in teaching Sign language in special needs units of primary schools. However, during the focus group discussions, the respondents further revealed that the standard of Sign language training at CTE were generally poor. Some teachers felt that the training at CTE was offering a much more finger spelling and sign vocabulary in Sign language. Here are the exact words of one respondent: “At the Debre Birhan College of Teacher Education, Sign language training is not

provided in detail. The training is more of theoretical. No adequate time and credit hours is given for practice.”

Table 6: Gender Difference in Knowledge and Skill of Sign Language

Variable	Sex	N		SD	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Communicative skill in Sign language	Male	43	2.3256	.51685	1.372	.174
	Female	36	2.1574	.57175		
Usage of finger spelling	Male	43	3.0078	.60197	2.073	.041
	Female	36	2.7407	.52922		
Awareness of holistic introductory course of Sign language	Male	43	2.0000	.47409	-.153	.878
	Female	36	2.0167	.48844		
Knowledge of linguistic issue	Male	43	2.2791	.41622	1.330	.187
	Female	36	2.4167	.50356		

The relevant descriptive statistics pertaining to SNE teachers' Knowledge and Skill of Sign Language they used to teach deaf students are presented in Table 6 above. The use of independent sample test computed for male and female special needs education teachers, there was no significant difference in communicative skills ($t=1.37$, $df=78$, $p>.05$), holistic introductory courses ($t=-.153$, $df=78$, $p>.05$), and linguistic issues ($t=1.33$, $df=78$, $p>.05$). That is, male and female SNE teachers have reported about the same level of Knowledge and Skill of Sign Language they used to teach deaf students. However, there was significant difference between male and female SNE teachers in finger spelling. The mean value for the males was higher than that of females for finger spelling.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results presented in the previous chapter are discussed. Attempts was also made to draw implication of the findings and to answer, the research questions that were raised initially.

5.1. Instructional contents of Sign language in teaching deaf students in special needs units of primary schools

The result in general suggest that except finger spelling, number sign and sign vocabulary, Sign language subject did not comprise the major linguistic part, holistic introductory components, and communicative skills of Sign language., This finding seem to be contradictory to what Sign language subject should include: holistic introductory course and linguistics course and communicative skill about Sign language (Ekwama, 2003).

Accordingly, to the researcher's observation, it is understood that the Sign language subject in special needs units of primary schools did not comprise a holistic introductory components, linguistics contents and communicative skills. Moreover, from the research findings, it was obvious that the deaf students and SNE teachers have difficulties in understanding each other. In support of the finding, in Kenya, Global Deaf Connections (2010) reports indicated that most of the teachers in Kenyan schools do not know Sign language or understand Deaf culture.

This implies that deaf students need to learn the basic linguistic parts of Sign language, grammar of Sign language and conversational behavior of Sign language in special needs units of primary schools. Some SNE teachers taking part in the FGD had limited knowledge, skill and awareness about deaf culture, visual preparation training and sociolinguistic issues of the deaf community.

In general, the basic assumption is that although SNE teachers are teaching Sign language with limited skill training on Sign language instructional contents, they could be benefited significantly from experience sharing with their colleagues. Having a responsibility, Amhara Regional Education Bureau and Debre Brhan CTE have made curriculum revision of sign language for deaf students in special needs unit of primary schools.

5.2 Instructional Strategies of Sign Language in Teaching Deaf Students in Special Needs Units of Primary Schools

The study has revealed that SNE teachers were using Signed Amharic signing system. In line with this, the main ways teachers communicated in classroom instruction were speech and written communication, seldom signing. “Oral speech”, reading and writing were the main mods of classroom instruction used by the teachers. Having rudimentary training in a sign system (signed, Amharic), teachers were forced to teach in an oral dominated approach, which is not totally perceptible by deaf students through their auditory or visual channels (Almayehu, 2003).he emphasis that in the class room while teachers used speech very frequently, deaf students used to sign in the classroom instructional interaction to express their thoughts. However, unless objects were referred to, teachers had difficulties in understanding the sign of the deaf students.

However, to the contrary of the result, experts in bilingual Deaf education emphasize the need to gain mastery in one language before learning the second language. This is also in line with the principles of the linguistic interdependency theory. With respect to this theory, Cummins (1989) states that one has to attain complete competence in one language before attaining competence in another. The evidence supports the use of a bilingual educational approach that promotes the use of a learner’s primary

language to develop skills in the learner's secondary language even though the curriculum has multiple objectives beyond just language development (Gregory, 1996).

In addition to, Bilingualisms' say, deaf children have the right to "their own language" i.e., sign language used by deaf people within their own community. Since sign language is to be the deaf child's "mother-tongue." Bilingualism emphasize that information and education should be offered primarily through sign rather than oral language (Johnson et al. 1989 cited in Almayehu, 2003).

In support of this finding, on the focus group discussion respondents emphasized that sign language was the main medium of communication between SNE teachers and deaf students .The schools have recognized that early language learning is key to the language development of the deaf. This is supported by many scholars who have proved through various research works that early language exposure improves literacy skills for the deaf (Drasgow 1998).

Moreover, regarding Sign language, MOE (2006), outlined roles and responsibilities of teachers with special emphasis on how to teach and assess students with special needs. With respect to methods of instruction in the class room 38% of the respondents confirmed that they use group work. The observation data revealed that SNE teachers use participatory active learning methods at group work. In line to this finding, MOE (2012) assert that teachers must use innovative instructional strategies, e.g. cooperative, collaborative learning, peer tutoring etc., to meet the needs of all children in the classroom.

In general terms, therefore, group work was the dominant instructional method that the majority of SNE teachers frequently used in their respective class rooms. But some also confirmed that they use individual work, role play. In line with this, most language acquisition and teaching theorists now support a holistic view of second language learning in which teachers are sensitive to the individual needs of students rather than to any dominant language methodology (Ekwama, 2003).

Personal observation of the researcher in the class room revealed that SNE teachers in both schools teach Sign language by using both speech and sign simultaneously. This implies that the majority of SNE teachers use simultaneous communication rather than other mode of communication.

On the other hand, if Sign language is to be introduced as a taught subject, how far should deaf students learn it? The study found out that there was confusion as to whether the schools were teaching Sign language as a subject at different grade levels or not. While some SNE teachers claim that they teach Sign language at lower grades. Despite these weaknesses, the study also found out that the majority of the respondents want Sign language to be introduced as a subject at least up to Grade eight.

5.3 Availability of Adapted Educational Materials in Teaching Sign language

The study revealed that there were not any students' text book and teachers' guide for Sign language in special needs units of primary schools. SNE teachers had a problem in teaching sign language as a subject and as a medium of instruction. This was because the resource centers were ill-equipped with sign language materials for both SNE teachers and deaf students. In line with this, in Kenya, Global Deaf Connections (2010) reports that only a small percentage of deaf children attended schools receiving limited resources because of the stereotypes that deaf education is a waste of time and money.

Personal observations by the researcher also revealed that the two schools did not have enough Sign language materials. At Atse zeraykob special needs units of primary school, the data revealed that only

the ‘ሀ sign book for students with deafness for Grades One to four and ‘የምልክት ቋንቋ ለጀምራዎቹ’ በሆላኦና መስማት የተሰናቸው ጎምህርት ቤት የተዘጋጀ and “the Ethiopian Sign Language Dictionary were available. At Hidasie special needs unit of primary school, only the ‘የምልክት ቋንቋ ለጀምራዎቹ’ በሆላኦና መስማት የተሰናቸው ጎምህርት ቤት የተዘጋጀ ‘were found. From this one can infer that the target schools have available other sign language books and word sign cards.

Generally, from the qualitative data the study revealed that main challenge faced by SNE teachers were lack of subject related Sign language dictionaries for reference purposes to the subjects they teach. Also, there was no consistent Sign language use in the schools. Schools have their own Sign language.

5.4 Support of CTE Training for SNE Teachers in Teaching Sign language

The study revealed that the training offered by CTE was at ‘poor’ level. However, based on the data gained from FGD, most of the SNE teachers believed that Sign language training by CTE was sufficient enough to help SNE teachers do their job in their respective schools.

Although it can be said that even if the 2011 Education Act emphasizes the use of Sign language in the education of deaf students, SNE teachers graduated from the College start teaching with very limited skills in Sign language and general interaction with deaf children. They lacked both the linguistic and communicative competence in Sign language in order to effectively teach the deaf. There is, therefore, a need to match policy documents and pronouncements with action on the ground.

The study revealed that the courses offered by the College are more of theoretical and lacks practical skills. SNE teachers did not get comprehensive training in Sign language. This was in line with the

researcher observations. These findings are similar to the situation in Kenya where Global Deaf Connection (2010) reports that most of the teachers in the 41 schools for the Deaf do not know Sign language as they use pointing as their primary means of teaching methods. This study shows that the Debre- Brhan College of Teacher Education was partially responsible for the problems created as a result of the inadequacy of Sign language training being offered. Based on the demographic characteristics the majority of SNE teacher respondents have less than 5 years of teaching experience and they need support from either their senior teachers or need additional in service training to improve their skill in teaching Sign language .In addition to this, based on their background information their qualification and level of education goes agreement with the expected educational level and qualification.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

The general objective of the study was to assess the practices of SNE teachers in teaching sign language to deaf students in special needs units of primary schools in North Showa Zone of Amhara Region. In this study descriptive survey research design was employed. Cluster sampling methods was use to select the samples Weredas. Simple random sampling technique specifically lottery method was used the cluster Weredas. In the second stage of sampling, in each selected clusters, the number of SNE teachers were considered before deciding the number of sample schools to be selected. To obtain adequate and relevant data for the study and triangulate it, the researcher selected and employed questionnaire, focus group discussion and observation chick list. The data were analyzed and interpreted using simple basic quantitative statistical techniques such as percentages, averages and frequency tables and t-test because it is appropriate to interpret data obtained through questionnaires.

Hence, finding of the summery of the study as follows.

- Regarding to instructional contents of Sign language subject in the special needs units if primary schools, basic instructional component of Sign language contents are not included in the curriculum.
- With respect to instructional strategies in teaching Sign language to the deaf students, SNE teachers were using Signed Amharic signing system.
- Regarding to availability of adapted educational materials in teaching Sign language to the deaf students were not available.

- CTE training support for SNE teachers in teaching Sign language to the deaf students is found to be at poor level.

6.2 Conclusion

Although sign language instruction has made progress over the past years in different parts of the world, it continues to experience little growth in Ethiopia in relation to instructional contents and strategies informing curriculum development and instructional methodology.

From the major finding, one may conclude that

- There is no gap in level of education and qualification of SNE teachers in teaching on the primary level of deaf education based on their back ground information.
- SNE teachers simply teach only sign vocabulary and finger spelling rather than major components of sign language
- SNE teachers use Signed Amharic in their schools.
- Absence of resource centers with ill prepared human resource.
- Sign language training at CTE was found to be at poor level.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher would like to forward the following recommendation for the improvement of Sign language education.

1. A thorough review of special needs units of primary schools curricula at various grade level should done to check the relevancy and adequacy of Sign language contents. Therefore, all SNE teachers should take on-job-training in various contents of Sign language.

3. The study showed SNE teachers used signed Amharic. However, many studies have shown that the bilingual/bicultural approach is the most effective approach of teaching the deaf children. Hence the College should to introduce the bilingual/bicultural approach to the education of the deaf.

4. Special needs units of Primary schools should develop supplementary teaching resources. These should be in the form of Sign language story books, picture, Sign language video tapes, charts, students and teachers' books and many more in order to improve the teaching of Sign language in schools.

5. College of Teacher Education should introduce comprehensive training in Sign language as a language for SNE teachers of the deaf. It needs revise the Sign language training curriculum. This would improve the values of sign language as currently most SNE teachers are not competent in Sign language.

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**ጳውሎስ ካሱ (2007 ዓ.ም) የኢትዮጵያ የምልክት ቋንቋ ማስተማሪያ መመሪያ፣ አዲስ አበባ ዩንቨርሲቲ
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