PRIMARY ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) TEACHING IN ETHIOPIA: POLICY AND PRACTICE

BY
DEREJE NEGEDE BINIYAM

A Dissertation Submitted to Department of Foreign Languages and Literature in the Institute of Language Studies of Addis Ababa University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the gap/s the teaching of English at primary levels faces focusing on the policy and the practices. In the study, the grades 1-4 English curriculum policy and the English text books are reviewed to identify the adequacy and appropriacy of the contents to promote students mastery of English. The grades 1-4 teacher training curriculum policy are reviewed and teachers classroom performances to teaching English are observed to find out the adequacy and relevance of the contents to equip teachers to the purpose and the actual practices teachers display in their classroom. The contents of grades 1-4 English curriculum policy and their respective English textbooks are reviewed qualitatively through adapting outlines developed by Balbi (1997, 2008) and the reviewed literature. The grades 1-4 curriculum is reviewed within this framework stressing the identified similarity or variation with the contents of the textbooks. The teachers training curriculum policy contents are examined qualitatively with reference to the reviewed literature and the competences teachers are required to the purpose. To further look into the practices of these policy contents and the delivery of the textbook contents, 48 live English classroom lessons of 24 teachers and their respective lesson plans at six different primary schools found in Bahir Dar town were observed and reviewed. Teachers competences in the English language and teaching English were assessed in light of the frameworks developed by Al-Mutawa (1997) and Kiely and Re-Dickens (2005) and the reviewed literature. A survey questionnaire was also used to allow observed teachers to evaluate their own English proficiency and English teaching skills using similar framework but quantitatively. The principals of these schools were also subsequently interviewed to identify activities the school perform to maximize students English language learning. Interviews were also conducted with the English language curriculum experts both in the Ministry and in the ANRS Education Bureau to examine policy and practice issues related to primary English language teaching. The results reveal that the grades 1-4 English curriculums are mostly represented in the English textbooks. Besides, most of the contents and the tasks and the activities embodied in the textbooks and the structures used to present these contents are found appropriate to promote students English. However, the organizations of the training program and the English course contents that the Ministry has stipulated are found to be inadequate and inappropriate to equip trainees with these skills required. This indicates a discrepancy between the grades 1-4 English curriculum policy and the policy stipulated to teacher preparations. The results of the classroom observations evidence discrepancy between the methods propounded in the policy contents and teacher’s guides and teachers’ actual classroom practices to teaching the target language. Even though teachers see themselves positively in terms of their English proficiency and English teaching skills, the multi-sources of data evidenced that teachers’ English language proficiency and English teaching skills are weak to implement the tasks and activities embodied in the English textbooks as intended. The study then concludes that the inadequate and inappropriate curriculum policy the Ministry has enacted for target teachers training seem to take the major responsibility for primary students’ weak mastery of English.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>Iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>Vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of Figures</td>
<td>Xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>List of Table</td>
<td>Xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>Xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Background of the Study</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Statement of the Research Problem</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Objectives of the Study and the Research Questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Significance of the study</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Scope of the Study</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>Definition of Terms</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: PRIMARY ELT IN ETHIOPIA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Primary ELT in Ethiopia</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Overview of the Review of the Grades 1-4 English syllabus</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Overviews of the Review of the First-Cycle Language Teachers Training Curriculum</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Conception of Curriculum and Syllabus</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Clarifications of the Conceptions of Policy and Practice</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>What is Primary Education?</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Contexts and Issues in Teaching EFL to Young Learners</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.1</td>
<td>Contexts for Children Learning E(FL)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2</td>
<td>Issues affecting early FL learning</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4.2.1</td>
<td>The age factor</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1.2 Grades 1-4 English Textbooks
4.4.1.3 Teachers Training Curriculum
4.4.2 Classroom Observation
4.4.3 Questionnaire
4.4.4 Interview
4.5 Data Collection Procedures
4.5.1 Procurements of Documents and Methods Used to Obtain Information
4.5.2 Classroom Observation
4.5.3 Questionnaire
4.5.4 Interview
4.6 Organizations of the data
4.6.1 Qualitative Data
4.6.1.1 Grades 1-4 English Curriculum
4.6.1.2 English Textbooks and their respective teacher’s guides
4.6.1.3 The Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program
4.6.1.4 Classroom Observation
4.6.1.5 Questionnaire (Open-ended)
4.6.1.6 Interview
4.6.2 Quantitative Data
4.6.2.1 Questionnaire
4.7 Data Analysis
4.7.1 Qualitative Data
4.7.1.1 First Cycle English Curriculum and their Respective Textbooks
4.7.1.2 The Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program
4.7.1.3 Classroom Observation
4.7.1.4 Questionnaire
4.7.1.5 Interview
4.7.2 Quantitative data
4.7.2.1 Questionnaire
CHAPTER FIVE: PILOT STUDY: RESULTS AND MEASURES TAKEN 123

5.1 Introduction 123
5.2 Sampling 124
5.2.1 Schools 124
5.2.2 Grade Levels and Teachers 124
5.3 Description of the Instruments 125
5.3.1 Classroom observation 125
5.3.2 Questionnaire 126
5.4 Procedures of Administration 126
5.5 Analysis of the pilot data 129
5.5.1 Analysis of the qualitative data 129
5.5.2 Analysis of the quantitative data 130
5.6 Results 131
5.7 Measures taken 132
5.8 Conclusions 133

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE ANALYSES OF THE GRADES 1-4 ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS 134

6.1 Introduction 134
6.2 Results and Discussions of the Analyses of the Grades 1-4 English Textbooks 134
6.2.1 Structure 134
6.2.2 Goals 135
6.2.3 Approach to language 144
6.2.3.1 Theory of Language 144
6.2.3.2 Language Input 148
6.2.3.3 New language is introduced 149
6.2.3.4 Language use 160
6.2.3.5 Language contents 172
6.2.4 Treatment of the four skills 191
6.2.5 Texts and topics 209
6.2.6 Lay out 215
6.2.7 Teacher’s Guide 224
### CHAPTER SEVEN: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS TRAINING CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS CLASSROOM PRACTICES

#### 7.1 Introduction

- **7.2 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of the Teachers Training English Curriculum**
  - 7.2.1 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of the Language Improvement Courses
  - 7.2.2 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of ELT Methodology Course

#### 7.3 Results of the Analyses of the Classroom Observations and the Questionnaire

- 7.3.1 Results of the Analyses of the Classroom Observations
  - 7.3.1.1 Reports on Teachers’ Level of English Proficiency
  - 7.3.1.2 Reports on teachers’ Lesson Planning and Implementation Skills
- 7.3.2 Results of the Analyses of the Questionnaire

#### 7.4 Implications of the Results of the Classroom Observations and Teachers’ Questionnaire

### CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.1 Summary

#### 8.2 Conclusion

#### 8.3 Recommendations

### APPENDICES

- **Appendix-A**: Questionnaire for Primary First-Cycle English Teachers in Bahir Dar Town, Amhara National Regional State
- **Appendix-B**: Checklist for Classroom Observation
- **Appendix C**: Interview guide for officials in the Ministry and Bureau
- **Appendix-D**: Interview guide for primary school principals
- **Appendix-E**: Templates for analysis and evaluation of textbooks
- **Appendix F**: Interview Transcriptions
- **Appendix G**: Sample Activity Types
Appendix H-Sample Classroom Lessons Transcripts

Appendix I-Teachers’ Lesson Plans
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure A  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Levels of Proficiency  267
Figure B  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Planning Competences  268
Figure C  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Implementation Competences  268
Figure D  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Planning and Implementation skills  269
LIST OF TABLE

Table 1- The English Language Courses the TEIs currently Offer to Language Cluster Diploma Program 232
ACRONYMS

EFL-English as a Foreign Language
MoE-Ministry of Education
TEI-Teacher Education Institutes
ANRS-Amhara National Regional State
REB-Regional Education Bureau
CPD-Continuous Professional development
IRE-Interactive Radio English
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study
The teaching of foreign languages began in Ethiopia a century ago. At the beginning of the nineteenth century mandatory French and optional Arabic, Italian and English were given starting from primary schools so as to produce Ethiopians who could ably communicate in the languages and look after the foreign affairs (Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996). English dominance in various domains in the country has begun after the end of the liberation struggle with Italy in 1941 (Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996; Marew, 2000). The use of English as a Foreign Language (henceforth EFL) in Ethiopian education system became dominant beginning from primary schools. English was given as a compulsory subject and used as a medium of instruction commencing from first primary grade (Bowen, 1976; Daniel, 1998; Dereje, 2000).

Due to the dearth of qualified personnel, the Ethiopian government issued policy that allowed the use of imported curriculum and ELT materials and foreign teachers who came from English-speaking countries; but many witness that primary school students’ performances in the English language were found commendable (Tekeste, 1990; Ayelech, 1997). One can observe from this policy experience that success in primary EFL teaching require appropriate curriculum policy and teaching material as well as teachers who are qualified to the purpose.

Pursuant to the need the independence of many African countries created, Ethiopian authorities passed another policy decision to localize the teaching staff and the curriculum (Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996; Tekeste, 2006). In order to reduce children’s learning burden and to achieve national unity, this policy ratified in 1958 replaced English, after serving fourteen years as the language of instruction in primary classes, by Amharic and barred vernacular languages other than Amharic from primary curriculum (Bowen, 1976; Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996). Thus, English continued to be taught as a subject from the earliest grade, but with transfer to medium of instruction occurring in the first year of junior secondary school (Jarvis, 1969; Tekeste, 1990; Daniel, 1998). The subsequent policy enacted between 1975-1990 delayed the starting stage of teaching English as a subject to grade 3, but remained as medium of instruction from grade seven (Bowen, 1976; Tekeste, 1990; Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996; Daniel, 1998; Marew, 2000).
Amharic, a language with its own script, has been the official language of Ethiopia since then and still holds this position. It is the most common lingua franca in the country, particularly in towns (Bloor and Wonwossen, 1996). Ethiopia is a multilingual country with as many as 80 indigenous languages (Marew, 2000; Michael, 2003). This may imply that for many Ethiopians English language could be the third or even the fourth language which could be seen as disadvantage unlike native Amharic speakers to whom it was the second. Cognizant of this, some further delay with English to students whose L1 was not Amharic was stated in the 1963 curriculum paying special emphasis to Amharic, though in practice no systematic provision was made (Tesfaye, 1976).

This policy shift in the starting age/stage (from grade 1 to 3) and in ELT approach (from using immersion to subject teaching) by the then authorities seemed to spring from the desire to localize the curriculum and the teachers. This policy decision appeared to pay little regard to the important conditions that might have brought the ELT program into success as revealed in various research evidences. Sufficient ground work was not made prior to implementing the decision of localizing the teaching staff and the production of English textbooks and following this to date a number of problems pertaining to English language teaching (ELT) have come into sight (Fanaye, 1972; Tesfaye, 1976; Tekeste, 1990, 2006). They also confirm that pupils English learning experience at primary school level were found insufficient to enable majority of them to cope with subjects given in English afterwards. Students’ weak post primary performances could show failure in policy decisions.

The widespread use of Amharic has reduced the previous status of English in Ethiopian society and has been viewed by many as a de facto classroom medium to teaching English and other subjects given in English because of comprehension difficulties in English (Stoddart, 1986; Tekeste, 1990; Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996). As the main goal of teaching English in Ethiopia between 1974 and 1991 was to use it as a weapon to intensify the struggle against international imperialism, emphasis was given to make the Marxist message in the contents comprehensible to students by translating the texts into Amharic rather than helping students practice the English language; following this, Amharic, in most of the classroom time, was used as the actual classroom language to teaching English and other subjects (Michael, 2003). Outdated approach and teaching methods suggested in the curriculum and used in the teaching materials as well as
untrained and academically unqualified teachers employed in primary classrooms have also been frequently cited in Ethiopia as responsible to the low levels of primary students English (Jarvis, 1969; Stoddart, 1986; Shimelis, 1998). By doing these, the then Ministry seemed to have given little regard to the target language and then posed problems in children’s primary EFL learning though English retained its significant role as a language of instruction in their transition to the next level.

Until 1991, there was no change in the Ethiopian language policy and Amharic maintained its status as the national language and the medium of primary education (Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996). English also continued to be given as a subject from grade 3 and as a medium from junior secondary school. However, official policy, which is currently in use, seems to decree that English be given as a core subject from grade one onwards, and be used as a medium of education from grade nine up to tertiary level and adds that

   a) Primary education will be in the medium of nationality language of the region. This will also be the medium of teacher training institutes for kindergarten and primary education.

   b) Amharic will be given as a language of country wide communication (FDRGE, 1994: 23-24).

Even though pupils’ exposure to English appears increasing by lowering the onset age from grade 3 to grade 1, the policy at the same time offsets this added exposure through reducing its use as language of learning from grade 7 to grade 9. However, this could provide children more time to English language learning before they are required to use it as a language of learning. In order to allow children learn primary subjects in their L1 and to reduce their learning load where Amharic is not L1, the policy notifies Amharic be given as a subject in late primary and secondary schools (5-12) giving priority to L1 and the English language. The policy further demanded L1 be a medium in the teachers training institutes and enquired trainee teachers to receive one year of training after completing their first-cycle secondary education (10 + 1) to get certification to teach L1, Amharic and English subjects offered in primary classes (MoE, 2002, 2003). These student teachers were expected to take 8 hours of general English to teach the language which was not sufficient for teachers to meet practical challenges of teaching EFL to first cycle students (MoE, 2003). This could mean that teachers were used to depend mainly on
the English language they were taught at primary and secondary levels to teach the language to primary school children though the amount of students’ English language learning time is increased. The policy of primary ELT thus seemed to have forced teachers to teach the language without providing them adequate and appropriate training.

Regrettably, it is common practice that the younger the learners are, the least educated their teachers may be and following this many officials used to assume that the ability to read and write is sufficient condition to be primary school EFL teacher when formulating policy (Brumfit, 1995; Rixon, 1999; Driscoll, 1999; Doval and Rial, 2002). This could imply that many countries including Ethiopia might set their primary EFL policy based on the assumption that teaching EFL at primary school level demands no qualification and spending money on teachers training is not worth of the results. However, the recent trends in the field have shown that most successful primary EFL programs have been in countries where teachers have been adequately trained to meet the intrinsic challenges of the curriculum (Rixon, 2000; Muir, 2005; Hayes, 2006). Teacher education is the cornerstone in this area and thus investing in primary EFL teacher training, more particularly, appears to be crucial for its success (Amanuel, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2005). This depends on policy decisions about where money in the country is invested, and in a country like Ethiopia where English knowledge is crucial in various domains, these are policies that affect the immediate future of the whole country. It is then the conditions a government put forward in its policy to the organization and execution of primary EFL teachers training that can mainly affect or effect the processes of the teaching and learning of primary English (Edelenbos et al., 2006).

The Ministry of Education’s (MoE, 2005, 2007) subsequent attempt to upgrade the educational level of all primary school English teachers through having them attend distance learning, pre- and in-service training, however, could show its recent endeavor to pave the ground for quality ELT. This decision for all primary school teachers to have a minimum of diploma on what they are teaching (MoE, 2007) may also indicate the undertaking to change old tradition upheld with regard to primary English teachers training. This may indicate that the country is in the process of change with regard to primary EFL teachers training, creating a demand for investigation of its policy and implementation.
The political, technological and educational changes the country has witnessed recently seem to have greatly increased the role of English when compared to the little efforts that have been made to improve its delivery. For example, the role of Amharic for inter-ethnic communication is reduced (Bloor and Wondwosen, 1996) and the use of satellite TV in secondary classrooms to teach English and other subjects given in the English language with no use of L1 (Tekeste, 2006) can make its knowledge crucial. What is more, the MoE (2010) notes that “English has become increasingly important as the language of instruction, business, communication, science and technology around the world. It is playing a pivotal role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in Ethiopian education system.” (p.1). Its role in the Ethiopian Education system is thus indispensable and students failure in English may signal failure in other subjects too at secondary level.

Although most of the government organizations use major languages such as Oromifa, Amharic and Tigrigna, depending on the particular region, English is still viewed by many as essential for progress in one’s life (Ambatchew, 2003). Anecdotal evidences show that with the recent boom of universities and then their graduates, proficiency in English has emerged as a critical factor in graduate unemployment. All of international organizations, some of the non-government organizations and most of the well-paying governmental organizations such as Ethiopian Airlines, Ethiopian Telecommunications, Commercial Banks of Ethiopia, Ethiopian Insurance Corporations demand candidates good mastery of English. These imply the significant role the English language plays in Ethiopia both to its economic development and to individual students’ future educational and life careers. These could imply that fluency in English has become an agent of social differentiation which has, in turn, led to increase the demand for quality primary English Education.

Moreover, the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program of the Ministry which brought the 12 + 1 Teacher Training Institutes and 12 +2 College of Teacher Education’s programs as well as Universities’ four year study program into 10 +1, 10 + 3 and three years, respectively, seemed to push the extra burden of English language teaching to lower grades. This again demands extra effort to improve the teaching of English at primary grades. These imply that the primary ELT policy the government puts forward and its actual practice need to be
commensurate with the practical use the language renders to individual citizens and the country at large.

So, the need to make research to understand what makes EFL teaching more successful and how young learners learn seems fundamental to rise up the quality of ELT in Ethiopia.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In spite of the wealth of experience Ethiopia has on primary EFL instruction, the situation to date seems to be precarious bedeviled by lack of quality as students are still found unable to study other subjects given in English in their post primary grades. In relation to this, several locally conducted studies have revealed that the level of English acquired by the time pupils complete primary grades have been found very poor and this has negatively affected the general level of their academic achievements (Rogers, 1969; Paulos, 1979; Dandir, 1981; Tewolde, 1988; Taddesse, 1990; Dejenie, 1990; Zenebe, 2000; Michael, 2003; Tekeste, 2006). The Ministry also seems to be bewildered by students’ insufficient knowledge of English after eight years of learning and questions the existing educational bureaus to seek solution for the problem through revisiting the system (MoE, 2002). The General Education Quality Assurance and Examination Agency’s (Henceforth GEQAEA) (2008) document further corroborates that performances of primary first-and second-cycle leavers on English subject in the Ethiopian Third National Learning Assessment were found to be lamentably very low, far less than the minimum expected by Ethiopian Education and Training Policy. The results Grade 4 and Grade 8 students obtained on English subject in the first and the second national assessment tests when compared to the third were found rather deteriorating which may further indicate the depressing levels of primary students’ English in Ethiopia (GEQAEA, 2008).

The problem of using English across the curriculum still continues to be acute, notwithstanding the significant role it maintains in the country (Michael, 2003; Abiy, 2005). It is then possible to argue that children’s English experience at primary level seem to have failed to enable them meet the rigors of other subjects given in English and thus their talent can be stunted while they struggle to acquire new skills and ideas through the medium of a barely understood English language. This could mean that Ethiopian students are unable to profit from the teaching of English at primary level and the implications it may have to the nation’s quality of education
have assumed an alarming proportion. Most of the policy decisions passed so far with regard to the teaching of EFL in Ethiopian primary schools seemed to have failed to foster the desired level of English pupils need at post primary levels and in so doing the role of English appears to be changed, to use Stoddart’s (1986) words, from “medium of instruction to medium of obstruction”.

The Ethiopian Government effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of enrolling all school age population in primary grades or primary education for all has recently increased the number of students’ enrollment in primary schools (MoE, 2008). During 2006/07 academic year, the gross enrollment rate for primary schools reached 95.9 %, while the net enrollment rate stood at 89.3 % which indicate high number of children in primary schools. Ethiopia cannot then meet the pressing demands of its economic development if more than 95 percent of its school age population is barred from appropriate and adequate education. Primary EFL education is crucial in this venture (Brumfit, 1995; Wang, 2002; Benedetti and Freppon, 2006; MoE, 2002).

In countries where English is necessary for access to secondary education, it appears vital for governments to ensure that primary English is taught effectively to provide equal chances to all citizens (Sure and Ogechi, 2009). Confirming the significant role FLs render to different countries, Hunt et al (2005) (citing Conius, 1630) note that ‘a nation’s fate will depend, in the end, on the quality of the education its children get in language.’ (p.1). The attainment of the quality of education and Ethiopia’s anticipated growth can then be determined by the quality of EFL delivery its primary school children are exposed to which again depend on the conditions entailed in the primary EFL education policies.

The Ministry state that children’s primary first-cycle grades encounter has to be enjoyable and provide children inspiration for learning; but if this early exposure to English poses problems on children’s cognition, affection and social development, then their sustainable learning can be hampered (MoE, 2003; Mohanraj, 2006). Several advocates of primary EFL teaching also argue that if young learners EFL learning experience is not enjoyable and successful, the program can be counterproductive (Cameron, 2003; Nikolove and Djigovich, 2006; Edelenbos et al., 2006). That is children’s attitude and interest towards learning EFL in their future educational career can be wasted if their early English learning experience is not winning. One can be rational then to state that the problem of ELT in Ethiopia seems to have its origin in primary school (Stoddart,
The self-esteem YLs are predisposed could be negatively affected and could lead them to avert English language learning in their future educational career even when there is a possibility of improving their proficiency in the target language unless their primary EFL learning is made to be successful (Brumfit, 1995; Cameron, 2001; McKay, 2006). Learning a language is a long process and ensuring children’s EFL learning to be successful at primary level is crucial before the demands of the adult life are up on them (Driscoll and Frost, 1999). These further vindicate the seriousness of the problem of the teaching of English at primary level in Ethiopia.

In order to assist Ethiopians cope with the versatile roles English plays, the policy with regard to the organizations and teaching of primary English are crucial and are expected to be in line with aspects included in recent developments in primary EFL education as well as practical experiences of successful primary schools in the world. The last 15-20 years have witnessed a shift of interest to teaching E(FLs) from secondary or late primary to earlier primary grade levels and this has been accompanied by a lot of research publications (Nikolove and Djigovich, 2006; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008). The various international conferences (Banglore, India; Pecs, Hungary; for example) held on young foreign language learners research, their subsequent publications (such as Moon and Nikolove, 2000; Nikolove et al, 2007) also indicate the special emphasis recently given to the field. Cognizant of this, several countries that were disillusioned from their early start program and that have just introduced it have begun revisiting their primary ELT policies operating in their respective context so as to profit out of these study booms and improve pupils’ achievement in English (Rixon, 1999; Benedetti and Freppon, 2006; Balbi, 2008). As part of the global community, therefore, revisiting the policy texts of primary ELT and its practices against the recent publications is crucial to prevail over the crisis of ELT the country is currently experiencing. Several authorities (such as Cameron, 2003; Nikolove and Djigovich, 2006; Edelenbos et al., 2006) then advise many countries to revisit their working policies that bind their program against international trends derived from various studies. This further vindicates the viability of the research undertaken.

There is a direct relationship between research and both policy and practice of primary ELT (Cummins and Davison, 2007). Examining policy contents in terms of their specific features to primary ELT and their effect on achievement against current developments worldwide on
primary EFL education appear to be essential to fostering children’s acquisition of English (Stern, 1969; Balbi, 2008). It is hardly possible to consider the classroom detached from current national and regional political milieu and trends happening internationally (Balbi, 2008). The appropriacy and effectiveness of aspects included in policy contents alone may not guarantee success of the program and thus their transferability into practice need to be weighed at the same time. International experience evidence that some countries policy contents marked as appropriate and effective may not be successful due to practice related problems (e.g. insufficient qualified personnel to implement, budgetary issues) (Hayes, 2006). Therefore, examining the practices at the same time focusing on the textbooks developed and teachers live classroom performances to teaching the target language appears crucial to find out any policy-practice gaps.

Examining policy contents in terms of their specific features to primary ELT and their effect on achievement seems to be a good start in identifying potential problems of primary EFL teaching (Stern, 1969). Ali (2003) has examined Malaysian policy texts of primary ELT and suggested potential policy concerns to improve classroom practices and then Malaysian students’ weak post primary performances in the English language. Thus, examining policy contents and the actual practices in terms of the specific elements involved in the organizations and teaching of EFL at primary level seem to be vital in identifying potential strengths and concerns and then to plant sound primary ELT policy and sound practices (Stern, 1969; Driscoll et al., 2004; Benedetti and Freppon, 2006).

Principles derived from the constructive views on language and young learners’ language learning, insights drawn from Second Language Acquisition researches and from special language learning characteristics of children are crucial aspects for success in teaching E(FL) to early primary school children (Parker and Parker, 1995; Williams, 1995; Brumfit, 1995; Dereboy, 2008). To promote the teaching of FL to young learners, it appears advisable to utilize works beyond language classrooms: in child development, learning theory, in L1 development and in the development of second language in bilingual contexts (Cameron, 2001). Children’s special language learning characteristics demand their teachers to receive special kind of training (Broughton et al., 1980; Felberbauer, 1997; Dereboy, 2008). Young learners’ social and cognitive development, children’s natural love for social interaction and language use, for
example, need to be considered when developing primary EFL curriculum and courses for
teacher training.

Policies that foster success of the program, therefore, mainly depends on the appropriacy and adequacy of the curriculum and teaching material, teachers’ expertise and teachers training and resources employed as these components are crucially associated with primary school children (Cameron, 2003; Driscoll, 2005; Petrides, 2005). Similarly, different advocates of the teaching of foreign languages at primary levels (for example, Stern, 1969; Moon and Nikolove, 2000; Nikolove and Djigovic, 2006) suggest that the specifications of the organizations and teaching of primary English with regard to beginning age, time allocations, approach and methods, teacher training and materials development to be researched, documented and debated as such results and documents are found to be crucial to refine and/or formulate policies that could positively dictate the quality of classroom situation. Several studies (such as Jarvis, 1969; Stoddart, 1986; Taddesse, 1990; Zenebe, 2000; Michael, 2003; Tekeste, 2006) recommend the review of the system of teaching English at primary school level in terms of curriculum approach and methods, material preparation, and teacher training to necessarily contribute to children’s English language learning.

Though few studies have been conducted on primary level English language (Girma, 1983; Chefena, 1988; Sara, 1989; Tesfay, 1990; Tsegaye, 1998; Brhanie, 1998; Zenebe, 2000), no studies so far, to the knowledge of the researcher, seem to address the primary EFL teaching program in terms of what the policy propounds to the organizations and teaching of English at primary school level and its actual practices.

Thus, this study aims at investigating the issues involved in the policy texts focusing on primary first-cycle EFL curriculum, teachers training curriculum, and the practices focusing on level of teachers’ expertise to the purpose and classroom ELT scenario, and the textbooks in use so as to bridge the gap (s) responsible to primary students’ low achievement in the English language.

1.3 Objectives of the study and the research questions

Thus, the overall aim of this study is to look into the gaps the primary EFL teaching program experiences through studying factors involved in the policy texts of primary ELT and their translation into practices. Based on this overall goal, the following specific objectives are set.
- Analyze the grades 1-4 English curriculum contents and their respective English textbooks against what reviewed literatures recommends to the target groups EFL learning so as to find out their relationships and their adequacy and appropriate to foster children’s English language learning.

- Examine first cycle teachers training English curriculum policy currently in use against what the reviewed literature suggest to primary EFL teachers to be equipped with in order to identify the adequacy and relevance of the teacher training program.

- Analyze primary English classroom dynamics against a framework suggested by different authorities (such as Al-Mutawa, 1997; Driscoll, 2005; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005) to the teaching of EFL to the target groups so as to find out teachers proficiency level of English and teaching English to young learners.

- Analyze aspects involved in the policy contents against the practices to identify any policy practice gaps.

Pursuing these objectives, the following major research questions are drawn to frame the study.

1. How adequate and appropriate are the Grades 1-4 English curriculum policy and their respective English textbooks to foster pupils’ mastery of the English language?

2. How adequate and appropriate are the first cycle English teachers training curriculum policy to equip teachers to the purpose?

3. What are teachers’ levels of proficiency in English and in teaching English to first-cycle pupils, as manifested in the classroom dynamics?

4. Are there any gaps among aspects involved in the policy contents of primary EFL teaching and the actuality in terms the practices?

1.4 Significance of the study

In spite of the limitations of this study (referred to below), I believe that there are a number of areas in which the results of the study can make a contribution to existing knowledge and understanding.

In providing detailed analysis of the curriculum and sample English textbooks in the context of teaching English to young learners, the results of the study can demonstrate the types of problems that can be associated with the underpinning theories and principles entailed in them,
and in so doing, alert Ministry officials the dangers involved in designing curriculum and in selecting and approving primary EFL teaching materials.

The results of the study can also draw Ministry’s officials attention to the fact that those who recommend appropriate textbook and teaching techniques for using it in primary classrooms often tend to underrate the difficulties that can be involved in adjusting the activities appropriate to pupils’ cognitive and linguistic levels and applying them in ways that make a genuine contribution to the teaching and learning of EFL.

In collecting and analyzing data on English language specific courses that are presently in use to train first cycle English teachers, the results of the study can alert officials and policy makers to the fact that how adequate and appropriate they are to equip trainee teachers with the skills they are expected to apply in primary EFL classrooms.

Advocates of FL teaching to young learners often suggest that teachers use instructional strategies that are suitable to young learners’ interest and their natural potential for language learning. Thus, the critical review of young learners’ special characteristics to learning EFL and theories and principles that may underpin teachers instructional strategies can draw teachers, textbook writers and curriculum developers’ attentions to a variety of teaching techniques.

Finally, the findings of the study can be used as a spring board for other researchers who want to make further research on the teaching of English to primary school children.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The objective of the present study is to examine the gaps the teaching and learning of English to primary school children experience through studying national policy texts of primary ELT and their practices.

The scope of the study is therefore delimited to national and regional levels for its data gathering. In collecting data related to organization and teaching of English at first cycle primary level, the national policy texts related to the first cycle English curriculum and teachers training are chosen and analyzed. However, in order to find out whether and to what extent aspects recommended in the national policy texts are actually practiced and the practices facilitate or inhibit the realizations of the nationally targeted primary first cycle English objectives, the scope is
restricted to government first cycle primary schools, and Education Bureau found in the Amhara National Regional State as well as on nationally prepared English textbooks. It does not cover other regions practices. What is more, private primary schools and second-cycle state-owned primary schools are not enclosed in the study. Although the sampled government schools were delimited to Bahir Dar town, the schools observed were made to cover various locations of the town so that any variations in ELT can be detected.

The manifold individual initiatives in pre-school EFL teaching (3 to 6 years of age) are not also considered in this study as there is no government-led kindergarten and even the existing private ones are restricted in towns sideling rural communities (UNESCO, 2006). Government role to promote EFL teaching at this level is peripheral such as preparing only the English curriculum for others to use it (ICDR, 2004). Therefore, due to this reason the study is delimited only to first cycle level.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study offers a number of useful insights with regard to the teaching and learning of EFL at primary school level; however, there are some possible limitations to this study.

Manageability as well as constraints in terms of research fund and time further restricts the study to focus only on aspects of curriculum contents, teachers’ competences, and the textbooks, and teacher training curriculum. The study does not attempt to find out possible problems related to other aspects of primary EFL teaching (for example, testing practices). The study is also limited to only explore whether the organization of the training program and the course contents currently in use are adequate and appropriate to equip teachers to the purpose. The study does not attempt to uncover how these courses are implemented in the college classrooms which could depict, for example, the discrepancy, if any, between what are described in the courses and the actual classroom practices.

I found some of the teachers reluctant to allow me to observe and audio record their ELT classrooms and to lend me their daily’s lesson plan despite the consent paper I produced from Bahir Dar Education Office. Following this, I found it appropriate to widen observed schools and tried to offset the unobserved classrooms. Besides, the use of self-contained classes in some
schools made some teachers to stop their ELT without waiting for the allocated time saying that they felt too tired to continue their lesson which also limited my observation time.

Lack of primary school teaching experience on the part of the researcher may also be viewed as the other limitation to the study. The results of the study would be richer if the researcher were not limited to only his indirect experience obtained from reviewed literature on the topic. His lack of direct experience, for example, in teaching primary school children and using the existing English teaching materials may limit the researcher’s involvement to giving comment on what children’s likes and abhors and how age-appropriate certain teaching methodologies are which may affect the research to depend more of on theoretical perspectives.

1.7 Definition of Terms

**English as a Foreign Language (EFL)** refers to a situation where the role of the English language in the social life is minimal and restricted to classroom or school context.

**Teacher self-evaluation** is another method of evaluation by teachers of their own classroom performance as a means of professional development. It aims to cross-validate my evaluation through conducting classroom observation and gathering descriptive data on specified aspects of the teachers’ classroom performance.

**Task and activity** have same meaning and imply that a piece of meaning focused work involving learners in comprehending, producing and/or interacting in the target language.

**Teacher competency** refers to specific knowledge or ability that a teacher possesses which is to be vital to success as a teacher.

**Language learning and language acquisition** refers to language learning and does not refer to Krashen’s meaning.

**Appropriate** is used in the research questions to refer to how in line the contents and their organizations are with children’s characteristics, language learning potentialities and interest that may bring about pupils learning and progress as well as how the courses are tuned in to would be English teachers expected roles. It also carries same meaning for training curriculum contents.
Adequate refers to the extent of the professional knowledge (specific to teaching EFL to primary school children) and linguistic competence in combination teachers receive are sufficient to execute their primary English teaching duties. It also refers how the tasks and activities encompassed in the textbooks are sufficient to attain the goal/objectives targeted.
CHAPTER TWO
PRIMARY ELT IN ETHIOPIA

2.1 Introduction

The major aim of this study is to examine the gap the teaching of English language at primary level experiences focusing on policy texts of primary ELT and its practices. The policy seems to be potentially responsible for the practices of the teaching of English at all levels and thus worth investigating it to identify potential problems it may cause on practices.

There are varieties of situations where young learners learn E(FL) and thus identifying background factors and examining the situation with reference to the past and current researches and the trends internationally may depict how the specific conditions put in place are effective and age-appropriate to meet the objectives of the program. To examine the adequacy and appropriacy of the organizations and presentations of the contents of the first cycle English textbooks, for example, clear descriptions of context seem to be essential (Driscoll, 1999; Nagy and Balbi, 2008). Thus, the following description of the context in terms of primary ELT, grades 1-4 English curriculum and its teacher training program are then used as a background to demonstrate the reality of primary EFL teaching in Ethiopia with few descriptions about the specific variations in the regions.

2.2 Primary ELT in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, primary education constitutes the foundation of the national education system. It is compulsory for every Ethiopian citizen between the ages of 7 and 14 (MoE, 2002, 2005). Primary education is emphasized because it is not only the right of every citizen, but also it is the chief instrument for social and economic growth (MoE, 2002, 2005). In the Ethiopian Education system, primary education lasts 8 years, from grades 1 to 4 (first cycle) and from grades 5 to 8 (second cycle) (MoE, 2006). EFL is offered as part of the curriculum at all school levels including in the kindergarten’s curriculum as compulsory subject.

The opening of kindergartens (for learners between 4 and 6 years of age) is left for private investors and religious organizations, and the government’s role is limited to curriculum design, standard setting and supervision (MoE, 2002, 2005). Following this, kindergartens in the country and in the region in particular are located around major towns and thus students who are living in
towns and whose family can afford the fees to pay can benefit from the English language being offered while those from rural areas and whose parents cannot afford the fees are unlikely to profit from (UNESCO, 2006). The consequence of this seems to be felt when these children with different experiences in learning the English language sit together in the same primary classroom and for the same national examinations. Such varied practices in one country are suggestible until sufficient qualified teachers who can ably teach EFL at KG are found; but disregarding this background difference in the subsequent grade levels where the students study together is tantamount to favoring some and denying the others (Komorowska, 1997). However, the strategic goal of the education policy, as is stated in the Ethiopian MoE’s (2002) document, is to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of quality education to all regions particularly to rural areas where 85% of the population live.

One of the major motivating forces underlying the decision to lowering the onset age to grade 1 from grade 3 in 1993 was the FL status of English in Ethiopia. Many pupils’ encounter with the English language is limited only in school classroom and thus lowering the starting stage is assumed, due to the time added to study the language, to better prepare children for access to subjects given in English in their post-primary educational career (MoE, 2002). It is at present compulsory FL for the entire student population at the primary and secondary levels, for 12 years. Despite its role as a FL, the English language earns a high prestige both in the society and in the educational system more than ever before (Teshome, 1998; Michael, 2003). Due to the various roles of English, pupils hold strong motivation to learn the language and parents and policy makers can easily be tempted to further reduce the onset age.

The pre-service education and training given to primary school teachers should take into account the levels of the curriculum and children’s characteristics including mother tongue languages so that teachers can assist children acquire the English language maintaining the quality standard (MoE, 2007). Over 20 languages are used as mediums of instruction in Ethiopia up to various primary grades in each region depending on the relative development of L1 and the availability of qualified teachers to teach the language (MoE, 2002). As a corollary, some regions that use L1 as language of instruction up to grades 4/6, unlike what is recommended by the Ministry, resort to the use English as a language of instruction beginning from grades 5/7. For example, in Addis Ababa and in Gambela, English is used as a language of instruction beginning from grade
7, while in Southern Nations Nationalities and peoples (SNNP), it is used beginning from Grade 5 (Abiy, 2005).

2.3 Overview of the Review of the Grades 1-4 English syllabus

The Ethiopian MoE selects a firm from among several bidders to prepare English textbooks at national levels using the grades 1-4 syllabus as a framework. Each first cycle primary grade has one English student book to be accomplished within one year.

The English Syllabus for Grades 1-4 (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education, 2009) acknowledges that the rationales for the revision of the previous syllabus are

- To reduce the content and make it compatible with students background as well as to harmonize the content and the allotted time.
- The syllabus is based on minimum learning competencies for each grade against which students will be assessed. Each unit provides the content and activities needed to build up students’ competency.
- The language contents in line with the main topic are organized on cyclical progression for all the first-cycle grades. This spiral progression is demonstrated in the minimum learning competences and the topic flow chart.
- The content is relevant to all children whether they are progressing to secondary school, technical or vocational college or leaving school and contributing to development of the community.
- The syllabus demonstrates practical implementation of active learning and learner-centeredness to provide teachers broader range of methodologies in their teaching.
- The approach to language teaching is communicative and skills based: students learn and practise language which is meaningful to them and which has a real purpose and context. For this reason the focus is on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Grammar and vocabulary items are integrated into practice of these skills. Language is about communicating with others and learners are encouraged to interact with each other in a variety of patterns: pairs, groups and whole class. The activities are also designed to encourage students’ natural curiosity and appetite for discovery together with enjoyment of learning through games, songs and stories.
The Ministry further acknowledges that the suggested syllabus contents underpin children’s psychological characteristics that are believed appropriate to promote children’s English language learning:

- motivating children to learn English by using interesting and enjoyable methods
- learning geared to: communicating in English, using the language creatively, taking delight in talk
- building on young learners’ instinct for play and fun
- taking account of their capacity for imagination and creativity
- developing in young learners sensitivity to foreign languages and cultures
- raising their awareness of the mother tongue and English
- developing in them a positive attitude to language learning

The syllabus further notes that activities and tasks to be designed need to consider the following suggestions.

- have a clear learning outcome
- can be personalised according to pupils’ interests
- are graded, to facilitate movement from the cognitively simple to the more demanding
- are contextualised and meaningful, with a real purpose and audience in mind
- encourage creative, productive and enjoyable use of language
- are designed to enable increasing pupil independence and choice
- stimulate young learners
- engage children’s minds and keep them physically occupied
- allow children to respond to language input by doing
- provide opportunities for interaction to develop fluency
- enable teachers to choose a style that suits the mood
- help young learners understand by using the various senses: seeing, hearing, feeling etc
- cater for different modes of learning: verbal, visual, musical, logical, physical, interpersonal etc
- keep lessons short and simple
- vary work on the same topic
- vary the organisation of learning (children working in pairs, groups, whole class)
- reuse materials for a different purpose
• repeat patterns (e.g. words or phrases) which promote learning
• repeat rhythms that reinforce English sounds, stress and intonation

The topics and activities chosen as well as the colourful pictures embodied in the grade 1-4 English textbooks are in line with the suggestions given in the syllabus to developing pupils’ positive attitude to English language learning. Teachers are also enquired to create anxiety free classroom through praising students classroom attempts whether right or wrong and helping children enjoy the lessons tailoring to their experience, for example. Children can develop positive attitude towards EFL learning if they are made to enjoy learning the lessons and the various learning activities they are involved in (Blondin et al., 1998). Unlike Ethiopia, China targets students’ motivation to EFL learning for teachers to work towards its attainment to pave the road for promoting children’s EFL learning (Wang, 2001).

The time allotted to first cycle students to learn the English language is five periods a week and the length of each period is 40 minutes. The guide further notes that English language lessons are conducted to a minimum of 170 periods, 113.33 hours, for 34-week academic year. Thus, primary school students may study English for 906.64 hours before it is used as a language of instruction in Grade 9. However, the time of exposure for some students is likely to increase particularly for students who have got the chance to start from kindergarten and to learn other subjects given in English before Grade 9. Some regions, as stated in section 2.2 above, have lowered the starting stage to use English as a language of instruction before grade 9 with the underlying assumption that more exposure to the target language can enhance students’ mastery of the language for subsequent learning (MoE, 2002). Thousands of hours of exposure in the FL are required before threshold level where students are expected to use the language for communication (Cambell et al., 1983; Johnston, 1994; Dereboy, 2008). The implications this may hold to primary EFL classrooms is that the effect of ‘learning time’ can be evident only in combination with other contextual factors germane to quality teaching (Blondin et al., 1998)

The first cycle English curriculum guide notes that the curriculum is designed to develop students’ communicative ability and demands students to use the English language that they learn in a true and meaningful way. The approach the document suggests to the teaching of English is the Communicative Approach emphasizing on developing the four skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing simultaneously. The goal of teaching English to primary first-cycle
students is thus to enable children to communicate in a foreign language. The ability to produce a comprehensible message is hence regarded more important than the message’s formal aspect. Consequently, it is very important to expose pupils as much as possible to the foreign language and to offer them frequent opportunities to use it in situations that closely resembles to their real life.

The grade 1 and 2 syllabus focus on improving students’ oral skills with some focus on enhancing students’ forming and recognizing letters of English alphabet (grade 1) which then grows to include to enabling students to recognize and write some familiar words and phrases grade 2). The focus of grade 3 is still on speaking and listening but there is more work on reading and writing. In reading grade 3 students move on from recognition and reading of words and phrases to reading short sentences. In writing, they continue to copy words, phrases and sentences but also write familiar words, phrases and very short sentences on their own. The Grade 4 syllabus notes activities must also encourage students to reading short paragraphs and writing short sentences in a paragraph on their own. The syllabus notes that activities that encourage students to read and write words and short sentences of their own begins in grade 3 and grow further to paragraph levels in grade 4. The syllabus thus suggest textbook writers to follow a step by step teaching of the skills of reading and writing skills emphasizing on letter and sound identifications and recognition of some familiar words/phrases and their sounds. It then suggests to defer activities that may demand students to read and write phrases and short sentences on their own until grade 3 where students are expected to begin developing some literacy skills (the ability in reading and writing) in their native language to assisting their reading and writing skills in English language (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001).

The syllabus suggest textbook authors to organize contents of the first cycle English textbooks into 15, 14, 12 and 12 continuous teaching units, respectively from grades 1 to 4, following a topical format. The topics the grade 1 syllabus suggests comprises of school, people, family, animals, objects, ability, likes/dislikes, and location, and for the grade 2 to center on all topics in grade 1 with the exclusion of the last two, and food, time and activities. The topics grade 3 contents and activities suggested to center on are school, people, family, animals, likes/dislikes (as in grade 1), food, time, and activities (as in grade 2), and health and safety, and Jobs. The topics grade 4 contents suggested to center on are school, people, objects, location (as in grade
1), food, time, (as in grade 2) health and safety, jobs (as in grade 3), and art and literature, and the past. The Ministry notes that it considers international contents commonly used for similar age and grade levels to choose English syllabus contents.

For example, under the topic *people*, the grade 1 syllabus are organized on the themes *Parts of the Body* (unit 2), *Families* (Unit 7) and *Describing People* (Unit 8) and of grade 2 on *Touch Your Nose* (unit 4), *What Are You Wearing* (Unit 12) and *Look at All the People* (unit 14) and grade 3 on *Let’s Wash Our Hands* (Unit 4), *My Father Looks After The Children* (Unit 5) depicting the reuse of the topics covered under different situations. Besides, the grade 3 syllabus suggests various activities to equip students on identifying and using English numbers under the theme *Ten Oranges, Please* (Unit 2) using various functions such as counting objects (such as pebbles, beans, beads) and boys and girls in classroom, and pronunciation on number stress as well as *You Must Have Fun* (Unit 3) use ordinal numbers printed on cards for students to line up in class, telling/writing time reading/listening digital clock can witness that contents within and across themes are suggested to be recycled. The topics chosen around which children’s English language is cultivated are thus recycled within and across each grade level in the syllabus.

The themes suggested in the syllabus such as greetings and objects in classroom, parts of the body, colours, and counting to organize content and activities to teaching the English languages appears to consider students immediate surroundings and are likely to be motivating to the target groups. Each grade syllabus also presents tasks and activities under each unit centering around these themes to give students context and interest to use the language. The themes suggested in each grade level syllabus to organize activities seem to be specified ranging from what is immediate and familiar to the pupils knowledge and experience as the topics in the first two grades illustrate to topics that are remote or unfamiliar as past or future event like jobs, basic health and safety in grade three and like arts and literature in grade four syllabus that appear to be cognitively more demanding for the first grades.

The typical methods teachers are suggested to employ are ‘present the day’s lesson and objectives’, ‘introduce new language such as vocabulary or functions’, ‘demonstrate the languages for students to repeat and then to reuse with teachers supervisions’, ‘allow students to try out the languages learned engaging in pairs or groups in an extended way’, and ‘review what has been learned’. The syllabus suggests teachers’ role to give direct instruction to introduce new
languages to the class, be a model for children to use the language and to give opportunities for children to try out the illustrated words and language patterns engaging with each other in pair- and group-work activities. The syllabus notes that students should get opportunities to check and compare their work in pairs/groups in the listening and speaking activities; students can also be arranged in pairs/groups to read aloud and to silent reading. Teachers are also suggested to give chances to students to write sentences and paragraphs together as writing is more of a process than a product. The syllabus further suggests the use of songs, games, role plays, chants, rhymes to enhance students’ language use. The activities often start with controlled practice of discreet language items or patterns through a variety of activities. This is to give students the chance to practise the target language. Freer speaking activities will occur later. It also suggests activities to mirror the national test types such as multiple choice items. The language lessons in every unit are organized in an increasing order of difficulties—from working on controlled activities that limit students to the given languages to freer activity types taking into account their experience on the English language and on the topic. The suggested procedures thus seem to follow comprehension, assimilation and production.

2.4 Overviews of the Review of the First-Cycle Language Teachers Training Curriculum

The aim of the first cycle teachers college of education is to prepare teachers who can ably handle the teaching of languages including English, and Civics and Ethical Education. In order to cope with the shortage of teachers at first cycle primary level and to minimize costs that the country may incur in terms of teachers salary and training cost (MoE, 2010), teachers training follows cluster modalities: language, social science, mathematics and natural science as well as aesthetics. This cluster is opted as it is believed that it enables trainees to acquire general and interrelated concepts and knowledge on the subjects they are prepared to teach. For example, the TEIs (Teacher Education Institutes) offer language courses to equip teachers with the skills of language teaching including English. Unlike the cluster diploma program, linear program prepares English or other subject teachers pursuing major/minor trends for second-cycle primary grades. The training in both programs runs for three years. The Ministry acknowledges the negative impact such disparity may exert on first-cycle trainees and promises to rectify it in the future as the country progresses economically (MoE, 2010).
Students who complete their first cycle secondary education and fail to join the second-cycle secondary education are screened and recruited by the Regional Education Bureau to join the pre-service teachers training colleges. From these failed students, the Bureau selects trainee students using criteria such as high CGPA (Cumulative Grade average Point) in Grade 10 national examination including in the English language, good communication skills, and good result in the written examination. Besides, the bureau channels recruited trainees to various departments of either the linear or the clustered program based on trainee’s selection and background. Candidates may become English language teachers based on their preferences to L1 and/or Amharic or English language and based on the results they achieved in language subjects including English in Grades 9 and 10 and in the Grade 10 National Examination. Teachers’ interest in studying L1 and/or Amharic may lead candidates to teaching English language with minimum interest and proficiency in the English language which may negatively impact the teaching and learning of English at first cycle level. These may indicate that the criteria the Bureau sets to recruit prospective English language teachers do not seem to directly correspond to the ELT awaiting them— for example—mandatory good proficiency in the English language.

For qualified student teachers who choose to study language education, the Cluster diploma Program currently offers a list of courses which include vernaculars and/or Amharic, English and Civic and Ethical Education. Some trainees are trained focusing on courses comprising of three different languages (Vernacular (L1), Amharic and English), while others are trained on the latter two languages and civics and ethical education courses. This variation in teachers training within and across the region/s could show one of the strategies the Ministry has considered to addressing the multilingual nature of the country; hence, trainees whose L1 is not Amharic may take only the language course, while others whose L1 is Amharic are made to substitute L1 with civics and ethical education.

Student teachers in the language cluster program take major courses which total 56 credit hours: Amharic with 20, English with 16 and Civics and Ethical Education with 17 credit hours. The Ministry arranges language cluster teachers to also take common courses that amount to eight credit hours in their three years stay in the colleges. Out of this, six credit hours go to English language courses (Communicative English I and II) while the other two hours go to one Information and Communication Technology course. The language trainees also take
professional as well as practicum courses with twenty three and fourteen credit hours, respectively. From these courses, General Methods of Teaching, Introduction to Educational Psychology, Child Development and Support, and Action Research I and II, though not tailored to ELT, may indirectly contribute to improve language teachers’ English language teaching as these pedagogical knowledge can help trainees understand children’s developmental characteristics. Here we see that language teachers in the cluster program are certified to teach English language at first-cycle primary level with only eight English language courses that total twenty two credit hours.

Trainees selected for second cycle, however, are trained through having majors and minors in a senior way-as English Linear Diploma Program. English majors take English language courses with 47 credit hours, while those who minor the English language take English courses that amount only 28 credit hours. Unlike the cluster program, the Linear Program (majoring English) further includes courses like English Grammar in Use II, Materials Preparation and Analysis, Introduction to Language and Linguistic, Fundamentals of Literature and Spoken English II courses with 3 credit hours each available in the former program. The additional courses if properly tailored to the purpose can enhance trainees English language proficiency and teaching skills.

Prior to the current cluster program, the training of primary first-cycle teachers to teach all subjects including English was provided for only eight months i.e. 12 + 1 and 10 + 1. The English courses trainees took together with other non-English courses were four general English courses designed to improve teachers’ English language proficiency. The current training program runs for three years to grant teachers diploma as language teachers by providing one ELT method and eight English language improvement courses. The Ministry’s belief towards the teaching of English to primary school children do not seem to be basically changed as the curriculum the Ministry has enacted so far has shown no difference in terms qualifying English teachers to the purpose. The Ministry rather has focused on changing their qualification from certificate to diploma level and from generalist to language cluster teachers with little or no contribution to teaching English.

In the earlier educational system, teachers were employed in the lower primary grades without having the required qualifications and knowledge as there was no checking mechanism to assess
applicants’ capacity and readiness. Presently, the Ministry seems to have corrected such trends and has determined first-cycle teachers’ competences to teaching English to assess graduates and/or applicants’ capacity and readiness to teaching English to the level (MoE, 2010). These profile competencies seem to have implications for curriculum policy the Ministry can ratify for TEIs to implement. The profile competencies prepared for primary English language teachers to possess seem to suggest for curriculum policy makers to include courses such as young learners L1 and L2 acquisitions courses, playful methods of language teaching to young learners, young learners natural predispositions to EFL learning, young learners characteristics to teaching and learning of English language, various methods of assessing young learners, courses that can enhance trainees reflective skills, action research related to EFL learning, various methods of presenting tasks and activities to address different young learners styles and intelligences to EFL learning, age appropriate teaching strategies and techniques, and EFL classroom management courses.

The targeted competencies further imply the inclusion of courses that could enhance trainees’ speaking skills such as fluency (flow of ideas) and accuracy (knowledge of the grammar) in the language as well as English lesson planning skills. The other types of courses the primary English teachers’ competencies entail could be language and language learning principles and theories tailored to teaching EFL to young learners, evaluating the English syllabus and/or student books, practicum courses related to teaching EFL to young learners. The profile further expects teachers to know the phonetics and phonology of the English language and to be a model for correct pronunciation of new English words to support children’s English language learning and courses related to enhancing trainees’ skills of teaching reading and writing skills and basic reading and writing to young learners. The profile of competencies that first cycle primary English language teachers should possess thus focus on teachers’ proficiency in both the English language and the teaching of English to young learners. These imply that primary first cycle English teachers are expected to have a profile of English language proficiency and skills of teaching EFL to young learners to facilitate children’s learning of the four language skills putting emphasis on speaking and listening skills. This could mean that the English curricula the Ministry has suggested for the TEIs to offer should include courses that could equip trainees with the profile of competencies stated in the Ministry’s document.
The English curricula the Ministry has enacted have also been further commented and reviewed with group of teacher trainers recruited from all the training colleges found in the regions and expertise in the Ministry under the auspices of the Ministry. This could indicate that the English curricula the TEIs use are likely to be in anticipation of the competences the Ministry prepares for trainees to be competent with. This implies that the training trainees receive at pre-service and in-service programme is expected to be in line with performances awaiting trainee teachers in primary classrooms.

The Ministry in collaboration with the TEIs have launched and expanded various in-service programs like summer, extension, distance education to cope with the dearth of the supply of qualified teachers in its attempt to fill in the shortage and to upgrade the existing first-cycle teachers qualification from certificate to diploma level which it believes to improve the standards of primary ELT in the country (MoE, 2006). The Ministry also offers various professional development courses on its own to improve first-cycle teacher’s English language delivery. The Ministry thus invests a lot of funds and efforts to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning at primary school levels. The policy the Ministry has enacted (the English curriculum) for the TEIs to adhere in the pre-and in-service programmes are thus expected to reflect the competences targeted and teachers need to teach the current English student books and the reviewed literatures suggest for primary EFL teachers to be effective with.

The Department of Education Programs and Teacher Education (EPTED) in collaboration with the English Language Improvement Department (ELID) under the MoE are the responsible units to manage and implement various on the job training programs. The World Bank (2008) document titled General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) points out that these units in collaboration with the TEIs have prepared various extra-curricular activities directed towards improving pre-service trainee teachers English language proficiency. The document further notes that teachers on the job are supported to teaching English to the purpose through preparing school based mentors. The Ministry also has conducted school cluster approach focusing on the themes such as effective use of continuous assessment, student-centered classroom techniques and classroom management skills in self-contained classrooms that might have little contribution to teachers ELT. These show that the Ministry provides, in addition to the
pre-and in-service training under TEIs, various trainings to improve the standard of teaching and learning of English at primary levels.
CHAPTER THREE  
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 Introduction

As the study attempts to examine the gaps the teaching of EFL to primary school children faces focusing on the issues entailed in the policy texts and practices, this chapter is devoted to producing a theoretical rationale for the organizations and teaching of EFL to children aged between seven and eleven. This framework is produced through reviewing and analyzing some of the key issues emerging from recent researches and successful trends all over the world. Thus, this chapter presents the critically reviewed selected literature on aspects related to the rationale for early start and the organization and teaching of E(FL) to early primary schools and trends observed in other countries dividing it into ten sections and subsections.

In the first sections, discussions are made on the existing conceptions of curriculum and syllabus in different educational contexts and then based on these notions, clarifications to the concepts of policy and practice used in this study is put forward. In the third section, I provide an explanation of what primary education implies in this study. I then present a review of various arguments for and against to the teaching of E(FL) to lower primary level pupils so as to assess and take lessons from the various reasons countries put forward. The fifth section presents the different contextual factors as well as age and time related issues that may influence the organizations and teaching of primary English. The literature regarding considerations in teaching EFL to young learners raises various conceptions on how children think and learn and their implications for approach to teaching EFL to young learners. The section that follows is devoted to discussing the range of curricular types and approaches to instruction stressing on the above psychological conceptions, research results from ELT world and from special language learning characteristics young learners reveal different from older and adult learners. This is then followed by the discussion on setting appropriate goals through considering their language learning characteristics to foster their EFL acquisitions. In the tenth section, a review is made on how the various goals countries set dictates the kind of approaches they should follow to primary E(FL) teaching and on how age-appropriate they are to cultivate the desired language skills. The subsequent two sections present literature on the required instructional competencies teachers should reveal in their classroom performances and the kind of courses teacher training institutes should offer to equip
trainees with these instructional competencies. This chapter then comes to end by discussing the conceptual framework the study employs to examine the policy and practice issues.

3.2 Conception of Curriculum and Syllabus

Presently, the terms curriculum and syllabus are sometimes used interchangeably and sometimes differentiated. Likewise, the terms syllabus design and curriculum development are causing confusions among researchers and practitioners. Concepts of curriculum in language education have focused on the distinction between syllabus and curriculum (Wang, 2006). The most heatedly debated aspect arguably remains that of the definition of a curriculum. Currently, there is still no widely accepted or unanimously agreed-on definition for the term curriculum, and its concepts vary depending on the context of the discussion (Richards, 2001; Solomon, 2008). The variation in their usage in Britain and America is one of the reasons for causing confusion over the distinction between the two terms (Xiootong, n.d.; Wang, 2006). The other reason for this confusion is the change of the concept of the curriculum in recent years (Nagy and Willis, 2008).

In Britain, a syllabus referred to an individual subject content such as mathematics syllabus or English syllabus, whereas curriculum meant to the body of a program of studies which focus on whole contents to be taught and the goals to be realized within one school (e.g. the curriculum of French) or educational system (e.g. the curriculum of Ethiopian education). In the USA, curriculum tended to be a synonym of syllabus. The concept of curriculum is later changed from its narrow definition of referring to a course of study or content in a particular subject to also include to the entire instructional process including materials, equipment, examinations and the training of teachers (Stern, 1983). Similarly, Nunan (1988) defines curriculum as a broader concept which is concerned with “planning, implementation, evaluation, management and administration of education programmes” (p. 8). He, on the other hand, contends that a syllabus originates from a curriculum and is the part of the implementation of a curriculum specifying what to teach at classroom for each subject. The curriculum thus illustrates the decisions of teaching English, whereas the description of what learners are expected to learn is displayed at syllabus level. Dublin and Olshtain (1986) also pointed out the common belief that curriculum includes a syllabus, but not vice versa.
The view that establishing a language curriculum development unit under the MoE has become since the 1980s a common phenomenon in many countries with a mandate to review and develop national EFL teaching curriculum based on a curriculum development perspective (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Following this, the “syllabus” is now changed its name as “curriculum”. The Institute of Curriculum and Development and Research (ICDR) which works as a unit in Ethiopian MoE also used to call the documents as “Grade 1-4 English Curriculum” until the present one “The Grade 1-4 English Syllabus”.

In this study, syllabus and curriculum are separated in line with the theoretical frameworks discussed above. To guide my study in exploring the enacted English curriculum at the primary and tertiary level in Ethiopia, the two terms—syllabus and curriculum—are operationally defined as follows: A syllabus is the blue print for particular subject/s which encompasses the learning outcomes for every unit, contents, MLCs required for particular activities, processes involved, and resources required to carry out the activities. A syllabus should also be viewed in terms of the course breakdown, course objectives, course description, course contents the Ministry suggests for TEIs to implement. It can then be understood as a vehicle through which policy-makers convey information about these aspects for teachers, material writers, and examination committees to follow. The curriculum, however, refers to general statements of the Ministry’s plan which includes information about the goal, the principles adhered to language and language learning and teaching, the rationale for the program, detailed specifications of MLCs for each grade level, how teachers training program is organized, how teachers candidates are recruited and assigned in the TEIs. In addition, the various guidelines the Ministry put forward such as teachers’ development programs, teachers’ competencies profile, primary ELT program that may facilitate or otherwise the teaching and learning of primary English are come under the curriculum. This could imply that a syllabus is part of the curriculum.

3.2.1 Clarification of the Conceptions of Policy and Practice

In many language education programs, the syllabus determines the kind of materials to be adopted and the methods they are exploited for classroom teaching (Xiootong, n.d.). Many governments around the world enact policies to teach EFL starting from earlier grades (Driscoll et al., 2004) and Ethiopia also recently published new policies on the topic. The increasing government roles in curricula and syllabi making over the past few decades is evident (Wang,
2006; Nagy and Willis, 2008), which is also the case in the Ethiopian context. Curriculum and syllabus are the policies governments enacted for textbook authors, schools, and teachers to practice (Wang, 2006; Nagy and Willis, 2008). Policy is thus understood as a set of instruction from policy makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and means for achieving those goals. Current literature and research on policy and practice have begun to use the terms educational policy, curricular policy or just curriculum interchangeably (Solomon, 2008). The policy then refers in this study to the present curriculum the Ethiopian MoE has enacted to promote the teaching and learning of primary first-cycle English. The current study explores the enacted English curriculum at the Ethiopian primary and tertiary level (Teacher Education Institutes) to determine the curriculum innovations in terms of the factors that lead to quality provisions. Materials are thus an instrument among others used to execute the goals of the syllabus. Therefore this study uses the terms policy or curriculum interchangeably to refer to the various statements of aims, goals, objectives, and guidelines that pertain to what and how language should be taught and how students should be assessed that the MoE has ratified for textbook authors, school principals, and teachers to practice to achieve the predetermined goals (Wang, 2006; Nagy and Willis, 2008).

The practice of the policy could also be meant in this study the English textbooks currently in practice and the teachers’ classroom teaching performances. Classroom teachers may not put into practice the curriculum policy as intended due to their inadequate training or skills and knowledge, and lack of available resources or their deeply rooted beliefs. The practice in this study thus refers to whether the textbooks developed and the classroom teaching and learning mirror the syllabus enacted. Besides the teachers training curriculum is also weighed in terms the practice teachers are expected to perform. Practices of the policy, therefore, in this study, refers to the EFL textbooks and teachers guide developed, instructional process in the English classrooms, all activities of teachers and school principals in school environment as well as the activities of REB which directly or indirectly assume to enhance teachers English language teaching and children’s English language learning.

3.3 What is Primary Education?

Primary education has different meanings in different educational systems. They fall, however, into two large groups:
1. Primary education as the minimum compulsory full time schooling. In that sense it is often also referred to as elementary education.

2. Primary education as one of the early phases of the educational process. Primary in that sense is the education of the younger children. (Stern, 1967, p.xii)

In this research primary education refers to the first definition which implies the first phases of schooling and very vital one traditionally found in formal education, beginning at about age 5 to 7 and ending at about age 11 to 14 (The New Encyclopedia of Britannica, 1985; Doye and Hurrel, 1997). Primary education is an institution in its own right and it is here that the bedrocks are founded for many fields of learning and for basic skills and strategies (Doye and Hurrel, 1997). Ensuring quality EFL teaching at primary school can guarantee students successful educational career at least in Ethiopian context where English is the language of instruction commencing from early secondary grade onwards.

The term ‘early’ refers to different ages in different countries as in each country it is generally used to mean ‘earlier than before’ (Balbi, 2008). Therefore, early start or early foreign language teaching or the teaching of English as a foreign language to primary (elementary) school children or to young learners in this study are used interchangeably to refer to grades one through four (ages 6/7 to 9/10 years).

3.4 Contexts and Issues in Teaching EFL to Young Learners

3.4.1 Contexts for Children Learning E(FL)

Different countries have different needs to teach EFL to primary school children. How much money is available, how qualified are the teachers, whether English has an SL or FL status and other factors may decide the rationales for the commencement of the program. It appears presumptuous then that the social, political and economic reasons may influence policy decisions whether to lower or delay the commencement of the program and the way primary EFL is organized and implemented (Cummins and Davison, 2007).

The value the society gives to the language and benefits that derive from the needs of children can have strong motivation for children’s EFL learning despite its FL status. Some countries may offer EFL as introduction and/or as support to the tuition of other subjects given in English (Balbi, 2008). Others use English to access other subjects given in English and then they give it
in school settings as part of the national curriculum through instruction (Balbi, 2008). Following the instrumental motivation it renders to children and parents and due to the high value it earns in the society, in addition to its offer in state schools, private kindergartens and primary schools with special emphasis on ELT mushroom to satisfy the demands in some contexts. In addition to what the national curriculum offers to children ELT, some state schools may take initiatives to expose children to more intense English through preparing English clubs, setting English day and similar others (Balbi, 2008). Private language schools also offer English lessons to children to supplement children’s classroom learning. The goals different countries put forward thus could range from sensitizing the children to the foreign language to acquiring a certain level of communicative competence (Fukami, 2004; Driscoll, 2005).

The variety of purposes countries consider to decide to introduce early start may dictate the goals and objectives of the program and then the kind of situations to adapt to children’s EFL learning. It appears reasonable then to infer that the policy decisions could dictate the rationales to early start and the standard of English its children are expected to acquire at each educational level considering the issues presumed vital to the success of the early start program.

3.4.2 Issues Affecting Early FL Learning

This section may further describe the complexity and interplay of the key issues that could affect or effect the expansion of early start.

3.4.2.1 The Age Factor

Several countries policy decisions with regards to the organizations and teaching of FL teaching seem to be mainly related to age factors. The role of age in language learning is complex that requires careful consideration (Nikolove, 2000; Balbi, 2008). The social, political and educational issues which could be raised around policies of early FL teaching are multifaceted and could dictate the decision of the onset age variably in different contexts (Cameron, 2001). It appears then vital to see the age-related arguments different authorities have raised favouring and/or rejecting the early start of teaching EFL.

Several scholars (See for example, Stern, 1969; Johnston, 1994, 2002; Drew et al, 2008) contend that age factor is one of the highly debated subjects in school based foreign language acquisition.
Some scholars (for example, Dash, 2002; Zhao and Morgan, 2004) argue that the age before 12 is critical period to learn foreign language perfectly with little effort (CPH) and after this period maturational constraints could result in moderate success. They argue then that children before 12 are more facile to learn FLs than older learners (adolescents and adults) and thus the early start of teaching English could pave the road to students’ future success in the language.

Viewing the CPH differently, several authorities (such as Brumfit, 1995; Marinova-Todd et al., 2002) contend that this should not be related to age factor; this age variations should rather be attributed to differences in learning situations and not to learning ability. Empirical research and experience in school contexts have shown that YL’s betterment to learn FL is associated with children’s abundant time, few negative attitudes to FLs than adults and therefore better motivated, meaningful use of the language as their language learning depend more on the here-and-now than adults, and best acquisition potential for certain aspects of language performance. (Vilke, n.d.; Brumfit, 1995; Martin, 2000; Marinova-Todd et al., 2002).

The perceived age related skills/situations early starters possess in acquiring the sound system of a FL in an instructional setting may show the advantage of early start over later start in the long run; but this works only if the goal is native like proficiency and not when the goal is communicative ability in a FL (Vilk, n.d.; INTO, 1991; Johnston, 1994; Tongue, 1995; Met, 1999; Martin, 2000; Johnston, 2002; Cameron, 2003; Sharp, 2005; Bennediti and Freppon, 2006; Balbi, 2008). This could mean that an early start has little or no benefits in FL contexts where the target is not native like proficiency and where teachers do not possess the required level of proficiency to be a model to the language (Johnston, 1994; Mieko, 2004). Deferring the teaching of EFL from earlier to later primary/secondary grades by officials is completely unacceptable as it has no harmful effect on YLs learning unless teachers are not well trained (Driscoll and Frost, 2005). This could also be interpreted as starting earlier the teaching of EFL without having qualified teacher can harm children’s future learning of the target language. It appears then reasonable to question CPH for easy learning and big success. Arguing against the critical period, McLaughlin writes:

*Certainly the optimal way to learn a second language is to begin at birth and learn two languages simultaneously. However, when should a young child who has acquired a first language begin a second? Some researchers take younger is*
better position…. however, at least with regard to school settings, the research literature doesn’t support this conclusion.

Certainly, beginning language instruction in kindergarten or first grade gives children more exposure to the language than beginning in fifth or sixth grade (1992: 3-4)

McLaughlin argues that CP does not seem to have any effect on children’s foreign language learning in an instructional context other than the extra time it confers to children. McLaughlin then cautions teachers not to expect miracles out of children and abdicate their duties of teaching following the CPH. This means that calculating the potential benefits one may get by starting earlier and work towards their attainment need to be preliminary works rather than expecting biological factors to take care of themselves.

This implies that age is not an independent variable for success in primary EFL to prevail, other restrictive variables like the status of the language, whether ESL or EFL, available teacher’s expertise, budget to train teachers, and resources to support FL learning among others can intervene (Nikolove, 2000). In line with this, many member countries delayed the start of early teaching of FL due to the shortage of qualified teachers despite the push by the Council of Europe for it (Drew et al., 2008). Vilke (n.d) also notes that age 6 for Croatian children is the optimum age to start if, at least, the following key conditions are fulfilled: “intensive interaction in class, amounting to 45 minutes per day for five days per week, class size of 10-15 for languages, and teachers who possessed a fluent command of the language and a good pronunciation and intonation” (p.7). Due to scarcity of qualified teachers and budget to train and hire EFL teachers, China also implements nationally decided onset age differently-it is age 11 in rural area primary schools (Wang, 2002). This is a pragmatic solution until the problem is rectified and contrasts with the widely held assumption that the arguments for early start are unassailable and the value of such programs is obvious (Driscoll and Frost, 1999). The outcome of early start thus depends on the way it is implemented and not on the age factor alone (Nikolove, 2000).

Strengthening the claim, Irish National Teachers Organization (INTO) (1991) warns

*It is important to guard against the notion that early teaching of foreign language is so effective that we only need to start off a program to be able to demonstrate this in*
The evidence many policy-makers and parents adhere for lowering the onset age has been the adage ‘the earlier the better’ or CPH without comprehending its lack of evidence and any attempt to put this idea into question has been seen as smokescreen for retrograde policies (Stern, 1967; Hunt et al., 2005). Being only taken away by the CPH to improve the country’s low standard of English and introduce the early start program may rather direct countries to have idealistic plan which can finally lead to disenchantment (Martin, 2000; Gilzow & Rhodes, 2000). This disenchantment could mean that parents may stop their reliance on the program and governments may give up providing budgets to run the program. Given the conflicting evidences and contrasting views on early/later start that still exist, parents, policy makers and officials in the education sector need to be cautious about translating CPH into personal practice or public policy.

In contrast to the assumed benefits for early start, some researchers (See Mclaughlin, 1992; Hyltensfam and Abrahamson, 2001; Johnston, 2002; and Mieko, 2004) argue for later start as older learners tend to be more efficient in EFL learning than younger learners due to their cognitive maturity, superior world knowledge and improved learning capacity. Besides, the greater vocabulary power they grasp in their L1, their capacity to take active role in negotiating meaning, understanding and sustaining conversations as well as their ability to use meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies that can foster their FL learning could justify the advantages delayed starters have over early starters (Johnston, 1994; Marinova-Todd et al., 2002). Older learners’ competence, for example, in their L1 particularly in reading and writing constitutes an essential foundation for development of higher level skills in EFL learning and thus delaying the onset age until pupils are able to read and write in their L1 can sustain the development of L2 literacy that can secure advantages over early start (Johnston, 1994; Cameron, 2001;Nagy, 2008).

It has often been found that older learners at final grades catch up with those who have had an early start in school context (Hodjikyriacou et al, n.d.). Studies that compare, for example, early starters (age 8) and delayed starters’ (age 11) foreign language performances in school settings reveal that, five years after, early starters performed better than delayed starters in oral and aural skills (INTO, 1991; Johnston, 2002; Drew et al., 2008). But when compared after one year late
starters were found a head (Johnston, 2002). It seems then possible to state that early starters in the long run either catch up or outperform later starters capitalizing on the extra time conferred and if there exists proper articulations across grade levels (INTO, 1991; Martin, 2000; Johnston, 2002). This can also have an implication that older learners can cope up with early starters if appropriate conditions are met and thus the arguments over CPH may not justify the advantage of early start over later start particularly in instructional contexts. Still others (Stern, 1967; Peren, 1992; Johnston, 1994; Brumfit, 1995 for example) suggest that it is untimely to draw out conclusive views on the optimum age to start learning a foreign language, and underscore that both earlier and later starts have got their own advantages and disadvantages.

The controversies that center on deciding best age, thus, seem to have failed to give definitive answer of the optimum age to begin foreign language learning. In foreign language settings where primary foreign language teaching is accepted, the debate to decide the onset age at primary level goes to the extent of even considering earlier than the primary level (Johnston, 2002). More than 90 per cent of industrialized countries, from the survey made in 1993, begin FL learning from age 10 or before which possibly justifies the advantages of early start and its replication (Met, 1999). In France, Italy, and Spain, for example, EFL onset ages have been lowered from 10/11 to 7/8 while Austria lowered further down to age 6 (Moon and Nikolove, 2000; Drew et al, 2008). Slovenia and China have also lowered the starting age from year five (age 11) to year 3 (age 8) (Wang, 2002; Dagarin & Andraka, 2007).

One can probably be fair then to infer from the discussions made above that in spite of the recent global tendency towards lowering the onset age, countries adherence to different onset ages may prove the uncertainty of the CPH or its corollary ‘the younger the better’. Delaying the onset age can also be a good option particularly in contexts where there are scarcities of budget for training of teachers and for fulfilling classroom resources, for example, as it is evidenced in different countries above. Research based policies to start earlier or later can then reduce potential road blocks and promote opportunities for students’ successful learning. The ideas discussed on the optimum onset age can also assist policy makers to decide either earlier (at 6/7 or even earlier, for example) or later (at 9/10 or even later, for example) by weighing the available time and resources and the potential gains each age renders to achieve the level of proficiency required in that particular context.
3.4.2.2 Time Factor

Children’s progress in FL proficiency in school setting, by whatever approaches (immersion, partial immersion, subject teaching, embedding or encounter), take substantial amount of time and endeavor. It takes a long time to gain proficiency in a foreign language, particularly when it is learned in a school setting (Johnston, 1994; Brumfit, 1995; Martin, 2000).

Many countries which are dissatisfied with the educational results at secondary and tertiary levels turn their faces towards the teaching of foreign languages commencing from elementary grades with the aim of improving the standard. Several researchers seem to agree that the nineteen nineties have witnessed a shift of interest in the teaching of FLs from secondary to primary school children (Cameron, 1994; Brumfit, 1995; Moon, 2005; Nikolove and Djigovic, 2006). The decision appears to be based on the different research findings that show the potential benefits age and time render to fostering children learning foreign language (Johnston, 1994; Lipton, 1994; Tough, 1995; Blondin et al., 1998; Driscoll et al., 2004; Low, 2005). Japan and Thailand, for example, that suffered from the low standard of their secondary and tertiary students’ English and which attributed the problem to not starting the teaching of English from primary grades brought the teaching of English down to earlier grade (Mackenzie, 2005; Ishizuka, 2006; Yasuko, 2007). The time (320 hours stretched in four years) allocated for secondary pupils in Scotland was found insufficient to achieve the required proficiency in the FL and then expanded its teaching down to two primary years increasing pupils contact hours to 480 hours for six years from age 10 to 16 (Johnston, 1994). Learning a FL or any other subjects in primary classrooms requires a lot of time even when the subject content is reinforced and supported by home environment (Driscoll, 1999; Driscoll and Frost 1999). Achieving proficiency in a FL in USA at least requires from four to six years of study and therefore, the extra time early starters enjoy learning foreign languages is likely to confer an advantage (Cambell, 1983).

In the above countries where schools are assumed to be well resourced and where students FL learning is assumed to be supported by home environment, the time allocated may signal that the development of proficiency in school settings require considerable amount of time that could be
obtained by reducing the onset age to earlier primary grades. Assuming such factors like quality teaching, opportunity for interaction, motivation and attitude of students towards learning the language as favourable, additional hours gained in primary school can help considerably, but a total of more than 1000 hours is required to attain threshold level (Johnston, 1994; Dereboy, 2008). The implications this may have to other countries like Ethiopia where home environments render minimal support to most of the students particularly for those residing in rural areas and that the use of English as media of instruction begins from early secondary level, starting earlier and allocating thousands of hours of classroom interaction and ensuring quantity and quality of teaching are crucial to assist children acquire the required proficiency before their transition to secondary school.

Therefore, the earlier students start the higher the level they are likely to achieve. In relation to this, Stern (1967) notes

_In language teaching, the searches for good methods have gone on for a long time. But in spite of improved textbooks, improved training of teachers, and the use of audio-visual aids, many deficiencies persist. In this situation, it is tempting to think that, if children could begin to learn a FL much earlier than customary in most educational settings—same way as they learn their LI—much more could be achieved._ (p.3)

This also vindicates the importance of increasing students EFL learning time together with other aspects vital to ensure quality teaching to assist students achieve the required level of proficiency. The teaching of FL to YLs thus demands a lot of teaching hours and comprehensible inputs to bring success in case of formal instruction; reducing the age in which children start to learn foreign languages therefore is likely to yield higher level of proficiency at some future date particularly in the area of oral communication. (Vilk, n.d.; INTO, 1991; McLaughlin, 1992; Johnston, 1994; Met, 1999; Martin, 2000; Saez, 2001; Driscoll et al, 2004; Rosa, 2004; Mohanraj, 2006).

Securing more instructional time by beginning young, however, may not guarantee success and thus this added time for FL learning should be accompanied by high quality teaching and must also be spent on actively learning the FL (Martin, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004; Fukamy, 2004). Therefore, in contexts where there is scarcity of budget and value for money analysis, it appears vital to work on the basis of evidence that starting earlier can be more effective only if other concomitant variables crucial for quality teaching are considered for meeting the long term needs
(Stern, 1969; Johnston, 2002; Balbi, 2008) or ‘the younger the better only if the essential conditions are met’ (Johnston, 2002).

This onset age controversy seem to have an impact on how the time can be used whether starting earlier stretching it or starting later intensifying it (Johnston, 1994). It does not seem to be suggestible to allocate 27 minute a week English from grades one to four, as in Norway during the 1997 to 2005 curricula period, and a total of 50 hours altogether in primary EFL, as in the Netherlands (Drew et al., 2007). This implies that a successful primary FL program demand a realistic number of lessons over a sufficient number of time. While most research work on age issue aims to examine if children are more predisposed to FL learning than older learners, the relation between starting time and cumulative time with reference to L2 proficiency seem to be seldom considered (Balbi, 2008).

The literature reviewed above seem to indicate that children’s disposition to learn FL in some respects, the time and the situations that the age issue creates can promote their achievement in the FL. Some authors also put forward the developed skills that older learners use to learn the language more efficiently as reasons for later start. Even though this onset age controversy is not yet resolved, it appears reasonable to work on the advantage/disadvantage each age brings to the FL learning. It seems then profitable to infer from the above discussions that the pros and cons early and delayed starters experience should not be subsumed with biological explanations which might negatively affect the onset age decision and teachers’ effort towards foreign language teaching at both levels. Thus, policy makers need to reconcile the tension between what is considered optimum in terms of age and the beliefs about the necessity of building up the groundwork for pupils’ future learning, and the real circumstances in terms of the available curricular time, existing teachers’ expertise fit to the purpose and capacity to the provisions of apt teacher training.

3.4.2.3 Other Arguments for/against Primary EFL Education

Despite the controversy, there seems to be considerable consensus among educational planners worldwide that introducing FL in lower primary grades confers a list of benefits (Stern, 1969; Curtain, 1990; Komorowska, 1997; Met, 1999; Johnston, 2002; Drew et al, 2008). The benefits researchers put forward for lowering the starting age may not be related to the potential benefits age and/or time offers to children’s language acquisition as discussed above. The arguments to
bring forward the age at which young children start to learn a foreign language (FL) in earlier primary grades, thus, differ in different contexts depending on the value placed on that particular foreign language proficiency by the society and its potential role to enhance children’s future career development (Curtain, 2000; Fukami, 2004; Edelenbos et al., 2006).

The importance of foreign language proficiency, particularly English, for example, has grown and been seen to grow-in Europe and in the wider world in response to the effects of globalization. Several authorities point out that English language has become ‘the lingua franca’ in all sectors of adult life and its influence on both educational policies and parental preference has caused the early start of teaching English to thrive worldwide in a non-English speaking countries (Nikolove and Djigovic, 2006; Wang, 2007; Balbi, 2008). Governments and families share the aspiration for new generations to be able to function without difficulty in an international dimension and consider competence in English as an indispensable condition for this. Supporting the idea, several authorities (such as Balbi, 2008; Zhao and Morgan, 2004) note that English is found to be a key for several non-English speaking countries like Japan, China and South Korea to compete globally and secure their economic growth. This perception seemed to have triggered these governments to revisit their EFL policies and to have passed a decree to lower the starting age to primary three/age eight since the turn of the millennium. Thus, the apparent social and economic rewards associated with the English language internationally seems to have given impetus for many governments and parents to demand earlier and more intensive teaching of English (Cummins & Davison, 2007; Balbi, 2008).

The study conducted with children learning EFL in their 1st and 3rd year of primary schools in Italy shows that the benefits early starters can achieve go beyond the FL (Johnston, 1994). Many countries thus assume early EFL teaching as a worthwhile venture to improve children’s practical communication, to cultivate their broader perspectives as regards other cultures and to gain insights into their own culture and language through contrast as well as to stimulate their cognitive and academic performances (Johnston, 1994; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2000; Gilzow and Rhodes, 2000; Driscoll and Frost, 2005). An early start also exerts positive influence on most children’s attitude towards the target language (Vilke, n.d; Driscoll and Frost, 2005). Such beliefs countries hold also have fueled the expansion of the early foreign language teaching program in many parts of the world. The Council of Europe, for example,
mandated member countries to provide at least two foreign languages to primary school children to pave the road to one Europe (Eurydice, 2001).

Some authorities (such as Mclaughlin, 1992; Howat, 1995; Singleton, 2001), however, argue against early start putting various ideas forward. They argue that the FL learning at earlier grades can be a burden to children affecting their learning of other curricular subjects. The other reason some authorities posit against the start of teaching foreign languages, particularly English, from earlier grades of primary schools, despite the enthusiasm it gets worldwide, is the threat it may pose to the development of first language (Howat, 1995; Nikolove and Djigovic, 2006; Balbi, 2008). The dissemination of English through early start programs in some Arab countries, as an instrument to globalization, is likely to corrupt young learners’ minds and endanger the development of their first language and identity (Nikolove and Djigovic, 2006; Balbi, 2008). Adding to this idea, some educators and policy makers in Japan argue against the teaching of English in lower primary grades (Grade 3) saying that it is tantamount to disregarding the national language and the national culture albeit the decision has gone in favor of early start (Ishizuka, 2006; Yasuko, 2007). For similar concerns, Taiwan announced English not to be taught in kindergarten, giving precedence to L1 and Mandarin (not the mother tongue) (Cummins and Davison, 2007), while Vietnam decided to shift the onset stage from grade one to grade three (Sinh, 2006).

Even though these countries raised the onset age to minimize the influence of English on L1, many parents insist sending their children to private schools that begin earlier and provide quality English, unlike state owned schools that adhere to the national onset ages and are less resourced, for their children to succeed in school and be able to compete for jobs and advance their economic status (Balbi, 2008; Obondo, 2007). Cognizant to this demand, some private schools in China and Hong Kong and many African countries, for example, against the official policy to start primary three and primary one, respectively, start teaching English as early as kindergarten as a response to parental desire rather than an action based on theories of child language development. This could mean that it is faith rather than research evidences that seem to be strong factor for the decisions in many countries to lower the age at which EFL is taught (Brumfit, 1995; Rixon, 2000; Balbi, 2008). This may imply then that the uses of English as media of instruction in many African countries including Ethiopia seem to have caused disparity.
against the education of children who are unable to afford the private school fees. Anecdotal evidence also show that even though Ethiopian MoE stipulates policy that allow private schools to teach English commencing from kidergarten (4-6) on wards, the way some private schools handle ELT is still a concern for many parents and educational authorities. This may show the gap in perspective between those who often view early teaching of FL as inherent good and others who vilify as a threat to L1 development. Substantiating the concern early introduction of foreign language may pose, Cummins & Davison (2007) note

In some contexts, English has displaced not only the competing 2nd languages but also 1st languages. In many former British colonies and other recently independent countries in Africa and Asia, for example, English is used almost exclusively as a medium of instructions in schools, thereby constricting institutional space available for indigenous languages and creating immense challenges for students to learn academic content through a language they do not understand. (p.XXIII)

Even though several research results (Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2000; Gilzow and Rhodes, 2000; Driscoll and Frost, 2005) show that early FL learning can contribute to children’s L1 development, many still view it differently. Despite the controversy, however, some writers assert that there is no evidence to accept or reject the claims and then express their doubts over the certainty of these issues (Stern, 1969; Edelenbos et al., 2006).

From the above discussions one can possibly conclude that the role of EFL in the education of children has always aggravated a variety of views, particularly related to L1. For some policy makers the mother tongue and FLs can happily co-exist and that tuition in a FL can even substitute tuition in L1-English in some contexts today. Others, however, bestow honored status to L1 due to its help to children to form and develop deep and permanent perceptions and subsequently view early EFL learning rendering little benefit to children as it can obstruct their general education in the L1. As this early experience is held to be the foundation on which children’s later learning and comprehension is based, L1 has to be given precedence in the education system. However, in countries like Ethiopia that accepted English to be the language of instruction in secondary level and beyond, giving precedence to L1 should not overshadow the quality provision of English in state primary schools where majority of its citizens are accommodated as it is a key to children’s future educational career. Introducing FL at primary level thus depend on benefits the language render in the country and benefits that derive from the needs of children (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005). One can be rational then to infer from the
above arguments that lowering the onset age of FL learning can be counterproductive unless contextual variables (such as benefits it renders to the country and YLs motivation to learn the language) and quality features (such as time, resources, qualified teachers) are carefully heeded to be up to the claim that early start is superior to a later starts (Mohanraj, 2006).

3.5 Considerations for Teaching Languages to Young Learners

The main concern of this section is to get a clear picture of the features of young learners EFL learning through reviewing literature on psychological theories on young learners learning in general education. Young learners EFL learning can also be affected by linguistic and learning theories considered to organize language lessons, pedagogies and available resources (Nagy and Willis, 2008). The theoretical rationale drawn from both applied linguistics and main stream primary education can thus provide a framework to the development of classroom lessons suitable to teaching FLs to young learners (Brewster, 1995; Williams, 1995; Edelenbos et al., 2006). Reviewing such issues could provide pertinent essentials that can be used as a guide to developing the right content, approach and methods for teaching EFL to primary school children.

There appears to be a huge difference in children L1 learning at home environment and L2 learning in classroom situation (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Johnston, 1994). For example, children could be influenced by L1 framework when learning L2 in schools; L1 is acquired orally while L2 is learned integrated with reading and writing in a classroom (Shin, n.d; Rixon, 2000). When we come to school environment more particularly where the target language is taught only as a subject and L1 is used to interact in other school work activities, experiencing L1 type of situation for L2 learning is likely to call for careful deliberation from all concerned with its provision (Dereboy, 2008). The challenge seems to be therefore to create situations that can closely simulate L1 situations to foster children’s FL learning.

The most effective methodology for ELT to young learners is anchored on issues entailed in the ways language, learning and teaching are viewed (Garvie, 1995; Dereboy, 2008). It is believed that the basic theories of teaching young learners can decide the central learning process and the conditions believed to promote successful FL learning in classroom situation (Shin, n.d.; Brewster, 1995; Richards and Rodgers, 2001). Besides, the learning theories developed suggest conflicting views concerning children’s cognitive development and the nature of language
(Dereboy, 2008). Reviewing these learning theories, however, may yield valuable tools for theorizing the teaching of languages to young learners (Brewster, 1995; Cameron, 2001).

Behaviorists view of stimulus-response theory that considers language as observable behavior state that children acquire language by observing and imitating adult’s language (Dereboy, 2008). This implies that children second language acquisition can be shaped by the environment teachers build in reinforcing or otherwise children’s attempt to produce to practicing the verbal language (sounds, words, sentences) repeatedly to approximate adults’ language. The innatist, however, argues that children’s ability to produce original sentences seems to be overlooked by the behaviorist who claims that sentences are learned by imitation and repetition (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Dereboy, 2008). Unlike the behaviorist learning theory, the innatist further notes that environment plays little or no role in children’s L2 language acquisitions as they have natural capacity to acquire the new language irrespective of the quality of input they are exposed to (Dereboy, 2008). In other words, the teachers’ level of proficiency, how proficient or weak in the target language, does contribute little to effect or affect young learners’ FL development due to their innate capacity for language acquisition.

Several present day approaches in primary FL education seem to be founded on insights and guidance predominantly drawn from Piaget and Vygotsky’s psychological theories of development (Viana & Stetsenko, 2006). Piaget and Vygotsky’s works have been cited as cognitive psychologist by various authorities referring to their popular books: Piaget, J. 1972. The Principles of Genetic Epistemology; Piaget, J. 1966. The Origins of Intelligence in Children; Vygotsky, L. S. 1978 Mind in Society. Cognitive psychology, the constructive theory, which is concerned on how human mind thinks and learns, has criticized behaviorists for their little regard to cognitive processes children apply while learning the new language (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Dereboy, 2008).

Piaget believes that cognitive development occurs when a child faces new experience which may not fit into his level of understanding and argues that children through actively interacting with the physical environment can construct knowledge (Curtain, 1990; Brewster, 1995; Renshaw, 2004). Piaget belittles the role language plays in developing young learners thinking and emphasizes their active involvement in doing activities on their own to develop their cognitive
capacity. Children learn through their own actions which is why children are considered to be central to their own learning unlike the teacher being the center of focus as in behaviorist theories (Hughes, n.d.; Shin, n.d.; Cameron, 2001; Dereboy, 2008). Piaget’s view of children’s own interaction with their environment encourage FL teachers to make their classroom rich of teaching resources for children to learn by doing, actively involved in their learning and develop their cognition and then the language (Cameron, 2001; Smith, 2001).

Vygotsky, in contrast to Piaget, contend that children construct knowledge not only by their own action but also through having negotiation with adults/teachers/able peers (Brewster, 1995; Smith, 2001). Children can acquire knowledge through active support of adults. For language development, Vygotsky stresses, young learner’s natural potential for active social interaction and for language learning with an adult support and help called scaffolding need to be considered (Brewster, 1995; Cameron, 2001).

Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s difference also seems to be apparent on the way they view young learner’s maturity to learn a language. While Piaget contends that children learning readiness depends on their different stages of learning, Vygotsky (1978) explains the difference between what children can do on their own and what they can do with assistance as Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) argues that zones vary in children’s culture and experience in contrast to Piaget’s universal stages of development where a child is expected to perform a certain kind of thinking at each stage of development. Vygotsky further argues that young learner’s inability to learn was not because of the stages but the unfamiliarity of the tasks and therefore action and problem solving activities can bring abstract thinking without waiting to the stages of development (Brewster, 1995; William, 1995). Whatever the methods of teaching EFL, young learners construct knowledge only when they are able to understand what the teacher says and do (Brewster, 1995). Children’s readiness to EFL learning can then be enhanced through exposing them to concrete experience and to topics they are already familiar with (Brewster, 1995). Primary school pupils EFL learning can also be enhanced by cashing in on their limited physical and social experience to think or talk about so that experience and language are made to match together. YLs EFL learning can then be cultivated through allowing them interact with their immediate environment, with their teacher and each other, using live objects, physical movements, pictures, familiar contents, and new words/phrases integrated with
familiarized contents. The types of activities and support provided to children need to bring children’s interest to communicate and be based on the here and now (Brewster, 1995; William, 1995; Rosa, 2004).

One can be rational to infer from this discussion that beginning learners’ interest to EFL learning can then be invigorated by exposing them to new objects and pictures (visual stimulus), stories (visual and aural) and games (visual, aural and kinesthetic) which allow YLs to actively experience the FL to lay foundation for subsequent FL learning, from concrete experience to abstraction (Brewster, 1995; Richards and Rodgers. 2001; Cameron, 2001; Renshaw, 2004). Children need direct experience to acquire and develop the new language, and they also need language to cope with the new experience.

Children have their own prior and current experience to relate to and construct new knowledge and thus topics and themes up on which activities are designed need to address children’s world experience (Garvie, 1995; Cameron, 2001; Renshaw, 2004; Bennediti and Freppon, 2006). In other words, children, both through their own discovery and assisted by adults, get concepts, use concepts and then language which goes with them to make progress in their foreign language learning (Garvie, 1995). Considering children’s prior knowledge and what can be supplemented next seem to be vital to decide threshold FL input so as to tune in to their language learning and development rather than waiting for Piaget’s stages of development that precludes the contribution of learning to YLs intellectual and personal development (Hughes, n.d.; Dunn & Lantolf, 1998; Dereboy, 2008). This implies that children’s levels of cognitive development dictate the classroom contents and methodology. If children find the theme and activities boring and difficult, they are unlikely to remember the words or the stories at all, and they can become uninterested (Gardner, 1993; Mendez and Lopez, 2005). These show that the process of learning language is as vital as the content to young learners and that discovery methods and activity-based learning are found suitable for young learners FL learning (William, 1995; Rixon, 1999).

YLs EFL material writers can thus use the assets children accumulate from the other curriculum contents and/or from previous lessons to cultivate the new language learning (Brewster, 1995; Garvie, 1995). Cognitivists, thus, appear to assume learning as an active process in which learners construct new concepts based on their past or current experience. They put emphasis on the constructive nature of the learning process through acting in the environment which contrasts
to the behaviorist theory that considers mind as a passive container of knowledge and of learning as the accumulation of fixed knowledge (facts and information) that are thought to exist independently of human activity (Viana & Stetsenko, 2006; Dereboy, 2008).

Combining Piaget’s theory of active interaction of the individual with physical environment with Vygotsky’s notions of ‘social scaffolding’ can create an extremely effective method for helping young learners acquire new language (Cameron, 2001; Renshaw, 2004). Children’s natural potential to active social interaction and language learning call for classroom teachers to apply scaffolding to assist children develop new concepts and build up the foreign language. Children EFL learning can then be promoted through their individual action and problem solving activities which involve interaction with others and use of the target language. This implies that, teachers’ capabilities to use classroom English tailoring it to children’s level of understanding, to ask children what they are experiencing and to facilitate conditions and create opportunities for children to use and practice the language meaningfully are essential scaffolds for learners to be competent in the target language (Hughes, n.d.; Cameron, 2001; Doval and Rial, 2002). Teachers instruction through repeating ideas with similar formats seem to have fostered scaffolding to take place in language classroom by combining children confidence on what they understand with the excitement of experiencing the new (Cameron, 2001). Children are motivated to take part in problem solving activities when they find the contents familiar.

Vygotsky views language and communication at the center of YLs intellectual development. Constructivist theory can then be executed through such activities like cooperative learning and teacher-student negotiations (Smith, 2001). These imply that children’s thinking process while engaging individually or socially with classroom activities to construct meaning seems to be more vital than their overt responses (whether right or wrong). Thus, children’s attempt to communicate using the target language can be seen as a process for guiding children’s language learning and for transferring knowledge (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008; Dereboy, 2008). It appears also profitable to view language learning not only as a social interaction, but also as cognition which heed the learner as active participant with their own prior knowledge and experience and which views teachers and pupils as collaborators to carry out meaningful interaction (Smith, 2001). Children, however, cannot become autonomous intellectually or morally in classrooms where teachers’ dominations are evident (Viana & Stetsenko, 2006;
Dereboy, 2008). This may further indicate that teacher’s various roles as facilitator or instructor while children attempt to carry out given classroom activities to construct knowledge and experience the target language seem to be vital.

It seems tenable therefore to state that instructional methods tailored to promote pupils’ cognitive skills such as their ability to memorize, analyze, discriminate sounds, to perceive visuals and their capacities to inductive learning seem to be crucial in order to maximize children’s foreign language learning (Curtain, 1990; Balbi and Nagy, 2008). Young learners active involvement in doing such activities can assist them grow both their concepts and the language.

Constructivism is thus characterized by the emphasis it gives to children’s active knowledge and their active involvement in their learning. Several teacher education institutes and classroom teaching practices worldwide presently employ the ideas propounded by constructivists. Educators and researchers are necessitating constructivist teaching approaches in the present day’s classroom in which students and teachers construct knowledge and meaning (Viana & Stetsenko, 2006). Primary children who were exposed to interactive activities (e.g. games and stories), rooted in the world they live in and accompanied by actions have resulted in a more rapid language acquisition and improved communication compared to those controlled group who followed instructive methods, e.g. transmission model (Martin, 2000; Sachs and Mahon, 2006).

Several researchers contend that findings of second language acquisition researches (SLA) may also have significant implications to primary FL classroom instructions. The way learners acquire both L1 and L2 in a non-formal setting can contribute to the development of the teaching of primary FL teaching to enhance the rate of children’s FL learning (Cameron, 2001; Richard and Rodgers, 2001; Mohamed et al., 2008). There is evidence that all learners learn a language following same natural path irrespective of its being L1 or L2 (William, 1995). Classroom teachers are expected to give sufficient language input using the language through input rich directives and extending utterances, for example.

Children learn a language first by incorporating the utterances of their teachers and their peers and progressively changing them into their own (Doval and Rial, 2002). The teacher then needs to have the competencies to be a model for what children’s learn so that learners will be able to
understand, use and acquire the target language more successfully. Exposing children with comprehensible language input through both listening and reading seem to be vital for their target language development. Creating opportunities for children to experiment with the language they heard being used can encourage them to take risks to use the language and learn from the possible mistakes they might make afterwards (Brewster, 1995; William, 1995). To bring this into effect, learners need to take the autonomy to control their own learning, and teachers role need to be limited to facilitating the development of the language and learning strategies (Krashen and Terrel, 1983). Linguistic environment established in primary English classrooms, thus, may determine the rate of pupils L2 acquisition (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Mohamed et al., 2008; Balbi, 2008).

In relation to this, Dereboy (2008) writes:

*Learning takes place in stages and in the presence of certain conditions, as, for example, opportunities for the learners to be exposed to something new but manageable, use of previous knowledge as a basis for internalizing the input received and teacher’s supporting strategies. (p.18)*

Ensuring optimal language input through establishing comprehensible and meaningful communications as well as through providing the right kind of comprehensible input that interests pupils seem to be crucial to maximizing children’s language acquisition (Garvie, 1995; Richard and Rodgers, 2001; Mohammed et al., 2008). It appears vital then for teachers and material writers to understand the cognitive and physical development (e.g. the ability to speak or write) of children as central to teaching and learning, and then base suggested themes and methods on this knowledge to foster the required linguistic and affective skills in children (Williams, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Cakir, 2004; Mohanraj, 2006).

Lundberg (2007) also reports that through careful lesson planning and through organizing a variety of activities for children to carry out in group- and pair-work, Sweden primary school teachers have become successful in creating more active, communicative and interested students. One can possibly then infer that children oral and aural skills in the FL may be advanced if the teaching methods promotes cooperative learning environment where children can venture out and take risks to use the target language (Johnston, 1994; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008). In this way, children may acquire the target language indirectly (Cakir, 2004). Classroom instructional techniques that heed children as passive learners, thus, seem to cease their dominance in FL
teaching/learning and pass to constructivism (Hasan and Raddatz, 2008). This further seems to indicate that teacher’s beliefs of what language is and their knowledge of how young learners learn a foreign language are likely to be fundamental to effective teaching (Cameron, 2001). One can be rational then to infer that children’s L2 acquisition in a FL context highly depend on what happens in EFL classroom, i.e. classroom instruction plays a critical role in promoting children’s English language acquisition.

In general, the above discussions seem to imply that considering the insights on SLA researches and the various learning theories to YLs and utilizing them to develop curriculum content, approach and method and to direct teachers training can promote pupils speedy acquisitions of the English language. Their implications towards developing set of guiding principles and a theoretical framework for FL teaching to young learners seem to be indispensable. The following criteria can then be drawn from the above SLA researches and psychological considerations to guide the development of classroom lessons appropriate to teaching EFL to young learners.

- Classroom lessons focus on the here and now
- YLs view language as a means to communicate and thus classroom lessons should be organized in this way
- Focus on oral and aural activities as they are good imitators of the TL
- Use of multi-modals-actions, pictures, IT- resources
- The content of the language lessons should consider their psycho-cognitive and psychosocial development – for example-Use of simple and short words (less or no long sentences)
- Scaffolding- teachers’ ability to use the language through rephrasing it to make it comprehensible, teacher-pupil relationships
- Use of target language, interactive mode of teaching, use of TPR
- The FL is used (almost) exclusively (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Met, 1999; Cameron, 2001; Driscoll et al., 2004; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Balbi, 1997, 2008)

Teacher and material writers need to question their beliefs of teaching FL to young learners through taking insights from the points raised above to can also positively impact children’s target language learning. Piaget’s view of facilitating the classroom environment for individual
child to actively explore, Vygotsky’s social interaction, ZPD and scaffolding appear to be vital insights to be drawn from the above discussions for teachers, teacher trainers and material writers to consider to promote primary school children’s EFL learning and development. The guidelines also demand teachers’ good command of the language to support YLs EFL learning and teacher trainers to design training curriculum following the guidelines.

3.6 Language Learning Characteristics of Primary School Children

Many of the approaches during the 1970’s and 1980’s to the teaching of FLs to young learners were transferred from the experience of teaching of young learners in general education and such methods were found unsuccessful in advancing young learners acquisition of the language as it overlooks the unique language learning characteristics of young learners (Brumfit, 1995).

Teaching primary school children requires a major difference in approaches from teaching adults. Second language experts and teachers unanimously agreed on age-specific approaches to teaching a FL to primary school children (Ur, 1996). These approaches may be a sign of diversity in teaching techniques and attitudes to conform to children’s cultural, cognitive, affective, linguistic and physical development. One of the most obvious differences YLs reveal is motivation—the functional or instrumental motivation for each group to studying the target language and factors that maintain their interest active (Williams, 1995; Kirkgoz, 2006). Understanding children’s needs, interests and developmental characteristics seems to take precedence when compared to other considerations vital to teaching FL to adults (Komorowska, 1997; Cameron, 2001; Cakir, 2004). Successful lessons and activities seem to be those that consider learners’ and learning needs, rather than interests of teachers (Brumfit, 1995; Cameron, 2001, 2003).

Young learners’ motivation varies and is more prone to the here and now influences including the teacher when compared to older learners who tends to be more stable (Ur, 1996). Children are enthusiastic and lively and thrive on praise for their actions to sustain their interest (Cameron, 2003; Brown, 2006). It is in this respect that enjoyable activities with specific language objectives can provide particularly suitable learning mechanisms. Teaching materials in schools then are expected to include activities like story-telling, songs, rhyme, riddles, guessing and other games and movement and other supporting materials such as realia, pictures and flash
cards; it seems barely possible to purely apply one of these methods in schools due to children’s little concentration span (Ur, 1996; Pinilla-Padilla, 2006). Children can also be guaranteed to interesting content and a shared context and an emphasis on meaning through selecting topic that can match to their experience unlike their counterpart adults (Holderness, 1995). Classroom lessons organized on topics of children’s experience promote their FL learning. One can be rational then to state that learning a FL be enjoyable and children’s initial interest be kept not to fade away.

Primary school children, unlike older learners, do not seem to have the cognitive skills and the self discipline to study and store up knowledge for later use, rather always try to apply what they learn in their contexts (Brumfit, 1995; Ur, 1996; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005). They are supposed to be better at acquiring language implicitly but older learners and adults benefit more from explicit teaching (Brumfit, 1995; Ur, 1996; Balbi, 2008). For this implicit learning to take place a large volume of comprehensible input are needed and thus content-based approaches are more beneficial than the traditional FL teaching approaches (language focused teaching) to respond to these young learners language learning potentials (Chang, n.d.; Brewster, 1995; Tongue, 1995; Ur, 1996; Dereboy, 2008).

Another difference between teaching FLs to children and adults lies on the cognitive and affective variables. Children process FL learning slowly and differently due to their limited thinking capacity when compared to adults. This implies that young learners FL development can be enhanced through capitalizing on their natural desire to talk and their capacity to indirect learning (Driscoll et al., 2004; Cakir, 2004). Thus, children need to be provided with opportunities to use the target language to communicate (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Ali, 2003). To bring this into effect, selecting contents and setting up activities that may invigorate children’s desire to communicate using the language appears to be essential. Through frequent exposure to such contents and language activities, primary school children can pick up and acquire new language items without being taught intentionally similar to the way they acquire their L1 (Ali, 2003; Kirkgoz, 2006).

Repeating activities is likely to foster children foreign language learning as children are prone to take part with high motivation in activities they already know (Ytreberg, 1997; Brown, 2006). Such method may further render children an opportunity to easily remember what they have been
taught, working against children’s natural weakness of easily forgetting. It seems therefore suggestible that in FL classroom providing children to contents and activities known to them can trigger their interest to indirect learning focusing on making meaning.

Short and frequent sessions seem to be more effective when compared to 45-60 minutes lessons of older children, and willingness on the teachers part to alternately use short and variety of activities to primary pupils’ level such as silent and noisy activities, individual, pair work, group work and whole class activities is likely to rectify children’s short attention span and keep them motivated (Ytreberg, 1997; Stokic and Djigunovic, 2000; Martin, 2000; Cakir, 2004). For ages 5–7, keep activities about 5 to 10 minutes long and for ages between 8–10, keep activities between 10 to 15 minutes long (S.hin, n.d.).

The use of supplementary materials, either syllabus driven to supplement contents in textbook or provoked by affective concerns can make the teaching of English more lively and interesting to children to get them into doing the activities (Balbi, 2008). Both kinds of supplementation need to be included in teacher’s annual and daily/weekly lesson plans so as to make the most out of them. Teachers may also use supplementary material which they think is/are appropriate to cure pupil’s deficiencies in specific areas (Balbi, 2008).

Several authorities (such as Ytreberg, 1997; Edelenbos et al, 2006; Wang, 2007) also suggest technology mediated teaching to enhance pupils’ foreign language learning outcome-for example-for facilitation of oracy, interaction, feedback, reading depending on the purpose of particular lessons. Technological tools such as video, computers, internet, for example, provide children’s favorite ways of learning (Stokic and Djigunovic, 2000; Cummins and Davies, 2007). By bringing new things in the classroom, by designing activities with an element of riddle, one can exploit children’s curiosity and channel it to their foreign language learning.

Therefore, understanding children’s peculiar characteristics for language learning and their learning needs and interest and utilizing these attributes to setting up classroom activities may accelerate children’s FL acquisition (Hughes, n.d.; Shin, n.d.; Cameron, 2001; Cakir, 2004). Counting children’s age may not show their level of maturity as it can be influenced by many factors like their culture, their environment (city or rural), their sex, the expectations of their peers and parents (Nagy, 2008). In sum, children share the following set of characteristics even
though the key elements including the age range vary from culture to culture in the concept of primary EFL teaching and thus considering them seems indispensable for teachers to keep away themselves from the dangerous belief that children are ‘empty vessels’ for teachers to fill.

- Naturally curious
- Good at interpreting meaning without necessarily understanding the individual words
- Have great skill in using limited language creatively
- A predisposition for kinesthetic learning modes
- Concentration on the here and now-stresses a move from concrete to abstract to support YLs EFL learning
- Enthusiastic and lively-they take great pleasure in finding and creating fun in what they do
- Lack of inhibitions
- Have short attention spans
- Quick learning accompanied by quick forgetting
- Preferences for whole-body learning (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 1997; Ytreberg, 1997; Cameron, 2001; Edelenbos et al., 2006)

Based on insights from the constructive approach to L2 learning as well as from second language acquisition researches and these peculiar characteristics of YLs, several countries have drawn principles for effective primary foreign language teaching and learning. From among the 20 principles flagged in official documents (e.g. curriculum guidelines) of European countries, for example, the following ten have been selected by experts without any significant differences as most important maxims to adopt into early foreign language teaching and learning.

- Providing meaningful contexts and relevant thematic areas
- A positive approach to learning foreign languages (children lay good foundation and perform better through early EFL learning as it has positive effect in their learning in general)
- In early FL learning holistic learning is central for children, not merely an additive approach
• Teaching early FL learning must be age related taking full advantage of the children’s physical predispositions i.e. age related psychological and physical characteristics of children such as need to communicate, eagerness to learn, readiness and ability to imitate, and ability to produce new sounds.
• Visual approach and multisensory learning
• Early FL learning should stimulate language acquisition
• In early FL learning taking full range of learner characteristics should be considered
• Comprehension precedes production
• Frequent exposure to target language
• Early FL learning should take into account learning strategies and learning styles (Edelenbos et al., 2006).

They further point out that the principles can be applied in a wide range of contexts. This may indicate provisions of primary foreign language education could be fostered through having such philosophies into official texts as guiding maxims for teachers and teacher trainers to implement. Primary E(FL) teachers can possibly construct classroom activities appropriate to the needs and levels of their specific learners basing themselves on the stated children’s characteristics and the set principles (Komorowska, 1997; Cameron, 2001).

3.7 Approaches to Primary (E)FL Teaching

There are diverse primary FL curricular models and major differences in the status and perceived value of FLs within different contexts (Blondin et al., 1998; Curtain, 2000; Martin, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004). Because the goals targeted to achieve vary across different contexts, so the program types they can adapt vary from language acquisition to language awareness model. These diverse primary FL curricular models can be language competence, sensitization or awareness programs, with variations in aims and functions, requiring different modes of provisions, including time allocation, and enforcing various demands on the teacher’s teaching skills (Johnston, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). Actually existing factors may determine what to aim and what program type(s) to use to attain the established aims (Johnston, 1994; Fukiema, 2004). This may indicate that primary foreign language provisions in different contexts would not necessarily target pupils’ linguistic development. Cultural and linguistic awareness and sensitivity and
understanding, for example, can also be taken as the chief aims of the program (Johnston, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). Even where linguistic development is a major focus, the level of proficiency targeted to achieve could vary. Each curricular model has value, but the aims, and consequently the outcomes, are quite different (Hunt et al., 2005).

What is more, these program types can vary in terms of the underlying approach to FL instruction—from overt to holistic approach to instruction. In other words, some primary FL programs focus on directly to teach target language and culture, while others employ content-based or content related approaches to indirectly teach the language. Language competence program (from content-based to subject teaching) targets teaching children one FL, with a focus on levels of proficiency, progression and articulation into the secondary school, but awareness, and sensitization/encounter models aim at motivational and attitudinal aspects of learning (Johnston, 1994; Curtain, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004). This may imply that considering issues related to quality teaching depend on the specific type of program implemented (Driscoll et al., 2004). It appears then vital to consider the various approaches to the teaching of primary E(FL) that the program types can adapt.

3.7.1 Content-Based Approaches and Primary School Pupils

Whatever the overall goals, it appears crucial to make the approach and method based on foundations in second language acquisition theories and researches on children language learning rather than following mainstream FL principles to organize language lessons for primary school children (Krashen & Terrel, 1983; Parker and Parker, 1995; Ytreberg, 1997; Cameron, 2001, 2003; Kirkgoz, 2006). Children learn FL more successfully through implicit learning unlike adults who can benefit from explicit learning of the target language (Johnston, 1994; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Garton, 2008; Lasagabaster, 2008). One best way of facilitating young learners FL learning in primary classrooms seems to be assisting them to focus on understanding the content rather than on mastering the language per se (Williams, 1995; Cameron, 2001; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Balbi, 2008). This implies the importance of exposing children to rich language input that simulate situations in L2 context. This can be effected through employing content-based approach as it can boost children’s desire to focus on meaning and communication that can foster their implicit and incidental EFL acquisition (Brumfit, 1995; Lasagabaster, 2008).
Children learn L2 more successfully when the information they are exposed to is interesting, useful and help them to get the desired result. This is in line with the principle that note that language skills can be fostered effectively when the teaching of language focus on meaning rather than form and use rather than through direct instruction (Hallewell, 1992; Parker and Parker, 1995; Tongue, 1995; Balbi, 2008). Therefore, the approaches and methods classroom language lessons and activities are founded on need to create an environment that simulate natural situation and that consider children’s developmental characteristics (e.g. using multi-sensory methods or variety of activities) to promote their FL learning in primary classrooms.

Children are no longer learning the language for its own sake, but in order to extend their learning horizon in a cross-curricular, holistic way (Holderness, 1995). This may indicate further that teaching FL to primary school children need to follow holistic, general and communicative elements of language learning (Ytreberg, 1997; Curtain, 2000; Garton, 2008). Content-based approaches seem to lie beneath these characteristics that are viewed to be appropriate for teaching FL to young learners as it can provide pupils a clear context which makes learning more meaningful and creates a true purpose for learning and for using language in the classroom (Holderness, 1995; Balbi and Nagy, 2008).

Content-based approach seem to have a variety of types and they seem to have overlapping features that can make difficult to draw a clear line among them and thus different labels may be used for similar teaching strategies (Curtain, 2000; Fukami, 2004; Lasagabaster, 2008; Balbi and Nagy, 2008). In content-based FL instruction, target language proficiency may be possible to a higher degree when compared to direct teaching approach as children are encouraged to spend more time using the target language and cover wide range of topics in the course of study (Curtain, 2000; Driscoll, 2005). Though content-based approaches are found appropriate for young learners, their implementation require careful considerations (Nikolove, 2002; Balbi, 2008). Content-based approaches can vary in terms of level of proficiency aimed and time dedicated to target language study.

### 3.7.1.1 Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

CLIL refers to teaching the primary curriculum in whole or in part through the foreign language as a medium with the intention of producing high levels of proficiency of the foreign language without being detrimental to pupils’ first language, to their academic achievement in other
subjects, or to their social-psychological well-being (Johnston, 1994; Curtain, 2000). It seems identical to immersion types. It is a meaning focused teaching method and learners are required to know the language to comprehend the information embodied in other subjects and to indirectly improve their language proficiency (Balbi and Nagy, 2008). Marsh (n.d.) refers to it as dual focused education. This approach may create a better language learning milieu that can promote children’s genuine language use while receiving and conveying subject information when compared to traditional or language focused methods of teaching (Tongue, 1995; Curtain, 2000; Balbi and Nagy, 2008). This approach if employed integrated with other approach particularly at first grades of primary schools, it can be a rich comprehensible input for subsequent language learning (Marsh, n.d.). Teachers to be assigned in this approach need to be highly proficient on the target language (Marsh, n.d.; Johnston, 1994; Curtain, 2000).

3.7.1.2 Cross-Curricular Approach

This is teaching the language by embedding it into other regular curriculum content areas (Johnston, 1994; Jantscher and Landsiedler, 2000), rather than teaching it as a separate subject with its own defined syllabus and material. Such approach can take various forms: from using the FL for every day classroom language (e.g. registering, greeting, dismissing, organizing pair or group works, talking about daily incidents, the weather and the date)-weak form-to embedding the FL into subject areas such as mathematics, social studies, physical education-strong form (Jantscher and Landsiedler, 2000). Several authors (Johnston, 1994; Komorowska, 1997; Driscoll, 2005) recommend the use of this approach as it can render instrumental and motivational advantages. That is, integration seems to encourage children to link the foreign language to the concepts that they are actually learning at school and creating such harmonization between the foreign language and the concepts about which children are familiar can promote a holistic approach to learning (Ytreberg, 1997; Doye and Hurrel, 1997). This approach may further render support to children’s learning of other curricular areas including mother tongue, reinforce the overall cognitive development of a child giving him confidence and enhancing motivation, help children learn how to learn by supporting cognitive strategies such as comparing, classifying, predicting, analyzing and hypothesizing which may pave the ground for children’s autonomous learning (Reeves, 1989; Johnston, 1994; Komorowska, 1997; Stoller, 2004).
However, embedding seems to be more demanding in terms of selecting appropriate contents and scheming predefined body of language items which could lead to fragmented approach which may in turn jeopardize recycling, consolidation, progression and continuity of the taught language items (Johnston, 1994; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Stoller, 2004). Besides, the duration and rate to be allocated to learning the FL are left to the teacher and thus success depends on the teacher’s language and pedagogical skills (Ytreberg, 1997; Jantscher and Landsiedler, 2000). In spite of these difficulties embedding model might pose, several researchers (such as Johnston, 1994; Curtain, 2000) seem to provide a high value to this teaching approach and insist its application. Selecting topics/themes from primary curriculum in ways that are in harmony with children learning environment can overcome recycling and organizational problems cited above (Komorowska, 1997; Ytreberg, 1997; Jantscher and Landsiedler, 2000).

Scotland seemed to have faced difficulty in implementing this model due to the dearth of adequate teachers trained with the required expertise (Low, 2005). Low further argues that implementing the embedding model by using both class teacher and visiting specialist teachers, as applied in subject teaching model, can hardly workout. Komorowska (1997), however, argues the possibility of embedding the foreign language if both teachers get sufficient time to collaboratively work to select the topic and plan the activities. It goes without saying therefore that introducing a particular type of program without teachers having the required competences may rather have counterproductive effect on children’s interest and later foreign language learning (Driscoll, 2005).

### 3.7.1.3 Theme/Topic-Based Approach

Topic-based approach is a way of organizing children’s language learning around topics or themes of interest to children (Moon, 2005). Teaching children through integrating on topic of their interest is likely to fit to primary education principle, simulate the way they naturally learn (Williams, 1995; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Cameron, 2001; Balbi, 2008). Topic-based approach calls for language content and organization which builds on children’s knowledge and previous experience (Williams, 1995; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savova, 2006). It seems the content and the activities that may determine students’ language learning opportunities and thus choosing topics and designing activities demand careful attention from both the institution and the teacher. Themes can be selected from children’s current interests, from topics being studied
in other subjects, from known stories, or from local or international festivals or events (Cameron, 2001). With theme-based lessons, a set of themes might be chosen as a framework in large or small amounts and for shorter or longer duration and each theme can be used as a basis to teaching the four skills including grammar (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Savova, 2006). Planning can thus be conducted either in advance or on the spot based on the teaching/learning dynamism (Cameron, 2001).

Theme-based approach can be used for one/two language lessons or for series of lessons in a term to supplement other regular classes; it can also be employed as a sole vehicle to improve children’s proficiency replacing syllabus and textbook if chosen for longer time and if there exists able teachers (Cameron, 2001). One can be reasonable then to infer that theme-based approach can be used as extra teaching activities to supplement textbook works.

Several primary FL textbooks can also be designed following themes/topics to structure their units, though this can often be a surface cover for grammatical or functional sequencing (Cameron, 2001). One can use the themes of the units (e.g. ‘animals’, ‘my family’) included in the textbook to extend the teaching and learning experiences following the principles in theme-based approaches beyond the confines of textbook (Ibid). Such topic-based approach may further allow teachers teaching the foreign language to find opportunities to support and supplement children’s learning of other areas of the primary curriculum (Komorowska, 1997). To bring this into effect, several authors (such as Brewster et al., 1992; Tongue, 1995) recommend possible content areas where the teaching of foreign language may be linked.

Maths: numbers, counting and quantity, measuring, telling the time.

Science: animals (domestic, wild etc), outer space, how seeds grow.

History: understanding chronology and the passing of time, prehistoric animals.

Geography/Environment: shops/shopping, parks, sports and games, using maps and atlases, the weather and climates.

Cultural studies: the everyday life of ordinary people, festivals around the world, food and music from other countries, other cultures and our own.
Art & Craft: drawing and printing, making masks, puppets, locks, making collages and posters.

Music and Drama: songs and rhymes, role play and dramatization, miming.

Integration can then effectively be implemented through enquiry based and discovery learning focusing on one theme (Tongue, 1995; Komorowska, 1997). These imply that teacher’s competence both in planning and implementing such activity types seems to be indispensable (Cameron, 2001; Mohamed et al., 2008). Cameron (2001, p.180) observes “Good theme-based teaching has produced some of the most inspiring teaching that I have ever seen; done less well, it can lead quickly to chaotic and ineffective classrooms… it is worth taking a long hard look at what makes for good theme-based teaching.”

After having teachers received training for program implementation, for better and efficient linguistic attainment, Austrian Ministry of Education seems to have introduced theme-based approach as of 2003 changing the traditional curriculum model (Curtain, 2000; Stoller, 2004). It appears then essential to consider preliminary works before embarking on adopting such approach so as to avoid unnecessary effects on children’s FL learning.

3.7.2 Subject-Teaching

Subject-teaching programs are the teaching of foreign languages as a school subject within a primary curriculum. These traditional models which were widely used during 1960s and 1970s, taking lessons from past failures, now focus less on the teaching of grammar and more on the development of aural and oral skills (Reeves, 1989; Curtain, 2000). Some authorities also argue that by selecting contents and approach and methods in line with the targeted goals and appropriate to YLs predispositions, such programs can be successful. The foreign language as a subject, with distinctive aims, content and methods, can be scheduled separated from other subject areas (Lipton, 1994; Johnston, 1994; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Martin, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004). Such distinctiveness, according to Johnston, may impose its own qualified and trained specialist teachers. This may indicate that professionally trained teachers to teach the language is a prerequisite to introduce such curriculum models. The foreign language can be scheduled as a compulsory subject included in the primary curriculum as is often the case for EFL in some European countries and beyond or remains optional as in England (Driscoll et al., 2004; Sharpe, 2005). Class time usually varies from two to five times a week for 20 to 40 minutes and the level
of proficiency attained is usually proportional to the amount of time pupils spend using the foreign language (Johnston, 1994; Curtain, 2000).

Many, however, view such direct language instruction as detrimental to children’s FL learning. Current SLA researches reveal that teachers cannot predetermine the natural order of language acquisition through focused instruction and that learners seldom move from early stages of presentation to direct mastery (Litz, n.d.; Nagy and Willies, 2008). Such approach seem to be fit only to motivated adults as it could disregard learner’s needs and interests (Nagy and Willies, 2008). EFL indicate situations where pupils learn language lessons for primary aim of language learning; but when referring to children (under 11 years), EFL seldom imply “explicit” teaching of the FL as EFL lessons for young learners are often either topic-based or content-based (Ytreberg, 1997; Planet, 1997; Nagy and Willies, 2008; Balbi, 2008). This may imply that children can be more motivated to express their views using the target language when they are exposed to contents, rather than directly teaching the language. Content-based teaching thus seems to be in contrast to traditional approaches to language teaching in which language is the main focus of the syllabus and classroom teaching.

It has been stated elsewhere in the study that primary education need to be essentially student-centered which implies that children’s learning needs and interests need to be met at the institutional level and while organizing and presenting classroom lessons.

3.7.3 Sensitization or encounter

Sensitization or encounter programs aim at developing children’s knowledge about language learning through having them encounter with one or more foreign languages and cultures, and encouraging them pursue further language study by laying good language learning foundation (Reeves, 1989; Driscoll and Frost, 2005; Martin, 2000). Like language acquisition model, sensitization is likely to foster children oral language with more restricted language content where pupils develop some basic competence in a limited range of vocabulary and formulaic phrases without the emphasis on progression and performance found in language competence programs (Fukami, 2004; Hunt et al., 2005).

This may imply that what may be aimed to be captured in the sensitization program could be applied as a basis in the initial stages of language acquisition program (Martin, 2000; Fukami,
2004; Driscoll, 2005). Unlike the earlier models, sensitization presupposes both teachers and pupils to use L1 for most of the instruction except some basics in the foreign language and thus earlier grades in language acquisition model can work towards developing children’s interest and risk taking behavior to lay good foundation for more foreign language learning (Halliwell, 1992; Bernard, n.d.). This implies the aims and contents included in sensitization model can also work in first grades of language acquisition model.

Sensitization assumes less intensified time with a focus mainly on listening and speaking, and minor roles on reading and writing skills (Martin, 2000; Fukami, 2004). Encountering the foreign language can be limited to the boundaries of the national curriculum, focusing on, for example, number related activities and computations which might be organized as part of children’s regular curriculum. Besides, transactional situations like requests and thanks as good manners in the target language as well as languages which are used in their daily interaction in the school compound like greetings, telling time or dates or weather and similar other routines supplemented by planned teaching could be included to reinforce their interest and basic competence in the target language (Martin, 2000). Such curricular model is especially suitable for teaching by primary class teachers who lack the training and the ability to speak the foreign language (Reeves, 1987; Martin, 2000; Hunt et al., 2005).

3.7.4 Awareness

Awareness model does not seem to primarily target developing proficiency in the foreign language; instead it intends to assist children to develop positive attitude towards other languages and cultures via sensitizing children to the nature, purposes and structure of the foreign language or to aspects of the cultures in which it is spoken (Johnston, 1994; Planet, 1997; Martin, 2000; Hunt et al., 2005; Driscoll, 2005). Children in this model are required to compare and contrast vocabulary, structure and sounds in their first language with the foreign language(s). It can lay the foundations for learning and learning how to learn FLs (Hunt et al., 2005). Primary generalist teachers with little active knowledge of the foreign languages can be assigned in this model (Martin, 2000) and much time seems to be spent on discussions in the first language (Fukami, 2004). The assumption underlying this model is that children’s conception of what language is can be reinforced if the concept is treated via several languages rather than one language alone (Johnston, 1994; Doye and Hurrel, 1997).
One can be rational to infer from the above discussions that there does not seem to be a standard pattern for the organization and provision of FLs in primary schools (Reeves, 1989; Johnston, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). Such situations of variability in the projected aims and in their implications to resources particularly in relation to staffing of each of the programs presuppose careful deliberation in framing the foreign language curriculum and decide the specifications of provisions appropriate to the program. It seems apparent then that considering issues related to quality teaching is likely to depend on the specific type of program implemented. Besides, the status (e.g. compulsory or optional, language learning or creating language awareness) and perceived value of the target language can dictate which program type to use.

3.8 Primary School FL Teacher’s Competence

Raya (n.d.) defines primary school foreign language teacher as “a professional decision maker who has mastered the minimum competences/teaching skills and has also learned when to apply them and how to orchestrate them, acting as a reflective practitioner.” (p. 6) Such perceived qualification is likely to presume specific knowledge and expertise that primary FL teachers need to be equipped with to effectively carry out their teaching job. Teacher’s knowledge about the subject, i.e. the FL content (e.g. verbs and nouns), the skill to use the target language in clearly defined areas for communication, and the target culture as well as his knowledge about subject- and age-specific teaching methods are crucial to maintain quality teaching in primary classrooms (Felberbauer, 1997; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Driscoll et al, 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Davison, 2007; Raya, n.d.).

Research also indicates that the supreme role to the success of early EFL instruction is played by a qualified teacher. In relation to the effect teachers low level of proficiency might pose on primary classrooms, Al-Mutawa (1997) writes

*In addition to creating feeling of frustration amongst pupils, the incompetent teachers cultivate incorrect linguistic patterns that are difficult to eradicate in subsequent grades*

*a teacher who has difficulty in speaking the foreign language will neither succeed in transmitting a good command of spoken language nor be able to teach effectively. Similarly, s/he will be unable to employ the method used adequately unless s/he is familiar with its principles and detailed components.*

(pp. 4-6)
Being the main provider of target language input and the main facilitator of classroom interaction, teachers of early primary schools are expected to have a good knowledge of the communicative and phonological aspects of English (Vilke, n.d.; Johnston, 1994; Edelenbos et al., 2006). All theories of second language acquisition seem to agree that, for learning a foreign language, learners must be exposed to a considerable amount of language input either in natural or artificial teaching settings (Rosa, 2004). The amount and quality of this exposure depend on teacher’s level of proficiency in the language and his teaching capability to make the language comprehensible and interesting to children. In addition, Reeves (1989) notes that for children whose exposure to the language is limited to school settings, it is unlikely for students to attain higher proficiency level in English than their teacher.

Above all the factors that need to be considered when a country decides to introduce EFL in primary schools seems to be an appropriately trained linguistically competent teacher (Bernard, n.d.; Felberbauer, 1997; Park, 2006). The younger the learner the more crucial the qualifications of the teacher and thus programs for learning a foreign language at primary level could risk failure if it fails to fulfill this basic condition (Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Curtain, 2000; Rixon, 2005; Benedetti and Freppon, 2006). It seems profitable then to conclude that teachers sufficiently qualified with the required subject knowledge and teaching competencies seem to be imperative to bring the primary EFL program to success.

Teachers’ good command of the language, the quality of their pronunciation, their fluency, accuracy and a range of language use seem to be major resources to support and develop learner’s ability to communicate in the target language (Raya, n.d.; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Driscoll, 2005; Wang, 2007). A teacher with such command is likely to be confident to use the language continuously throughout the session even when children ask questions and respond in their L1 (Driscoll, 2005; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005). This implies that the methodological approaches to teaching foreign language to primary school pupils all involve interactive language use between teacher and pupils which calls for teachers who are sufficiently confident and fluent in the language (Komorowska, 1997; Driscoll et al, 2004; Edelenbos et al, 2006). This seems to imply that lower grade foreign language teachers need to possess the required competencies to execute their teaching duties.
Teacher’s ability to use various non-linguistic, syntactic and discourse cues by accompanying his speech appears to be vital to ensure communication with children. In other words, FL teachers ability to tailor the language to the level of children’s comprehension using enactment to convey meaning, intonation, change of pitch, focus on discreet lexis (paralinguistic), fewer verb forms and modifiers, simpler structures used and more content words and fewer function words (syntactic), more interrogatives and imperatives, speech more fluent and intelligible and more repetition (Discourse) are crucial to create a situation that can enhance pupils’ comprehension skills and make them feel encouraged to use the language (Curtain, 2000; Nikolove, 2002; Hurrel, 2005; Dereboy, 2008). The teacher is also expected to go beyond books, create situation where there exists a lot of language use and playfulness to promote children’s language acquisitions (Garton, 2008).

However, children are unlikely to benefit from a foreign language teacher who repeatedly swings from the use of the target language to L1 and thus such classroom practice needs to be avoided at all costs (Hurrel, 2005; Brown, 2006). One can possibly infer then that teachers’ competences to teach using the target language and their ability to spontaneously act out a set of key classroom behaviors (narrating incidentals, praising pupils, organizing lessons and pupils, for example) using the foreign language and adjusting it with the age-specific cues may assist pupils segment the sounds and build up their vocabulary power while at the same time enhance their comprehension which are vital for success in their foreign language communication.

One can possibly notes from the above discussions that the quality of teacher’s command of the language affects both the model of the language to be provided and the type of methodology adopted. This seems to imply that ensuring whether the assigned teachers are suitable ones to be a model for accurate pronunciation of the FL seems to be vital before any damage occurs on account of children’s sensitivity to sound particularly in earlier primary grades where speaking is the dominant mode to teach the foreign language (Lipton, 1994; Martin, 2000; Nikolove and Curtain, 2000; Cakir, 2004; Satchwell, 2005). Besides, a teacher who lacks the confidence and fluency in the language is unlikely to organize instances for pupils to engage in genuine interactions which may spoil the other capacity of young learners-desire to communicate. Such teaching environment may therefore negatively affect children’s curiosity to learning and progress in the target language.
Primary FL teacher’s effectiveness in the classroom can further be seen in terms of how well he prepares annual and weekly/daily lesson plan

- to topics that are being covered in the year;
- what resources to be employed;
- what target language phrases are going to be used;
- what target language children are going to learn to use (Satchwell, 2005: 89).

Besides, the teacher’s ability to set clear linguistic objectives for every lesson and make them known to children before each lesson, to record when and how lessons to be taught and to ensure continuity, coherence and progression of the lessons seem to have a strong impact on pupils’ success in learning the target language (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Muir, 2005; Satchwell, 2005; Mohamed et al., 2008). Teachers’ previous experience of working with children and training may assist them internalize these competences including their capability of classroom management (Martin, 2000; Driscoll et al., 2004). These imply that teachers’ ability to prepare sound lesson plan can build up their confidence to use the language continuously tailoring to the level of pupils and improve their classroom performances.

A study conducted in Jordan seems to be evidence for the idea that children who began learning EFL in earlier grade in private schools failed to perform well when compared to state school students who started learning English later in their fifth grade (Al-Mutawa, 1997). The study further reports that the difference in the results seemed to be due to the insufficient consideration paid to the quality of EFL teaching, and poor proficiency level of teachers’ English in the private schools. Early foreign language programs in Europe seem to have also evidenced that early starters are likely to be superiors to late beginners only if teachers are found to be fit to the purpose (Martin, 2000). The viability of primary foreign language program then can be viewed as mainly attributable to teacher’s proficiency in both the English language and primary EFL teaching methodology (Bernard, n. d.; Rosenbusch, 1995; Low, 2005). The discussions made above seem to suggest that assigning teachers who lack the appropriate competencies to teach the target language particularly where the foreign language is seldom spoken outside schools can do more harm to children’s interest in learning and progress on the foreign language and of course on the budget incurred to run the program.
Due to lack of qualified personnel to teach the foreign language and the budget it requires to training and hiring such personnel, several researchers seem to have witnessed that inadequately trained teachers have been given the responsibility of teaching the foreign language in many countries primary classrooms (Johnston, 1994; Driscoll, 2005; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Balbi, 2008). Generalist primary teachers who could hardly speak the foreign language and were not trained to teach it, for example, have been provided the responsibility (Scotland, Britain, France for example) (Johnston, 1994; Martin, 2000; Low, 2005). In such cases, authorities (such as Lipton, 1994; Edelenbos et al., 2006) suggest other options to be considered depending on the apparent urgency and value of the foreign language. Specialist teachers from secondary schools who were fluent but with little knowledge of young learner’s pedagogy or persons with fluency in the foreign language have been hired and given provisional teaching license to support the primary generalist teachers who had little knowledge of the foreign language in many countries like USA, Scotland, France, Sudan, South Africa, for example (Rixon, 2000; Martin, 2000; IATSC, 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Low, 2005;).

While tackling the dearth of appropriately trained teachers, the British and French governments have also begun funding both teacher education institutes to offer FL as part of their primary Initial Teacher Education Program and in-service programs for primary teachers to upgrade their competence and confidence in teaching foreign languages (Driscoll et al, 2004). The use of authentic and adapted listening materials, cassettes, records and videos in primary classrooms have been used to supplement and temporarily solve teacher’s language problem (e.g. France) (Komorowska, 1997; Driscoll, 2005). On the job training to teachers via TV, satellite or video programs (China) as well as peripatetic teachers who were native or near native of the language but least competent in young learners foreign language pedagogy were also used (Lipton, 1994; Wang, 2002; Driscoll, 2005). The discussions made above seem to imply the various options countries consider to counter primary FL teachers’ deficiency to teaching the target language and the danger of employing inadequately trained teachers.

However, assigning teachers to teach FL in primary classrooms for which they have no true working knowledge, without considering their actual need for more professional development than is currently available, seems to be unfair. To ask over teachers to teach something for which they are least competent is likely to set both teachers and their students up for failure (Bernard,
n.d.; Doye and Hurrel, 1997). Substantiating this idea, Mukatash (1984) and Wang (2002) assert that the crisis in the teaching/learning of primary English both in Jordan and in China, respectively, have been ascribed, as a major reason, to the system that assigned teachers to handle the program to which they are less equipped. This is also an issue on which many researchers in Ethiopia are in agreement (Rogers, 1969; Paulos, 1972; Stoddart, 1984; Tewolde, 1988; MoE, 2003; Abiy, 2005, for example).

One can possibly be rational then to ascribe the main reason for pupils’ failure of attaining the required proficiency level of the foreign language mainly to teachers’ limitations that are usually presumed to be competent and well-trained for the purpose (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Edelenbos et al, 2006). Thus, lowering the teaching of EFL to early primary grade levels before having enough teachers able to teach it seems to be viewed as ‘the cart before the horse situation’ (Iida, 2004; Dolitsky, 2006).

One can be fair to infer from the above review of related investigations that teachers’ competences and capabilities are essential irrespective of the national context in realizing aims of primary EFL education. It follows then that if teachers lack the required competences, it is unlikely to achieve such aims. It seems generally acceptable that the classroom teachers be assessed with reference to their competences both in the English language and in primary English teaching skills. These seem to exert policy implications that the qualifications of teachers the primary EFL program demands need to be explicitly stated and assessing the levels of available teachers expertise to the attainability of stated aims and then suggest viable temporary and/or permanent strategies, as countries’ experiences demonstrate above, to support and upgrade teachers primary English teaching skills seem to be crucial. These imply that the establishment of competent primary school EFL teacher preparation program appears to be crucial.

3.9 Teacher Education Institutes

The teacher’s depth of subject knowledge and teaching skills and its effect on quality FL teaching in primary classrooms has been contentious among educational authorities since the advent of national primary foreign language curriculum (Lipton, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). Many appears to believe that, albeit mistakenly, the younger the learners the least educated the foreign
language teachers may be, unlike their counterpart at secondary or tertiary levels (Brumfit, 1995; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Curtain and Pesola, 2000). This coupled with some research results which contend that children before age 11/12 have special language learning skills even in a situation where teachers are less proficient and have little or no training to teaching the target language have influenced many governments to have set policy that demean teachers role and then their training including the time duration (Rixon, 1992; Lipton, 1994).

Following this, several primary foreign language programs in different contexts seem to operate with the assumption that “a little bit of instruction is better than no language instruction at all” (Curtain, 2000). Such misconceptions seem to have convinced various countries policy makers to set policy based on the belief that teaching FL in lower primary grades does not require any qualifications (Edelenbos et al., 2006). One may wonder then that the Ethiopian MoE’s demand for an enthusiastic teacher with no or little training on ELT could be a precursor of this worldwide misconception. Untrained and academically unqualified teachers were hired to teach English in Ethiopian primary grades (Jarvis, 1969; Stoddart, 1986). Slovenia, prior to 1990, used to employ enthusiastic teachers to teaching EFL to primary school children by giving the FL training on the spot (Gagarin and Andraka, 2007). At the beginning, form teachers with B.Ed. but with little or no training in the English language were assigned to teach English in primary schools in Norway, Netherland, and Scotland (Johnston, 1994; Drew et al., 2007).

In addition, the theoretical frameworks several countries employ to the preparation of such teachers have been transferred from the experience of teaching of primary school children in general education and the watered down mainstream EFL methods that gives little regard to children’s special language learning characteristics (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 1997). In other words, the curriculum contents TEIs in many countries used to adapt to the training of primary EFL teachers have not been appropriately tailored to the purpose (Lipton, 1994; Brumfit, 1995; Rixon, 1999; Drscoll, 2005). The unqualified or less qualified teachers are unlikely to follow methods which consider children’s potential for language learning and thus teachers often are dependent on frontal work, reading aloud or filling in textbook exercises, which have little or no significance to children’s FL language learning (Komorowska, 2000). Several studies, however, caution that the method of teaching EFL to young learners is as important as the content (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 1997; Rixon, 1999). Only if teacher
education succeeds in making these goals transparent, will teachers become specialists both in PE and in FL pedagogy (Felberbauer 1997). This implies then that the policy texts of primary FL training need to supply curriculum contents that may consider children’s predisposition to assist trainees employ effective and age appropriate teaching strategies.

One can then be rational to infer from what has been stated above that the unfounded conceptions about children’s unique capacity to easily learn the FL and subsequent demeaning of teachers’ roles in the FL classroom as well as the little regard given to children’s predisposition towards language learning while preparing teachers were highly accounted for failure of the primary FL program worldwide in the seventies.

Other authors, in contrast, view primary English teachers’ role in motivating children and supplying comprehensible input in a FL context as vital and therefore teachers will need a great deal of support in developing their knowledge, understanding and classroom approaches (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 2000; Edelenbos et al, 2006). This implies that provision of adequately qualified teachers is the most critical of all the conditions for Ministries to put in place to raising students’ achievements, implementing high academic standards, and improving quality instruction (Edelenbos et al., 2006; Al-Salem, 2011). Moreover, sustained professional development opportunities is a key to the long-term viability of effective foreign language teaching programs (Gilzow and Rhodes, 2000; Edelenbos et al., 2006).

Due to the fact that young children learn the foreign language more differently than at later stages and that the nature of young learners dictates the kind of content and methods more than other age groups (Broughten et al, 1980; Driscoll, 2005; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008), it seems essential for primary level EFL teachers to have special training. Such perceived qualification seems to go against those who belittle teacher’s role in primary FL classroom; it rather presumes specific knowledge and expertise that primary FL teachers need to be equipped with to effectively carry out their teaching job. Several research results and experiences of successful primary FL programs presently seem to have vividly shown the central role of teacher training institutes in effecting teachers classroom practices (Cameron, 2001; Muir, 2005; Edelenbos et al., 2006). Most successful primary EFL programs have been in countries where teachers have been adequately trained to meet the intrinsic challenges of the curriculum (Rixon, 2000). In relation to this, Muir (2005) notes:
If we aim to ensure that delivery in the classroom is effective, it is essential at the outset that the quality of training is high. Courses must be enjoyable, related directly to the primary curriculum (not a watered-down secondary course) and backed by good resources. (p.109)

It appears vital then for teacher education institutes to direct their foreign language training heeding the constructive views on language and language learning and teaching, the insights of second language acquisition researches as well as the peculiar language learning characteristics children possess that are presumed to be effective to enhancing primary EFL teachers’ practical knowledge and skills awaiting them (Cakir, 2004; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2005). This implies that the English curriculum contents TEIs may adapt to train primary English teachers need to underline these theoretical principles so that teachers can employ age-appropriate contents and teaching strategies. As Hayes (2006) argues, training English courses should be essentially practical or applicable to real teaching situations and bestow trainees an opportunity to put into practice what they have learned in a non-threatening environment. For training institutes to challenge trainees transmission model of teaching that they might have anchored, helping trainee teachers experience the constructive way of teaching only through practicum may not be sufficient. Supplementing trainee teachers with further options like analyzing other recorded or live classroom teaching experience led by able peer or experienced teachers and providing readymade constructive activities to use during their training can bring the required behavioral changes on teachers (Smith, 2001). This implies that the quality of the theoretical concepts that the training institutes’ curriculum promotes may not secure trainee teachers change of behaviour to implement it in the classroom afterwards. Various methods need to be actualized to unravel the deeply rooted trainees’ transmission model which is found unsuitable to young learners FL learning and to assist trainees adjust their teaching techniques appropriate to young learners.

These imply then that policy makers need to be cautious not only on the essential knowledge and skills derived from these theoretical frameworks but also on their method of training to secure quality EFL teaching in primary classrooms that promotes the desired FL learning. In light of this, the China MoE, for example, has published a document for teacher training institutes to follow:

- To change trainee teachers’ stance about language and language learning and thus for example, from knowledge based to ability based language teaching.
• From knowledge transmitter to multi-role educator aiming for the whole child development
• To use a more activity-based approach and make students the center of learning
• To use formative assessment in addition to using tests
• To use modern technology in teaching and to creating more effective resources for learning and for using the language
• Above all this, teachers own language need to be improved, without which teachers others role can barely be fulfilled. (Wang, 2002)

Several authors (such as Driscoll, 2005; El-Ebyary, 2005) also assert that proficiency level of EFL non-native teachers is the foundation of their professional knowledge. An appropriate policy for teacher education needs to ensure that trainees have sufficient command of the languages to sustain the interactive language use between teacher and pupils typical of current methodologies. It appears evident then for training institutes to ensure that teachers’ level of proficiency are good enough to carry out their professional duty needed in primary EFL classrooms. In contexts where teachers training take place in short duration, it is unlikely to make all trainees acquire the targeted knowledge and skills at the same time due to the various levels of proficiency (low to high) they have on the FL. Setting up minimum proficiency standards, for example, prior to admitting trainee teachers can circumvent this and other possible challenges that may affect the process of children’s language learning (Muir, 2005). Such screening system of potential trainees has been found increasing teachers academic performances and then their effectiveness on executing their teaching duties in different contexts, for example, in South Korea and Bulgaria.

Knowing the language is only one element but not sufficient; teachers should also be educated about the process of first and second language acquisitions, the underpinning principles in the constructive approach to EFL teaching to young learners, learning styles and types of intelligence, children’s language learning characteristics and others to effectively teach EFL at primary level (Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Blondin et al., 1998; Driscoll, 2005; Sharpe, 2005; Edelenbos et al., 2006). Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of children’s overall development, i.e. children’s cognitive, linguistic and emotional developments, can enhance their teaching performances as this knowledge can exert an impact on children’s EFL learning.
Teacher’s knowledge of theory of language and language learning, for example, can influence the degree of emphasis they place on the FL learning process and the construction of meaning (Cameron, 2001; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Balbi, 2008). Various empirical researches also appear to point out to the influence of teacher education both directly through responding to teachers’ command of the language (particularly their oral command) and their knowledge of children’s language development, and indirectly through the knowledge that certain approaches can achieve better results (Cakir, 2004; Edelenbos et al, 2006). The quality of primary EFL teachers training, therefore, depends on its organization (such as screening system, time allotted, established to the purpose), degree and types of English course contents and suggested modes of delivery that policy makers put forward for teacher education institutes to follow and work towards equipping prospective English teachers (Lipton, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). These imply that the depth and types of knowledge and skills a particular policy encourages teacher training institutes to offer can determine the quality of the teaching process. Therefore, initiating competent pre- and in-service teacher education programs to meet the special challenges of primary foreign language education seem to be a requirement for its success (Felberbauer, 1997; Cameron, 2003).

Teaching English to young learners has become its own field of study as the age of compulsory English education has become lower and lower in countries around the world (Shin, n.d.; Driscoll, 2005). Cognizant to this view, educators and policy makers have begun revisiting their primary ELT policies working towards scaling up teachers’ subject knowledge and subject application skills within the territory of EFL teaching to young learners through launching its own training institutes (Lipton, 1994; Bernhardt and Hammadou, 1987; Curtain, 2000; Driscoll, 2005; Low, 2005; Nikolove et al., 2007). Such global shift towards training primary FL teachers fit to the purpose seems to have become widespread sidelining generalist program of teacher preparation. Slovenia, Croatia, China, Turk, Jordan, Egypt and Kuwait, for example, have reformed their curriculum and set up training institutes to equip teachers with the required foreign language knowledge and teaching skills (Vilk, n.d.; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Cakir, 2004; Wang, 2002, 2007; McCloskey et al., 2006; Dagarin and Andraka, 2007). And this, according to Al-Mutawa, Wang and McCloskey et al., seems to have exerted a significant impact in improving their respective students’ English in the subsequent grades. Policy makers can then put forward the right types of EFL curriculum for teacher education institutes operating in their specific context depending on the objectives of the program and the level of proficiency children
are required at the end. To better understand the relevant courses required to primary EFL teachers, it appears vital to survey how various successful countries organize their training and what kinds of courses incorporated in their initial and in-service primary EFL teachers training.

South Korea’s MoE attributed primary students’ low levels of English proficiency to the generalist teachers who had little or no training on teaching the language and consequently prepared a 20 days (120 hours) in-service training program to regular primary classroom teachers to enabling them both in the English language and the teaching methods and techniques suitable to primary pupils (Park, 2006). More than two thirds of the training time (84 hours) was devoted to language improvement courses designed to improving trainees’ English speaking and listening skills including classroom English with the words and expressions used in primary English classes, rather than those languages used in mainstream classrooms; while the 34 hours was devoted to teaching skills applicable to primary English classrooms like useful ELT techniques, songs and games for ELT to children, teaching English pronunciation, observation in primary English classes run by experienced primary English teachers, micro-teaching and reflecting on one another’s’ performances among others (Park, 2006). The context here seems to force authorities to put more emphasis on improving teachers’ command of English when compared to their teaching skills. The training in this context focus on more on improving teachers English proficiency putting emphasis on teachers listening and speaking, and classroom languages. Teachers are also made to improve their teaching skills more through having teachers encounter experienced teachers classroom and through having them reflect on their own performances. In addition, trainers in teacher training institutes are also expected to practice what they preach (Park, 2006). It appears then up to teacher training programs to make student teachers model socially constructed learning through observing their teacher trainers and through exposing them to direct experience led by a more experienced teacher or peer (Smith, 2001). If the teacher trainers in teacher training colleges have practical teaching experience, or at least extensive observations of English classes in the primary schools, they will not only have better understanding of young learners and the difficulties that teachers may face, but also be able to offer more realistic and practical instructions.
To equip teachers with the required level of command which are believed to be essential for teachers to effectively carry out their EFL teaching duty, several researchers suggest teacher training to focus on developing:

- the sound system of the language—accurate pronunciation/intonation
- personal language—you yourself, your family, where you live;
- descriptive language—people, animals, clothes, houses, town, environment, weather, food and drink;
- affective language—likes/dislikes, feelings, emotions, aches and pains, praise and terms of endearment;
- classroom language—daily routines, greetings, instructions, teacher language for organizing pupil activities, pupil language for asking for permission, for help, for solving problems;
- language to cover activities from other curriculum areas such as math, art, science;
- language needed to play games; to teach children poems, songs, tongue-twisters; to tell and act out with the children popular stories in the foreign language (Felberbauer, 1997; Low, 2005; Satchwell, 2005).

Scotland primary EFL teachers were made to receive language improvement training focusing on the above language points (Satchwell, 2005).

It appears vital to understand how Bulgarian MoE has become successful in primary EFL teaching through referring to the study made by Harizanova and Maragaritova (n.d.). Soon after the Bulgarian MoE decided to lower the onset age to grade 1 in 1998, teacher education institutes felt the necessity of preparing enough English teachers for grades 1-4. Even though some universities in Bulgaria prepare a four-year training programs to prepare teachers who can teach English by integrating to other subjects, waiting for four years was perceived as too long to meet the country’s urgent needs. To respond to this urgent need, many experienced and newly graduate primary teachers with little or no knowledge of English were made to apply for one year retraining courses to help them improve their proficiency both in English and in teaching English to young learners. The university in its 1998/1999 and 2003/2004 academic years has provided courses aimed at improving primary teachers’ proficiency in the English language.
classifying them into two semesters and on four levels (840/720 hrs) and in teaching English to young learners (180/270 hrs). Contents of the methodology courses comprise:

- Primary FLT methodology 60 hrs
- Textbook evaluation and materials design 15/30 hrs
- Testing, assessment and evaluation 15/30 hrs
- Audio-visual and information technologies 15/30 hrs
- Lesson observation 15 hrs
- Children’s literature in English 45 hrs
- Teaching practice 60 hrs

While dealing with the **Primary ELT methodology** course, the issues involved were approaches and methods in FL teaching, how children learn foreign languages, teaching YL pronunciation, intonation and rhythm, teaching the alphabet (ways of introducing letters, teaching handwriting, etc.), classroom language, error correction, visual aids in teaching EFL to YLs, making EFL learning fun (using songs, games, puppets, etc.), classroom management (lesson planning, classroom organization, pair/group work etc.), integrating EFL into the primary curriculum, teaching culture and books for children, storytelling.

The courses the university offered were proved to be successful as retrained teachers witnessed that their pupils’ interest to learning the language and ability to use the language were genuinely improved afterwards. The key features accounted for the institutions’ success of improving teachers’ English delivery were:

- The fact that the course is designed for people who already have sound theoretical and practical knowledge of teaching children makes it possible to optimize the content of the methodology module and to put a strong emphasis on the English language module.
- Trainers are highly qualified and have been involved in pre-service and in-service teacher training for many years and thus the retrainees have the opportunity to see their trainers teach English and benefit directly from their knowledge and experience, references being constantly made to EFL teaching in the primary classrooms.
The methodology module aims at combining the theoretical input with workshop-format sessions where retrainees experience techniques and activities and reflect upon them from the perspective of teaching English to young learners.

The retrainees are made to acquire hands-on experience in lesson planning and teaching, preparing and adapting materials, post-lesson self-evaluation, etc.

To further understand the kind of training relevant to teachers to teach FLs in primary schools, suffice to note what Dagarin and Andraka (2007) put forward while comparing Slovenia’s and Croatia’s primary English teachers training programs.

After lowering the onset age/stage to Year 3 (age 9) and benefiting from the widespread research publications, Slovenia seemed to realize the importance of teachers’ qualification and established a new program for training pre-and in-service classroom teachers to teach EFL under the Faculty of Education in 1998. Full time students are made to attend a four-year university classroom education program, while primary school teachers who has already completed classroom education program are made to take a two-year in-service teacher training programs. The aim of this latter program is to train classroom teachers to be linguistically and methodologically prepared to teach FL to children. A total of 750 hours for six courses are designed to developing trainees linguistic and methodological skills within two years: the language module comprises of 285 hours of practical English classes, 180 hours of grammar and 60 hours of phonetics and phonology; the methodology module consists of 90 hours of methodology for teaching FLs to children and 45 hours of non-verbal means of communication which emphasize teachers to teach FLs through arts, music, movement and puppetry; The literature module consists of 30 hours of general literature in a FL and 60 hours of children’s literature, where student teachers learn how to adapt and apply stories, poems, rhymes and other literary texts in their delivery. Some courses like classroom language, assessment, role play and drama in young learner classroom are also added with primary FL teachers’ request. These show the kind of knowledge and skills teachers training programs should focus on to equip trainee teachers to EFL teaching to young learners.

Croatia created pre-service program to train English teachers of primary school children in 1994. The program comprises of 12 courses with 1185 hours spread over four years: 570 hours of language courses-to develop students linguistic and communicative competence; 405 hours of literature and culture-the culture courses include the impact of cultural context on language
through topics taught at primary level like food, holiday, pop culture and others; and 210 hours of ELT methodology—students learn specific features of teaching English with particular reference to children and to the integration of English to other curriculum areas; practicum is also part of this program.

The three-year pre-service college in Poland offers a curriculum comprising of a methodology course in the domain of teaching English to young learners with the aim of improving the teaching and learning of primary English ( Szulc-Kurpaska, 2007). This course includes a semester of psycho-pedagogy (30 hours), a semester of EFL methodology for young learners (30 hours) and trainees are also expected at the end of their third year to attend practicum courses to teach young learners in lower primary classes (aged 7-11).

Ujlakyne (2005) also describes how the teacher training institutes in Hungary takes care of the teaching of FLs to primary school pupils. Hungary colleges provide training to primary school (6-12 years of age) teachers first as classroom teacher to teach all subjects and then after further training in the FL, the classroom teachers become a primary EFL teacher. The classroom teacher training supports future FL teachers as it includes courses like characteristics features of young learners, the psychology of 6-12 year old children, L1 development, practicum courses and basic teaching techniques in lower primary classes like equipping students with visual presentation and musical skills which are vital in FL teaching too. Foreign language teacher training, which is one third of classroom teachers training program, encourage trainees to write final essay on professional topic and to discuss professional issues and read literature using the target language on teaching EFL to young learners.

To produce primary school teachers that specialize in the FL, Britain uses PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate of Education), a one year course after graduation from a university, as a main teacher training program (Wilson, 2009). Wilson further notes that the program is too intensive to include much tuition in the target language as well as a four week stay in a country where the target language is spoken. Trainees are also made to observe a number of lessons and to take part in teaching part of the regular curriculum in the target language.

Initiating universities and colleges that provide pre-service training emphasizing on such courses which are directly related to the teaching of EFL to young learners may depict the recognition
different countries give to the special training primary FL teachers need to effectively execute their teaching job. The number of years and hours trainee teachers required to study may also depict the degree of competences teachers are required to be equipped with to teaching EFL in primary classrooms. This may also show that training primary school English teachers require high amount of money, though the money incurred for such purpose seem to reverberate positively on improving students English and then on attaining the desired quality education at all levels as well as on subsequent reduction of budget for ELT particularly at secondary and tertiary levels (Amanuel, 2002). Thus, countries from relying on main stream EFL courses to train primary English teachers seem to have shifted to use courses that reflect the reality that are awaiting teachers in primary EFL classrooms.

Teachers’ competence for teachers training to focus can then be summed to include the following:

- Knowledge of the language-performance skills on the language taught
- Knowledge about the language-knowledge about the specific FL and language in general
- Knowledge how to teach the language-understanding the teaching/learning process
- Knowledge about teaching young children-general pedagogical understanding
- Knowledge about teaching the language to young children (Moon, 2005; Inbar, 2005; Sharpe, 2005)

One can be rational to state then that in order to equip primary EFL teachers with the potential challenges of primary EFL classroom, the curriculum the Ministry put forward for primary EFL teachers training need to reflect the practical encounters awaiting teachers in the classroom through adhering to the above frameworks and heeding the actual context.

One can be rational then to draw clear picture of theoretical frameworks that educational authorities can make reference to design curriculum for primary EFL teachers training to follow and to suggest the use of effective and age appropriate instructional practices to foster children’s language learning. It seems advisable to be clear at the outset about the necessary ingredients of the primary teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions to the desired program model and to
view these as useful input to the success of teaching a foreign language (Driscoll, 2005). Besides, identifying such knowledge and expertise required of primary EFL teachers and stipulate them in policy texts of primary ELT could further contribute to future training and development of teachers and teacher trainers (Driscoll et al, 2004). To foster quality primary FL teaching and improve pupils’ foreign language learning, England, China and USA have stipulated basic standard competences for primary FL teachers to possess to be certified to teach and for TEIs to follow to design the curriculum and work towards equipping trainees with these competences (Wang, 2002; INTASC, 2004; Sharp, 2005). England to equip its primary FL teachers with the necessary skills profile, initial teacher training institutes have offered courses to develop their spoken competence in the target language and to acquaint them with principles of effective primary FL teaching (Sharpe, 2005). In relation to this, Raya (n.d.) notes that teacher education institutes can profit a lot if they early identify teachers expected ELT competences to effectively teach the primary curriculum and make attempts to synchronize the courses designed to offer as per their expectations.

It appears, therefore, essential for educators and policy makers to determine the relevant knowledge and skills primary teachers need to successfully deliver the foreign language curriculum. Such profile of teacher competences can assist providers of teacher training to aim and work towards furnishing trainee teachers with these competences. Analogous to this, evidences discussed above and elsewhere in the study about factors underpinning successful foreign language teaching to primary school children seems to have implications for both initial and in-service teacher training institutes. However, in contexts where primary teacher preparation is insufficient for proper target language delivery, “it may actually be better to remove EFL completely from the curriculum, or alternatively introduce professional subject teachers of English instead of all round teachers.” (Drew et al, 2007)

In general, it appears vital to create an effective, integrated program of initial and in-service teacher training to pave ways for suitable development of EFL teaching in primary schools. It seems also vital to synchronize the curriculum of teacher education institutes to what teachers are expected to perform in primary classrooms. Offering courses that may equip trainee teachers with the essential skills and capabilities fit for the purpose and merge this with steps that ensure
whether or not the trainee teachers have internalized the expected specialized competences need to be a requirement.

3.10 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The aim of this study is to look into the gaps the teaching and learning of primary English experience in terms of aspects advocated in the policy texts and their actual practices. Policy aspects which refer to organizations and teaching of English, as manifested in the first cycle English curriculum, of the primary English curriculum (aims, contents, approach and methods, time allocations), as well as organizations and contents of the English curriculum of the teacher training program and other policy texts pertinent to these issues are examined. The policy practice is also examined through studying the English textbooks, course contents of teacher training, and teachers live first cycle English classrooms and school evidences, and activities the bureau carries out to enhance pupils English communication skills or otherwise.

In this regard, the philosophies of constructivism (Piaget and Vygotsky) as well as insights from Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researches (such as Krashen and Terrel, 1983) and children’s potential (e.g. curious, talkative) to language learning are adopted to serve as a conceptual framework to appraise working policy texts and practices of primary EFL teaching. I decided to use this as a framework to examine the gaps the teaching and learning of primary English face through drawing aspects from primary ELT policy and practice since several recent studies attest that successful S/FL teaching/learning at early primary school level are underpinned by principles drawn from these insights.

Several advocates of E(FL) teaching to young learners contend that present day approaches in primary FL education seem to be founded on insights and guidance predominantly drawn from Piaget and Vygotsky’s psychological theories of development (such as Seefeldt, 2005; Viana & Stetsenko, 2006). Piaget’s view of facilitating the classroom environment for individual child to actively explore, Vygotsky’s social interaction, Zonal Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding appear to be vital insights to be drawn for curriculum developers, teachers, teacher trainers and material writers to consider to promote primary school children’s EFL learning and development.
The constructivist’s perspective on language, thought and language learning are particularly heeded to frame the study. Several researchers also contend that findings of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) may have significant implications to primary FL classroom instructions. Cognizant to the way children learn their L1 and L2 in a natural setting and the apparent ease it may render to children to learn other languages in school context, many of the current successful primary schools are found replicating this naturalistic approach to classroom instructions to enhance the rate of children’s FL learning (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Martin, 2000; Lightbown, 2000; Cameron, 2001; Richard and Rodgers, 2001; Rosa, 2004; and Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008). Principles derived from this theory and found successful for lower primary schools in SL situation can be used in FL situation (Brumfit, 1995; Brewster, 1995). Primary foreign language teaching methodology and teachers training which rests on exploiting the insights into children language learning theories (e.g. constructivist/ communicative theory), second language acquisition researches, and children’s potential (e.g. curious, talkative) to language learning can possibly lead the primary EFL program to success (Cameron, 2003; Rosa, 2004; Dolitsky, 2006).

The constructive language learning theory contends that primary school children’s foreign language learning depends on the physical, social and mental interactions they made with their environment and other individuals (Seefeldt, 2005; Viana & Stetsenko, 2006). This implies that children’s language learning is derived from what they do individually and from the interactions they made with their teachers and other pupils in the classroom and school.

In line with FL curriculum, today, as in the past, constructivists continue to support an EFL curriculum development around young learners’ first hand experiences (Smith, 2001; Seefeldt, 2005). In developing children’s language and thinking, ZPD or their immediate potential plays central role for effective learning (Cameron, 2001; Smith, 2001; Seefeldt, 2005). Embedded in activities and experiential learning, beginning learners can gain experience of the world around them and acquire and develop the language related to the new experience. Matching EFL curriculum content both to young learners’ development and to their here-and-now social and physical world is crucial for them to get involved with interest (Seefeldt, 2005). This could imply that the contents and methods employed to present the contents at the earlier level should focus on things that children can see and experience and on discrete languages in line with their cognitive development.
Children’s interest to EFL learning can be invigorated by exposing them to new objects and pictures (visual stimulus), stories (visual and aural) and games (visual, aural and kinesthetic) to actively experience the FL to lay foundation for subsequent FL learning, from concrete experience to abstraction (Brewster, 1995; Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Cameron, 2001; Renshaw, 2004). Children need experience to acquire and develop the new language, and they also need language to cope with the new experience.

Children’s prior experience, interests and the resources of their surroundings can guide curriculum and material writers and teachers for selection of contents and activities. The range of language experience primary school pupils receive from the FL lessons can decide the rate of their language development. Language can grow when classroom children get opportunities to interact with others using the language previously learned. Primary school pupils EFL learning, thus, depends not just on exposure to the target language but also access to much EFL input which is adjusted in various ways to make it understandable to children (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Martin, 2000; Lightbown, 2000; Cameron, 2001). That is, the amount and quality of exposure children experience on the specific FL can dictate their rate of mastery of the target language.

Primary school children best acquire English and teacher’s best support their students learning when knowledge is negotiated and acquired through social interaction. The constructivist theory and SLA researches and studies on young learners language learning potential demand teachers and curriculum developers to view language teaching not as a subject for children to know but to help children to communicate using the language. The principles that underpin this theory and approach stress primary school pupils as active participants with prior knowledge and experience in language learning and thus both teachers and children construct new knowledge through interaction (Smith, 2001). Constructivist theory can then be executed through such activities like cooperative learning and teacher-student negotiations (Smith, 2001). These imply that children’s thinking process while engaging individually or socially with classroom activities to construct meaning seems to be more vital than their overt responses (whether right or wrong). Thus, examining the contents and organization of the primary English curriculum and textbooks to find out whether or to what extent the contents and activities involved in them underpin the constructive and SLA insights as well as young learners characteristics can pin point the
potential strength and/or drawbacks the documents accommodate to fostering the primary English.

Children’s attempt to communicate using the target language can be seen then as a process for guiding children’s language learning and for transferring knowledge (Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008; Dereboy, 2008). Young learners cognitive and English language developments are largely dependent on opportunities given for meaningful interaction in the language, and not on exposure alone. Young learners need thousands of hours of exposure before they are expected to use the language to talk, and that this exposure is crucial (Johnston, 1994; Dereboy, 2008). This implies that teacher’s ability to modify their classroom talk is mandatory and thus teachers need to be trained to adjust their talk using the following speech characteristics when attempting to communicate with young learners.

a) Paralinguistic features
   I. High pitch
   II. Exaggerated intonation

b) Syntactic features
   I. Shorter mean length of utterance
   II. Fewer verb forms and modifiers
   III. Fewer subordinate clauses or embeddings per utterances
   IV. Shorter mean pre-verb length
   V. More verbless utterances
   VI. More content words, fewer function words

c) Discourse features
   I. More interogatives and imperatives
   II. Speech more fluent and intelligible
   III. More repetition whether complete, partial or semantic or phrases (Dereboy, 2008)

Thus, the approach and methods suggested particularly to the first primary grades need to put emphasis on developing pupils oral/aural skills and the teaching and learning of the FL need to be as whole as children are. Letting them sitting still in the FL classroom to listen to and recite what the teacher says or viewing children as passive learners and teachers as transmitters of
knowledge is against the underpinning principles of this theory. It is also against children’s developmental characteristics. Teachers and learners are co-constructors of knowledge.

Teachers like mothers are expected to support a child through fine tuning their classroom talk to motivate and bring children’s involvement in problem-solving activities. Teachers’ classroom scaffolding is expected to mirror what successful mothers do for their children to carry out certain tasks and these actions include the following:

- They made the children interested in the task;
- They simplified the task often by breaking it down into smaller steps;
- They kept the child on track towards completing the task by reminding him the goal;
- They pointed out what was important to do;
- They controlled the child’s frustration during the task;
- They demonstrated an idealized version of the task (Cameron, 2001, p.8).

Following this, effective and age-appropriate primary EFL teaching characteristics seem to include:

- Classroom lessons focus on the here and now
- Young learners view language as a means to communicate and thus classroom lessons should be organized in this way
- Classroom lessons should encourage young learners to be actively involved to find and construct meaning and purpose
- Focus on oral and aural activities as they are good imitators of the target language
- Use of multimodal--actions, pictures, realia, video/audio cassettes and others
- The content of the language lessons should consider their psycho-cognitive and psychosocial development—for example—use of simple and short words (less or no long sentences)
- Scaffolding—teachers’ ability to use the language through fine tuning it to make it comprehensible for children
- Use of the target language, interactive mode of teaching, use of TPR
These characteristics require primary EFL teachers to have good command of the language and language specific teaching strategies for young learners. Teacher training should include the above elements to support, promote and develop teachers’ effective practice in primary English classrooms. This implies that the kind of organizations and curriculum contents of the teachers training need to reflect the required practical skills: to improving teachers’ subject knowledge, especially English proficiency as well as language-specific teaching strategies for young learners. Looking into the organizations and contents of the courses the teacher training employs to train English teachers against these insights may indicate the capacity of the training to equip teachers to the purpose.

The implications this framework may hold towards the organizations and provisions of primary EFL teaching program are used as lens to look into aspects propounded in policy texts and the potential implications they may have towards the teaching and learning of English to the target group. Aspects involved in first cycle English curriculum policy texts pertinent to teachers training program as well as the language lessons embodied in the first cycle English textbooks, teachers live classroom English teaching, other practices the schools may evidence and the course contents encompassed in the college’s course catalogue relevant the teaching of English are appraised against this skeleton.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction
This chapter attempts to delineate a detailed description of the research methodology adopted in this study. Aspects which Cohen et al (2000) suggest as vital for researchers to follow when describing the research methodology are heeded as outline to writing this chapter. This includes a description of the qualitative, quantitative approaches, and the mixed methods approaches, as well as the rationales for the choice of the approach, and an overview of the research design are presented focusing on the research questions. Then, the qualitative and the quantitative types of methods utilized for this study are illustrated through discussing the strategies used in the sampling of settings and research subjects, data collection instruments, and data collection procedures. Following these, data organizations and data analyses methods used for both the qualitative and the quantitative parts of the study are detailed.

4.2 Research Methodology
This study focuses on curricular policy contents related to the teaching of English to primary first-cycle students and to the preparation of teachers to teaching English to the level as well as on the contents of grades 1-4 English student books and teachers live performances to teaching English to find out any policy and practice concerns based on aspects described in the conceptual framework of the study. The study also considers individuals as data sources to examine policy and practice issues. To answer the research problem focusing on these data sources, mixed methods approach or both qualitative and quantitative approaches for data collection and data analysis are employed.

Qualitative methods allow for identification of previously unknown processes, explanations of why and how phenomena occur, and the range of their effects (Dorney, 2007). That is, it works for an in depth understanding of the situation and individual experiences. Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then analysed primarily by non-statistical method. These imply that the data drawn using qualitative methods provide complete information and real reflections of the meanings of the documents, people, and situations (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).
Quantitative data have the potential to provide measurable evidence, to yield efficient data collection procedures, to create the possibility of replication and generalization to a population, to facilitate the comparison of groups, and to provide insight into a breadth of experiences (Creswell et al., 2010). In order thus to find out teachers perceptions of their classroom performances to teaching English and the training they received, survey questionnaire are prepared and administered.

Given the nature of the study, this study employs both qualitative and quantitative research methods to answer the four research questions. This study uses document reviews, observation, survey questionnaire, and interview to address the four research questions. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed methods research as a research method “where the research mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p. 17) The use of mixed methods research design allow the researcher to use multiple approaches to answering research questions (Creswell, 2003; Dorney, 2007).

The rationales for adopting such an approach to examine the research problem are threefold. First, the mixed methods research approach employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection and data analyses is particularly appropriate for this study as this best fosters to answer the research questions. In order to better understand the contents in the policy documents and textbooks and the English classroom scenario, the qualitative methods design is mainly used.

Second, the classroom phenomenon is complex. In order to view the primary first-cycle EFL classroom real practices from multiple perspectives, the only use of qualitative approach may not be sufficient. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methodologies in classroom research can foster good understanding of the intricate tapestry of classroom events (Dornyei, 2007). The quantitative parts of the study through survey questionnaire can then add depth to understanding the classroom practices more thoroughly. To achieve a fuller understanding of the classroom phenomenon, the two research methods are employed. Many other authorities (such as Patton, 2002; Creswell, 2003; Dorney, 2007; Creswell et al., 2010) also contend that the use of a combination of methodologies is most effective in answering research questions.
Third, from collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher is able to provide a strong case for drawing conclusions through convergence and corroboration of findings. The multiple measures to investigate teachers’ English language proficiency and English teaching skills help to ensure the validity of both the qualitative and quantitative findings. The qualitative classroom data is then substantiated by drawing data from teachers through adopting a survey questionnaire, quantitative research. A quantitative research methodology is used to complement and confirm findings of the qualitative classroom observation, document reviews and interviews. The utilization of a range of data sources in such a study is a means of data triangulation (Patton, 2002). This triangulation of data coupled with methodological triangulation or the use of multiple methods to examine a distinct problem was considered crucial to validate and cross-check the research findings in this study (Creswell, 2003). The researcher thus found qualitative and quantitative research more apt to evaluating the primary EFL policy and practice related issues.

The research questions set earlier following the general purpose of the research are considered to frame the study. The qualitative methods design is mainly used to answer the first two research questions; and the quantitative and qualitative approaches is also found particularly appropriate as this best works to answer the third research questions. The use of mixed methods research allows the researcher to take a closer look into both the policy enacted and the practice of primary first-cycle English teaching. The use of mixed methods research generates classroom data from different perspectives—observing teachers live performances, interviewing school principals and officials in the REB and MoE, and teachers’ perceptions of their own performances in teaching English to the young learners. The qualitative data drawn from classroom observations, teachers’ views of their training to the open-ended question in the survey questionnaire and document reviews coupled with the quantitative data that depicts teachers’ views of their actual competences to teaching the language can also enhance and enrich the complete understanding of the policy and practice issues related to primary EFL English teaching. Thus, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data found profitable to best address the research problem.

Accordingly, qualitative methods of data collection (document review, classroom observation and interviews) and data analyses are mainly used to answer the research questions related to the
adequacy and appropriacy of the policy stipulated (which include grades 1-4 English curriculum and teachers training curriculum) and of the practices (which focus on the grades 1-4 English textbooks and teachers’ competences in the English language and English teaching) to fostering primary EFL teaching. A quantitative survey questionnaire which contains close-and open-ended items is also used to find out teachers’ perceptions of their classroom performances and about their training to teaching English. Finally, the implications of the findings towards policy formulation and practice concerns are discussed in terms of the pros and cons they incur to the program.

The policy documents and the textbooks are reviewed mainly prior to the classroom observations and interviews are conducted so that possible variations between policy and practices can easily be detected. The survey questionnaire is administered soon after the classroom observation is conducted so that teachers can fairly evaluate their classroom performances. Interviews with the school principals are also conducted after the observations so that what happens in the classrooms can be cross validated. Subsequently, interviews with the ANRSEB and then with the MoE officials are conducted in order to cross check any policy and practice variations as obtained from the other data sources. This study is therefore more of qualitative and less quantitative (Creswell, 2003).

In this study, both the qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed separately and then integrated in the discussion stage (Creswell, 2003; Dorney, 2007). It appears suggestible to write up the qualitative part of the study qualitatively and the quantitative part quantitatively, and do the mixing in the discussion stage; this has been suggested to be appropriate for triangulation study where the objective is to corroborate findings as means of validation (Dorneyei, 2007). Therefore, this study basically employs mixed approach to data gathering and analysis. With these philosophical ideas behind, the methods of data collection and analyses are detailed below.

4.3 Sampling

The rationales and the research procedures followed in order to sample out the research settings and research subjects are discussed hereunder.
4.3.1 Setting

In this subsection, the rationales considered to selecting the region, the schools and their locations, and the grade levels are put forward.

4.3.1.1 Selecting Region and its Rationale

Among the nine regions and two special towns found in Ethiopia, Amhara National Regional State (ANRS henceforth) was purposefully selected so as to look into how the national teachers training and primary EFL curriculum policies are implemented in the region’s primary first-cycle schools. This region was purposefully selected as the writer lives and works there so that follow up plans and participation in the future intervention can be made possible. Selecting this region can also represent the other regions as all regions follow similar primary English curriculum and textbooks and similar teachers training curriculum policy. Besides, working in this region where the researcher knows the culture can enrich and validate the data that the study sought to gather — for example—understanding teacher’s and/or learners’ possible use of L1 in English classrooms, analyzing how culturally alien and/or appropriate the language contents and tasks and activities embodied in primary English textbooks (Lobo, 2003; Balbi, 2008).

4.3.1.2 Selecting Schools and its Rationale

Government first-cycle primary schools were selected in this study as sources of information due to the large number of students they accommodate when compared to their private counterparts (ANRSEB, 2008; MoE, 2008). As interest in EFL instruction continues, it seems right to research on the efficacy of the government lead EFL program so that majority citizens can profit from its EFL teaching (Cambell et al., 1985). Besides, the resources allocated to these numbers of students seem to be higher which further justifies a focus to be made on these schools.

Bahir Dar town and its surrounding primary schools were randomly chosen because the kinds of primary schools the region may accommodate can also be found here. The existing government primary schools in the region are classified into two types, urban- and rural-for administrative reasons. Such classifications of primary schools are also found in Bahir Dar town and its vicinity (ANRSEB, 2008). Thus, from among the 27 (18 urban + 9 rural) government primary schools found in Bahir Dar town and its surrounding, six were selected using stratified sampling
technique. That is, to make the six sampled schools represent the features found in both locations, urban and rural schools, proportional stratified sampling technique is used (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Creswel, 2003). Accordingly, four out of eighteen urban and two out of nine rural government primary schools, as is given in the ANRSEB (2008) document, are selected using simple random sampling technique. The size of an adequate sample depends on how alike or unlike the populations are; if the population exhibit homogeneous characteristics, it can be fairly represented (1/5th of the total population) with small number (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). Even though the information obtained from these sampled schools may not give the overall picture in the region, they, together with other data, can be indicative of aspects to be considered vital in identifying teachers’ ELT competencies to teaching English and the overall classroom practices of the teaching and learning of primary English in the region.

4.3.1.3 Site of the Schools

The selected rural schools, Zenzelima and Meshenti Primary Schools, are found in different sites at the outskirt of Bahir Dar town, and they are approximately ten kilometers far from Bahir Dar University main campus where the researcher works. From the sampled urban schools, Atse Sertse Dingil and Yekatit 23 Primary Schools are found at the center of the town, while Dona Berber and Dil Chibo Primary Schools are located far from the center and at different sites. Viewing them from the university, the former school is about five kilometers from and just opposite to the university, while the later school is located in similar distance but to the left of the university.

4.3.1.4 Determining Grade Levels and its Rationale

The first-cycle primary school (i.e. grades one up to four) is considered purposefully in this study to elicit the required information on the teaching and learning of primary English. The Ministry writes that primary first cycle students experience has to be enjoyable and provide children inspiration for learning; but if children miss this opportunity, then their higher order thinking skills and sustainable learning can be hampered and children at this level may fail to develop positive attitude (MoE, 2003). Several authorities (Madson, 1970; Mukattash 1984; Omodiaoogbe, 1992, for example) underscore the relevance of lying proper English language foundation at primary level to enhance pupils’ achievements at secondary and tertiary levels. The
teaching and learning of English to these grade level students is likely to decide students’ progress and then their desire to study the language and perform better in the subsequent grade levels compared to the way it is handled to upper grade level students (Madson, 1970; Mukattash, 1984; Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Edelenbos et al., 2006).

What is more, studying these grade levels also gives an opportunity to look into the extent of help or otherwise the start of teaching English from grade one renders to children’s progress or failure in the language. Availability of resources in a specific context like time, qualified teachers to effectively teach primary English and other crucial factors are likely to determine the lowering or the delaying of onset stage (Fukami, 2004; Sinh, 2006). Commencing the teaching of EFL from first grades of primary schools without fulfilling the necessary resources can be counterproductive on children’s future target language learning (McLaughlin, 1992; Johnston, 1994; Nikolove, 2002; Nikolove and Djigunovic, 2006).

4.3.2 Research Subjects

Under this subsection, the justifications and procedures followed to sampling the research subjects—officials, school principals, and teachers—are discussed.

4.3.2.1 Selecting Officials and its Rationale

The Primary English Curriculum Expert under Regional Education Bureau (REB) and the English Language Quality Improvement Programme Coordinator, and Teachers and Educational Leaders Directorate, of the Ministry of Education responsible to plan and run primary EFL education are selected using available sampling technique. This is because they are the right persons in the units to provide information germane to the organizations and management of primary EFL education. Purposefully selecting these officials who lead the units to retrieve the required data is likely to yield the relevant information about the topic under investigation (Ali, 2003). A researcher can choose individuals he expects to furnish him with the required information (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

4.3.2.2 Selecting School Principals and its Rationale

Principals of the selected schools are considered as sources of information to understand the strategies the schools take over to improve children’s communication in the English language.
and to validate information retrieved from classroom observation and from their respective English teachers. School principals can provide relevant information about the various endeavors the schools employ in addition to the normal English classroom lesson to promote their primary pupils communication skills in the English language (Ali, 2003). Every sampled school has one principal and thus available sampling technique is used to sample the principals.

4.3.2.3 Selecting Teachers and its Rationale

Four teachers, one English teacher in each of the sampled four grade levels, are selected irrespective of the number of teachers teaching English in same grade levels but in different sections as all teachers in one grade level and one school use similar textbook and prepare all students for similar classroom tests. Thus, four teachers in one sample school and a total of 24 teachers in the six selected schools were chosen as sources of information in this study.

Pupils who start speaking and writing well in English at primary level are motivated to learn and carry on their education at secondary and tertiary levels (MoE, 2002). This implies that language learning at this level seems to be crucial and therefore quality teaching of English must be ensured to lay the required foundations for the pupils’ future education. The English teacher, therefore, seems to be the principal agent to decide the quality of the teaching and learning processes particularly in first cycle primary classrooms (Wajnryb, 1992; Parker and Parker, 1995; Fukami, 2004). Thus, heeding teachers as sources of information can yield data required to spot the possible problems in the teaching and learning of English in primary classrooms (Ali, 2003).

4.4 Data Collection Instruments

A qualitative researcher can use a variety of techniques for gathering information as long as they are ‘fit for the purpose’ since the qualitative researcher is viewed as a ‘methodological omnivore’ (Cohen et al., 2005, p.76). Thus, documents, classroom observations and interviews as qualitative data gathering tools were more widely used in this study than the quantitative questionnaire which was used to triangulate the qualitative classroom data.
4.4.1 Document Review

The major aim of employing document review method is to gather information on aspects related to the organizations and teaching of English at primary school level both at policy and practice levels. Accordingly, the Course Catalogue for English Diploma Cluster Program (MoE, 2009) and the English Syllabus for Grades 1-4 (MoE, 2008) and other pertinent documents were studied to capture data on policy factors, while primary first cycle English textbooks and their respective teacher’s guides as well as the daily/weekly lesson plans of observed teachers were examined to draw data on practices. Such document evidences were then used to examine whether or not the aspects involved are adequate and appropriate to promoting the teaching and learning of English to the level.

The use of documents as data gathering tools renders the advantages of being always available and being fact (Cohen et al., 2000). Document review technique is employed here as a major tool as it is believed that this technique provides authentic and rich information when compared to other methods of data collection such as questionnaire and interview techniques (Leedy and Ormrod, 2006; Dörnyei, 2007).

4.4.1.1 Grades 1-4 English Curriculum

In order to obtain information on the national goals, the contents, the approach and methods as well as onset age and time allocations, the English Syllabus for Grades 1-4 (MoE, 2008) is studied and presented in an overview form. The principles and theories concerning how languages are learned, knowledge of language is represented and organized to be remembered that the curriculum is founded on can determine the quality of language teaching and learning (Richards and Rodgers, 2001; Balbi, 2008). Thus, the primary first-cycle curriculum is examined to find out whether the contents, aims, approach to language and language learning and organization, the stated, are age-appropriate to promote children’s EFL teaching and learning (Ali, 2003). The adequacy and appropriacy of the primary grades 1-4 English curriculum is examined together with the English textbooks as the textbooks are detailed representations of the policy specifications (Nagy and Willis, 2008). The data drawn have been used to examine how they are reflected in the contents of the sampled English textbooks and in the classroom practices.
4.4.1.2 Grades 1-4 English Textbooks

The Grades 1-4 English textbooks which are assumed to reflect elements in the curriculum are also used as sources of data to examine whether its contents, organizations and presentations are effective and age appropriate to fostering pupils’ language acquisition.

In a context where textbooks serve as the basis for much of the foreign language input pupils receive and for the language practice that takes place in the classroom, English textbooks appear to be invaluable resources to cultivating children’s English language proficiency and to achieving the aims and objectives stated in the syllabus (Litz, n.d.; Lunderberg, 2007; Hasan & Raddatz, 2008). If the contents failed to meet children’s world experience and if the methods up on which these contents are organized do not consider children’s developmental characteristics, textbooks are likely to hinder children’s effort to progress on the English language (Gardner, 1993; Komorowska, 1997; Cameron, 2001). Therefore, evaluating first-cycle English textbooks whether or to what extent they contribute to or inhibit children progress in the English language seems to be crucial to find out potential problems related to primary ELT. Evaluating textbooks can also complement other classroom data gathered from observation and questionnaire which can add depth to understand the practices of the teaching and learning of primary English (Bazo and Penate, 2007).

4.4.1.3 Teachers Training Curriculum

The Teachers Training Curriculum Policy the Ministry has enacted for grades 1-4 English teachers training is examined in order to find out how adequate and appropriate the teachers training are to teachers expected classroom performances. This is done focusing on its organizations and the English language-specific course contents. These can give the adequacy and capability of teacher training program as the way the training programs are organized and the types of English curriculum the Ministry suggests for TEIs to offer seem to have direct impact on prospective teacher’s ability of teaching English.

Studying teachers training curriculum policy the Ministry has stipulated to train prospective English teachers could reveal one of the ranges of issues that directly impact their classroom teaching performances (Chang, n.d.; Dugarin & Andyaka, 2007). In addition to the English textbook prescribed for primary teachers to use to facilitate pupils’ learning, it has been
worthwhile investigating sources of support in terms of both the English language and pedagogical content these teachers get from as part of teacher education program (Beinhardt and Hammadou 1987; Rixon, 1999). To make effective use of the textbooks designed, teachers need to have sufficient competence as its mere presence cannot substitute teachers (Chang, n.d.; Drew et al., 2008). The way initial and in-service teacher training is organized therefore exerts a strong impact on the quality of classroom practices which then justifies the researcher’s attempt to looking into the curriculum policy the Ministry has ratified for teacher Education Institutes to follow to train grades 1-4 teachers to teaching the English language (Chang, n.d.; Nikolove, 2007).

Given the degree of dissatisfaction with performances of primary school leavers, it seems vital to examine the teachers training curriculum policies to find out their adequacy and appropiacy to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills that are awaiting teachers in the English classrooms (Cambell et al., 1985). The quality of training teachers receive is likely to determine the quality of their performances in the classroom and then, of course, students English language learning (Beinhardt and Hammadou 1987; Komorowska, 1997; Driscoll, 2000; Cakir, 2004; Edelenbos et al., 2006). In addition, to find out whether or to what degree the Ministry attempts to provide on-the-job training to first cycle English teachers, relevant policy documents are reviewed as sources of information.

4.4.2 Classroom observation

The major aim of the classroom observation is to collect data pertaining to teachers’ proficiency both in the English language and in English teaching as well as the classroom ELT practices pupils are exposed to acquire the English language. It is essential that the evaluation includes an element of classroom observation in order to assess teachers’ actual performances and its impact on English language teaching/learning practices in the primary classroom (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005; Dugarin & Andyaka, 2007). Thus, classroom observation is a strong tool to investigating teachers’ level of proficiency and English teaching skills as well as the kind of English environment students are exposed to practice the English language.

Since people do not always do what they say they do, observation is an important instrument to get direct information about teachers and classroom events (Cohen et al., 2000). Classroom
observation can create opportunities to collect first hand information with regard to teachers’ performances and what happens in the primary EFL classrooms without depending on what teachers say through other methods (Wajnryb, 1992; Cohen et al., 2000). Classroom observation is a powerful tool to draw data on classroom reality which may not be possible to obtain by administering questionnaire or interview as teachers tend to be usually unaware of the processes; they are absorbed in “the purpose, procedure and logistics” (Wajnryb, 1992, p.7). Moreover, it also enabled the researcher to gather data that can be unwillingly missed, or to discover detailed data that participants may not feel free to talk to in the questionnaire or interview (Cohen et al., 2000). Thus, observational data are likely to be accurate as they avoid relying on what teachers tell us about their classroom performances through questionnaire or interview.

The observations are naturalistic in the sense that teachers’ true classroom performances with regard to the level of English language and teaching procedures they exhibit were picked up and the real classroom scenario with regard to teaching and learning of English were collected (Ali, 2006). Cohen and his colleagues (2000) note that “a structural observation will already have its hypothesis decided and will use the observational data to conform or refute these hypotheses. On the other hand, a semi-structured and, …, an unstructured observation will be hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing.” (p.305) Hence, this study used the latter one, hypothesis-generating. Semi-structured observation guide helps the researcher to take down detailed notes focusing on the categories desired without being restricted to certain listed features (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

Observation guide was employed for recording qualitative classroom observational data (Cresswell, 2003; Dornyei, 2007). The observation checklist was used to guide the researcher to capture data on teachers overall command of the English language and teaching skills focusing on their pronunciation and intonation, grammar, spelling and classroom English language and on learning objectives and outcomes and stages of presentations, strategies used, follow up activities, criteria used to gauge learners participation to achieve the objectives targeted as intended in the lesson plan and the evidences used to support these to decide their English teaching skills. It also includes ‘general comments’ section to write notes on teacher’s level of English and teaching English and on the overall classroom practices of the teaching and learning of English to the level.
The daily/weekly lesson plans sample teachers prepared to the observed lessons were also considered to examine teachers’ lesson planning skills in English teaching pursuing the criteria drawn from Al-Mutawa (1997) and Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005)—clarity of lesson objectives, alignment of the defined objectives in preparing instructions, revisions of previous lesson, presentation of the new lesson and suitability of teaching aids to the lesson. Teachers’ levels of grammatical and spelling accuracies were also captured from studying the lesson plans. Teacher’s English language lesson planning skills as well as their grammatical and spelling accuracies were retrieved from studying the lesson plans (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

4.4.3 Questionnaire

The purpose of teacher’s questionnaire is to find out teachers’ feeling of competence in using the English language and in teaching English in primary classrooms which can also be used to cross examine classroom data and data obtained from analyzing the teacher training curriculum policy. A questionnaire is appropriate to gather information on what teachers think of their perceived practices in the teaching of English. Teachers’ perceptions of their own competence particularly in primary classrooms could determine the quality of the practices of the teaching of English and thus asking teachers to fill in the questionnaire could contribute to meeting the research purpose. Questionnaire is employed to retrieve the required data as it is found to be less threatening for teachers to give their genuine responses as it is anonymous when compared to interview (Chang, n.d.; Cohen et al., 2005). Research findings on teacher’s perceptions denote that teacher’s perceived efficacy in aspects of teaching EFL could be linked to teaching practices and learners’ learning outcomes (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Eslami, 2008). Thus, examining teachers’ confidence or lack of it using questionnaire is likely to reveal information on the quality of English teaching practices in primary classrooms.

The teachers’ questionnaire was prepared by adapting Al-Mutawa’s (1997) and Kiely and Rea-Dickens (2005) questionnaires that have been used for similar research intents and by reviewing research evidences on effective EFL teaching practices to primary school children (Raya, n.d.; Gilberts and Lignugaris-Kraft, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickens, 2005). The three major categories that the questionnaire is framed with are taken from the questionnaires, while the items in each of the categories are adapted to fit to the purpose. For example, to obtain teachers’ views on how their pre-and/or in-service training is adequate to help them to effectively teach English, one
open-ended question is added; it is also adapted through adding another open-ended questions to allow teachers comment on their performances which could make the information gathered from the questionnaire more reliable; pronunciation is adapted to refer to teachers’ segmental pronunciation skill and does not refer to teachers’ prosodic pronunciation that native speakers are expected with.

Teachers level of proficiency to use English for classroom purposes pitching it to children’s level of comprehension and to be a model for children to follow, and teachers’ lesson planning, and implementation skills are viewed as crucial to fostering young learners EFL acquisition. Under each of these categories in the questionnaire, various lists of items are itemized and embodied so as to assess teachers’ perceptions of their efficacy on these good practices of English language teaching to primary school children.

To avoid respondents’ unwillingness to respond to the questionnaire, closed-type of questionnaire seems to be recommendable when compared to open-ended questions which may take teachers’ time; rating scale-Likert scale is also found to be the best technique so as to measure the extent of teachers’ perceived competencies in teaching the target language (Cohen et al., 2005). They further point out that rating scale is widely used in researches as they afford the researcher the opportunity to mix measurement with “opinion, quantity and quality” (p. 257). The questionnaire is scaled on the basis of Likert system with a five-point-scale ranging from (5) Excellent (4) V. good, (3) Adequate, (2) Basic, and (1) Weak. A five point scaling system is used after piloting the questionnaire and as is found to be appropriate to the descriptive categories selected (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

It contains 38 questions (some with more than one part) divided into four main areas of focus as follows:

- **Background Information**
  Sex, educational background, teaching subject(s), teaching experience (Questions 1-4)
- **English language level (Questions 1-5)**
- **English teaching skills (Questions 6-30) including one open-ended question for teachers to comment on the adequacy of their training to their teaching of English**
- **Analysis of the day’s lesson (Open-ended questions 1-3)**
Thus, the questionnaire (see Appendix A) is framed to contain the four categories. Questions in the background section are devised to capture data on key characteristic of as well as the qualification and professional experiences of the informant teachers which are used to analyze classroom dynamics, teachers’ espoused qualification in the policy, the presence or absence of and the degree of provision of in-service training (Chang, n.d; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickens, 2005).

Part II and Part III of the questionnaire are devised to capture data on teachers’ beliefs of their competencies towards important aspects for the teaching of English in primary classrooms. The items in Part II refer to level of the English language, while the items in part III refer to the English teaching skills divided into two sections: planning phase and implementation phase of teaching. The former part draws information on teachers’ perceived levels of English proficiency focusing on their overall command of English and their skills on specific language elements, i.e. pronunciation, word spellings, grammar as well as classroom language use. The latter part (planning and implementation phases) consist of English teaching skill components that teachers are expected to be good at to competently perform their duties of teaching English at primary level.

Except one question in Part III and all questions in Part IV which are open-ended, the rest questions in the questionnaire are close-ended. To allow observed teachers state their views about the adequacy of the training they received to the teaching of English to first cycle pupils and to make their rating responses more reliable, one open-ended question is added. Part IV enquires teachers to analyze their observed lessons in terms of the lesson objectives and their attainment through the teaching and learning activities they employ. Teachers’ assessment of their own performances—what they achieve and/or fail to achieve—of the day’s lessons further revealed information on teacher’s capability of teaching English that could validate teachers’ responses to the closed-items. Reliability of a questionnaire can be addressed through increasing the number of questions in the questionnaire (Seliger and Shohamy, 1987; Cohen et al., 2005). Teachers perceived knowledge of the English language and of the teaching of English can be evaluated through allowing them assess their own performances (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

Pilot study followed by the main study is conducted. Trialing of the instruments and procedures were carried out and then any possible problems detected by participants in the pilot study
including problems relating to terminology that could affect their understanding and interpretation were revised for the major study (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005; Cohen et al., 2005; Dörnyei, 2007). The prepared questionnaire was also given to educationists for review before it was administered in the actual research so that it was possible to insert changes and revisions (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickens, 2005).

4.4.4 Interview

The major aim of conducting interview is to elicit data with regard to the organizations and provisions of EFL in government led first cycle primary schools and the specific strategies sampled schools employ to enhance children’s EFL learning. The data drawn from the interviews could further be used to supplement and triangulate information gathered from all reviewed documents, classroom observation and perception questionnaire. Semi-structured interview technique is employed in order to help interviewees give critical and descriptive reflections on the issue (Creswell, 2003; Cohen et al., 2005). The widely used interview technique in qualitative interviewing is the semi-structured interview with sufficiently open-ended schedules to make the contents gathered in order and to undertake further probing on the issue (Cohen et al., 2005). Interview technique is thus selected to be used as it could allow the researcher to make follow-up on unexpected data which may be gathered from documents, classroom observations or questionnaire and to obtain in-depth information about the organizations and provisions of primary English in the sampled region when compared to questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2005).

A guideline interview questions (see Appendix B and C) were then framed based on Cohen et al.’s (2005) suggestions that the format includes background information, topics to be discussed and specific issues and questions to put forward including debriefing techniques so as to delve the required information from the interview. Interview in qualitative research is used to obtaining facts about the issues, to commenting on the standards of actions and to eliciting reasons and explanations (Cohen et al., 2005). Thus, issues like efforts the Ministry/Bureau put forward to improve children’s English such as supervisions, resources, teachers training and sustainable development and questions other data may necessitate are used to frame the questions for semi-structured interview. Probes are also used to ask the interviewee to clarify, extend and/or add information.
4.5 Data Collection Procedures

This study involves both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative consisted of teachers survey questionnaire in the six primary schools found in Bahir Dar town. Qualitative data consisted of document reviews, classroom observations, interviews and questionnaire for open-ended questions. To employ the research instruments and generate the relevant data which are vital in this study to respond to the research questions under investigations, the following various data elicitation procedures were set.

4.5.1 Procurements of Documents and methods used to obtain information

All relevant policy documents such as the grades 1-4 English syllabus and their respective English textbooks and teacher’s guides, the Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program, Ethiopian education and training Policy, and the Ethiopian Teachers’ Training Blue Print and others were procured through systematically approaching and formally enquiring officials who are involved in primary English education both in the REB and in the MoE. Colleagues who are working there were also both formally and informally approached to obtain relevant documents. These requests were done after explaining the sole purpose of borrowing the documents and through being courteous and respectful (Chang, n.d.; Cohen et al., 2005). The documents borrowed were both in soft copy and hard copy form and the hard copies were returned on due time. Only authentic and legitimate documents were consulted as they were collected and borrowed from the persons directly responsible to the subject under investigations.

The data required to evaluate the English textbooks were collected through studying the language contents encompassed in both the English student books and the teachers guide through referring to the criteria developed from Balbi (1997, 2008). The contents in the grades 1-4 English curriculum were also reviewed and displayed in line with the structures developed for evaluating textbooks; the adequacy and relevance of the this curriculum was evaluated while evaluating the English textbooks. The data required to assess the adequacy and appropriacy of the Ministry’s training curriculum policy were drawn from the Course Catalogue the Ministry suggests for Teachers Training Institutes in all regions to apply through referring the criteria adapted from pare teachers to teaching English in grades 1-4 classrooms.
4.5.2 Classroom Observation

Even though I came to know sample teachers through the school principal, further attempt was made to secure their permissions through revealing myself and producing the consent letter similar to the letter I gave to the principals which depicts the purpose of the research. The researcher is expected to disclose himself and fully explain the purpose and procedures of the research to the subjects at the outset as ethical considerations (Cohen et al., 2005). I subsequently had informal discussions, both cordial and professional, with the teachers that further assisted me to secure a good rapport. The principals and the teachers were courteously informed that information gathered during the interview as well as from classroom observations and their lesson plans and from having teachers fill in the questionnaire would be strictly kept confidential and anonymous. Being ethical while conducting a research can exert a significant impact on gathering data that could be reliable and valid (Chang, n.d.; Cohen et al., 2005).

Following this, all teachers volunteered to allow me to sit in their classes and to audio record their classroom lessons and to provide me their daily/weekly lesson plan during the observations. They also allowed me some time to have their lesson plans until I get them photocopied. I gave back the teacher’s lesson plans on due time. A compromise was also made with the teachers about the dates and periods that suit them for observations.

In total, the classroom observations covered 30 lessons taught in six selected government primary schools found in Bahir Dar town from October 17 to November 03/ 2012. The lessons were taught in grades 1-4 English classrooms, four in each school, by 24 different teachers. Observing teachers this time is believed to provide the researcher genuine data as teachers are likely to have relaxed time to allow me to observe their classrooms and to filling in the questionnaire when compared to examination times which make them busy revising lessons, preparing, marking and filling in test papers. The 18 teachers were observed once for two continuous hours while the rest 6 teachers were observed two times when teaching their English lessons that totals 30 classroom observations. Teachers are required to teaching English in a self-contained classroom which demand teachers to teaching English for two continuous hours (two times a week); but some teachers are teaching English for one hour (four times a week) to meet the radio English broadcast time, as they said. The average class size in the observed classrooms was found to be 64. Classroom seats in most of the observed classrooms were arranged for
students to face each other which may signal the opportunities students might get to use and practice the language rather than facing the black board to only listen to the teacher.

The textbooks used by teachers and learners in the observed classrooms were not only the newly prepared and distributed textbooks. Few of the observed teachers were found using the old textbooks as their schools did not yet get the new textbooks. The old textbooks was substituted by the new grades 1-4 English textbooks so as to minimize the amount of contents and to also allow teachers to sometimes use L1 in English classroom; otherwise the approach suggested is the CLT similar to the new ones. Thus, observing teachers using the old textbooks did not deter the researcher to obtain classroom data that could reveal teachers’ English language proficiency, lesson planning and implementing skills while teaching English to young learners.

In order to document the actual classroom teaching and learning of English, the researcher recorded the lessons using digital recorder (EDIROL (by Roland) 24 bit wave/MP3 recorder R-09). In order to better understand classroom events and to avoid observer’s personal meaning, the use of recording is extremely vital (Garton and Balbi, 2008). The machine was tested for its operation and function before applying it for recording classroom events.

To back up recordings and remedy the limitations with audio recordings such as teachers’ use of non-verbal behaviours like where the teacher is standing at any given moment, gestures, facial expressions, use of the blackboard, marking and so on, the researcher employed field notes to record what he heard, observed or felt vital as each lesson progressed (Wang, 2006; Garton and Balbi, 2008). They were opted for collecting classroom data as it was felt that video recordings may attract teachers and students’ attention and disturb the proper functioning of the learning process. In order to ensure the quality of the recordings of teachers’ classroom performances, the researcher opted a seat in the middle of the class which is a safe distance to record teachers and students’ voices from every corner in the classroom. The recorded English lesson and its lesson plan were distinctly marked not to mix up during data organizations and data analysis.

The accuracy of the classroom data was addressed by recording teachers’ live classroom performances and by cautiously taking down notes that fit to the actual performance of the observed teacher (Cohen et al., 2005). The availability of a good sound record (recorded by the researcher) also implies that data can be repeatedly examined to make certain trustfulness
(Chang, n.d.; Garton and Balbi, 2008). These observation data are then used to evidence the degree of competence the sample teachers revealed in using the target language and in teaching English in primary classrooms and at the same time the sample primary EFL classroom practices. That is, 24 teachers live performances while teaching English to first cycle children in the sample schools were recorded. I, through my classroom observation experience, hold the feeling that two periods, forty-minutes each, (or two hours) observed are prototypical of the teaching of English in sampled primary schools and adding any extra observation are unlikely to yield any unusual pattern in the focused descriptors. Comprehensiveness was addressed by observing six schools that could represent schools of the sampled town through heeding the possible variation in rural and urban primary schools as are put forward by the Ministry and the region in focus (ANRS Education Bureau, 2007; MoE, 2008). Observing the same aspects in 24 teachers’ classrooms that share analogous characteristics two times for forty minutes or for two hours each can get rid of one off data and further contribute to the reliability and validity of the collected data (Carless, 2004; Cohen et al., 2005).

Schensul (2008) observes that the role of the researcher in classroom observation can vary along a continuum from participant to non-participant observation. In this part of the study, the researcher’s role was a non-participant or complete observer. Data capture on teachers’ level of English proficiency in relation to their classroom English language use implies an assessment of teachers English proficiency in action and their ability to teach the pronunciation of individual speech sounds such as final-s/-es or final –ed/-d or minimal pairs and perform key observable linguistic features considered crucial for classroom communication (classroom English use, teacher’s pronunciation and intonation, grammar and word spelling skills) (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005). Due to the nature of the role of the primary EFL teachers as a model of producing the FL on the one hand and the nature of the textbook used where vowel/consonant articulation and minimal pair samples are found on the other, segmental pronunciation approach is followed to assess teacher’s pronunciation skills (El-Ebyary, 2005). In other words, the observed teachers are expected to have a basic understanding of how the pronunciation system in the English language works so as to effectively execute the textbook prescribed by the Ministry. It seems presumptuous then that fluency and comprehensibility by native speakers, as seen by prosodic approach advocates, are not the major concern in this study, but rather the ability to present and model English pronunciation features correctly even at
slower rate are used to assess teachers’ pronunciation skills. Similar methods have been used by Al-Mutawa (1997) and El-Ebyary (2005) when evaluating Kuwait’s and Egypt’s primary EFL teachers’ proficiency in the English language, respectively. Thus, these data could decide teachers’ English language proficiency as testing language proficiency (e.g. reading and writing) on paper might not indicate the dynamics of teachers classroom English language performances (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

Teachers overall EFL teaching competences are understood as the levels of proficiency teachers display both in the English language and in teaching English while actually teaching in primary classrooms. Teachers’ level of proficiency in English was assessed based on the degree of classroom language use and the level of accuracies in pronunciation of individual speech sounds and intonation, grammar and spelling which are also used to frame the teachers’ questionnaire. Similarly teachers’ EFL teaching skills is evaluated through studying the lesson plans prepared for observed lessons and through assessing the procedures teachers employed to deliver the specific lesson in their lesson plan and in their live English classrooms and cross-referencing to the good practices suggested in the framed questionnaire as lesson planning and implementation (see Appendix A). That is, teachers’ capability in informing clear objectives to pupils and the steps followed to presenting the lessons, degree of use of the teaching aids, variation in teaching techniques, pupils participation, use of body language, motivating pupils to like the lesson and participate, use of interactive teaching methods, teachers knowledge on the subject, teaching methods to present the lesson at appropriate levels, and classroom management can provide data that reveal teachers’ implementation competencies (Raya, n.d.; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).

The daily/weekly lesson plans sample teachers prepared to the observed lessons were also studied to capture data that revealed teacher’s lesson planning skills as well as their grammatical and spelling accuracies (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005). In addition, teachers’ classroom talk and use of blackboard in live English classrooms were used as sources of information to find out teachers’ English language level and primary English teaching skills (Raya, n.d.; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005).
The time I spent in the visited schools also enabled me to raise and discuss different issues with regard to English language teaching with the research subjects in their respective schools which I included while reporting the data.

4.5.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared and administered to the sample teachers so as to find out teachers perceived competence of teaching English in primary classrooms. To secure permissions to effect the administration of the survey questionnaire and the classroom observation, and the English teachers in the sample schools were approached using support letters produced from Addis Ababa University, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL) as it could depict the sole purpose of the research. To assist teachers provide their true account, the observed teachers were made to fill in the questionnaire soon after the end of the final observation (Al-Mutawa, 1997). The teachers were made to fill in the questionnaire and bring it back to me in the next day so that they could have ample time to study the information and provide their genuine classroom accounts while filling in the questionnaire.

4.5.4 Interview

I went to Bahir Dar Zone education office where I collected the names of two urban and 4 rural primary schools and their specific locations as well as written support letters for each school. I then produced the support letters I had gathered from zone education office and the letters I collected from AAU and my school ID card that convinced the school principals for allowing me to conduct interview and classroom observations. School principals’ interviews generated data that are used to witness the extra methods the sample schools used to cultivate primary pupils’ English language and to triangulate data obtained from observation and from the teachers’ questionnaire.

To secure permissions to effect the other interviews, officials in the Ministry and the Bureau were systematically approached through revealing myself and supplying them with similar support letters produced from Addis Ababa University, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature (DFLL) as it could depict the sole purpose of the research. It was vital for the researcher to reveal fully his identity and background (Cohen et al., 2005).
Experts who are in charge of the English curriculum and teacher development program under the Ministry and Primary English language curriculum expert within the Regional Education Bureau were formally approached. Through being courteous and respectful, I tried to get their consent for interview and to providing me their genuine accounts with regards to primary English education in their respective contexts (Chang, n.d.; Cohen et al., 2005). This was further effected through revealing the purpose of the research and guaranteeing interviewees that the information captured is kept confidential and anonymous (Cohen et al., 2005).

The interviews made with one of the school principals were recorded using digital recorder (EDIROL (by Roland) 24 bit wave/MP3 recorder R-09) and by taking down notes, while the interviews made with the remaining school principals as well as with the officials in the bureau and the ministry were recorded by directly taking down notes as they were unwilling their voices to be recorded. In order to make sure that all the information recorded reflect the perceptions of the interviewees, the transcribed data were given back to them to corroborate the accuracies of the information encompassed (Cohen et al., 2005).

Interview data collection with school principals were conducted soon after the classroom observations between 6 and 22 November 2014. The time and the place of the interviews were already set during the classroom observations and were conducted as per the schedules agreed upon. Interview with the officials in the REB was done subsequently after frequent schedule arrangements and postponement as the person was busy in his office and in visiting schools inside and outside Bahir Dar town. Similarly, I had to arrange and cancel various schedules before I was able to conduct the final interview on January 15, 2012 with the expert in the Ministry. The interviews were conducted through considering the interviewees’ convenient time and place so as to elicit detailed and appropriate data (Cresswell, 2003). Interviews with the officials were carried out after obtaining all the required data of the study, at the final stage, so as to elicit data that was not sufficiently accessed and to triangulate exaggerated data captured from other sources. The interviews with the school principals were conducted in Amharic, but with the officials in English with occasional use of Amharic whenever necessary to elaborate key points following their preferences. To ensure that I translated the Amharic interview texts as accurately and truthfully as possible, I invited my colleague who has good experiences in translation works to check my interview data.
4.6 Organizations of the data
The methods pursued to organize both the qualitative and the quantitative data are described below.

4.6.1 Qualitative Data

The qualitative data obtained from document review, classroom observations, interview and teacher’s questionnaire is presented below.

4.6.1.1 Grades 1-4 English Curriculum

The grades 1-4 English curriculum were reviewed and presented based on the major categories that are used to evaluate the language contents embodied in English student books and in the teacher’s guides. The reviewed curriculum contents were then assessed via assessing the contents embodied in the grades 1-4 English textbooks as they are the blueprints to select contents and to design tasks and activities for textbook development (Balbi, 2008).

4.6.1.2 English Textbooks and their respective teacher’s guides

In order to find out the adequacy and appropriacy of the grades 1-4 English textbooks to fostering pupils English language acquisitions, the language contents embodied in the English textbooks and teacher’s guides were examined with reference to the adapted framework developed by adapting Raya (n.d.) and Balbi (1997, 1998) (see Appendix E). In teaching EFL to young learners, much of the language contents and the procedures suggested to presenting the tasks and activities embodied in the earlier English student textbooks are given in the teacher’s guides (Ur, 1996; Balbi, 2008) and thus worth analyzing the earlier grades teacher’s guides. Each of the codes embodied under the major categories of the adapted outlines were then defined based on the views of the constructive approach and insights of SLA to the teaching of EFL to young learners as well as through referring to young learners potential to second language learning and their developmental characteristics. The authorities from where the researcher takes the definitions to describe the codes under the major categories of the adapted framework are also cited close to the codes.

Thus, the language contents embodied in the teacher’s guides and student books were read and reread to codify and categorize the contents in line with the developed outline.
4.6.1.3 The Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program

Different policy documents the Ministry has ratified to organize and manage the grades 1-4 teachers’ training to teaching English were also reviewed and presented in an overview form to provide thorough descriptions of the training program and cross reference the results of the analysis of English curriculum that are being offered currently.

Data on how training programs are organized and how prospective teachers are trained to effectively carry out their duties of teaching English in primary first-cycle classrooms were elicited from studying the Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program (MoE, 2009). Data that reveals the adequacy and appropriacy of the organizations of the pre-and/or in-service training program were captured focusing on the codes- major/minor issues, the types of English language specific courses presently being offered, number of years/hours allocated for studying English specific courses. The English courses were further studied and then categorized into language improvement and ELT methodology courses following the course titles and course objectives stated in order to assess the adequacy and relevance of the training the policy has enacted. What is more, in order to assess the adequacy and appropriacy or practical relevance of the training, the English language improvement and the ELT methodology courses encompassed in the Ministry’s course catalogue were captured in terms of the predetermined templates-course objectives, descriptions, methods, contents and time allocated. These drawn data were then organized on a spread sheet of paper following the codes under the two categories. These captured data could provide proper description of the teacher training colleges (Ujlakyn, 2005).

4.6.1.4 Classroom Observation

The thirty audio recorded live grades 1-4 English lessons and were carefully transferred into different audio CDs. These burned CDs were subsequently checked for clarity of the recorded voices and were given to each of the five research assistants hired from graduate program students to listen to and transcribe them. The transcribed data received from the assistants were again redistributed to the assistants to check each other’s transcriptions; subsequently the few detected mistakes such as spellings, missed/wrong words on the transcriptions were reassessed through re-listening to the recorded CDs and through having further discussions among the assistants including the researcher and corrective measures were taken accordingly for final
transcriptions. These were done under the researcher’s close supervisions to ensure the completeness and quality of the transcribed data.

The lesson plans prepared for the selected 24 lessons were chosen and attached to their respective transcribed data. The data drawn from each of the selected 24 lesson plans were also organized based on the predetermined codes as stated in the lesson plan for easy references in order to evaluate teachers overall competences in each of the three major categories. These organized data were also cross referenced with the transcribed data in order to assess and to substantiate or otherwise teachers’ English proficiency and lesson planning and implementation skills. The words or phrases or sentences taken down from live English classrooms that could witness each of observed teachers’ English proficiency and English teaching skills were also organized and attached with their respective transcriptions. These transcribed data and the data drawn from the lesson plans and the taken down classroom notes were organized to evaluate teachers’ competences on the categories and to depict the English classroom practices.

4.6.1.5 Questionnaire

Teachers responses to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire were also recorded descriptively on a spread sheet of paper following the themes of the questions: the training teachers received to teaching English (Part II) and teacher’s evaluation of the lessons they taught-success/failure of their lessons, manifestations for their claim (Part III).

4.6.1.6 Interview

All the interview data retrieved from the officials in the Ministry and in the Bureau as well as from the school principals were transcribed following the questions and answers recorded. The first step in data analysis is to alter the data recorded in textual form (Dornyei, 2007). This was made possible after repeatedly listening the recording and reading and rereading the jotted down notes. The authenticated transcribed data were then read and reread as a pre-coding analysis so as to understand texts and to make preparation for codifying and combining similar themes.

4.6.2 Quantitative Data

In this subsection, the quantitative data gathered from filled in teacher’s questionnaire is presented.
4.6.2.1 Questionnaire

Twenty two fully or partially completed questionnaires were returned. The data collected through teachers’ questionnaire were tallied, collated and then tabulated based on the categories-Background Information, English Language Level, Lesson Planning and Implementation. Information obtained from the background sections (Part I) of the questionnaire was taken down on spread sheet of paper and then tallied and collated to give teachers background information. Teachers responses to the close-ended of the questionnaire (Part II) were also carefully tallied one by one on spread sheet of paper and then data on similar items was collated and fed into a computer to throw light on teachers’ self-claimed competences on the major categories (English language level, lesson planning and implementation). The data was then statistically analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to see the internal consistency of the rating, which determines the reliability of the instrument; and the results of the analysis show Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient to be 0.91 indicating the reliability of the instrument. A Cronbach’s alpha of 0.70 or higher is considered sufficient evidence of reliability (Clayton & Crosby, 2006)

4.7 Data Analysis

This section describes qualitative data analyses of the grades 1-4 English curriculum and the English textbooks, the language cluster diploma program training curriculum, classroom observations and their lesson plans, as well as of the responses to the open-ended items of the questionnaire and of the interviews made with the school principals and the officials in REB and the Ministry of Education, first, followed by quantitative analyses of the questionnaire. Thus this section throws light on how both the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed.

4.7.1 Qualitative data

Qualitative data analysis is an approach which denotes a range of activities “from imaginative and artful speculation to following well defined analytical moves, from deductive categorization to inductive pattern finding” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 220). This implies that the qualitative data analysis had to focus on a number of separate but related sets of data. This study then uses well defined deductive categorization to organize and reduce the data. That is it starts out with a template of codes. The fact that qualitative data analysis lacks uniform analytical conventions needs to be heeded as a weakness as intuitive analysis is not immune from simply being wrong
(Dornyei, 2007). In order to make qualitative data analysis more valid and acceptable by audiences, Cohen et al (2005) and Dornyei (2007) advise researchers to use formalized analytical moves rather than subjective intuition and then define qualitative content analysis as it involves data organization, data display and data interpretation. Thus the procedures employed to display and interpret the qualitative data are discussed here under.

4.7.1.1 First Cycle English Curriculum and their Respective Textbooks

The reviewed English Syllabus for Grades 1-4 (MoE, 2008) were then evaluated together with the contents embodied in the grades 1-4 English textbooks. The embodiments of the contents of the syllabus in the English textbooks were at the same time assessed to identify policy and practice relationships.

This study then defined the predetermined codes within the developed framework in order to examine their presences or absences in the teacher’s guides and student books. Each of the four sample English textbooks and their respective teacher’s guides were then read and reread thoroughly until the information required to responding to the defined template codes were drawn and described on the spread sheet of paper. The data drawn both from the teacher’s guides and from the student books were then organized and categorized based on the defined predetermined codes under the structure developed (Cresswell, 2003). Both bringing codes to the data to arrive at analytic categories deductively and finding out codes from the data inductively can be similarly workable in qualitative research (Dornyei, 2007). The language contents drawn from each of the textbooks based on the structures adapted and the codes defined were then sorted and sifted into smaller meaningful units to decide the quality of the English textbooks. This template method can make the analysis more acceptable for those who are skeptical of qualitative research (Ibid).

These codified and organized language contents were then given to my two colleagues to carefully check whether the data segments were appropriately categorized and consistency in the coding process was achieved. The data organized and described to illustrate each of the codes under the major categories were then carefully read and clustered. For example, the contents drawn to witness the presence of other curricular contents or content recycled were clustered to
make generalization on the categories. Examining the consistencies identified in the clustered data generalizations were made for each category.

The findings generalized for each code were referred through the extracts drawn and the task and activity types appended and were analyzed following evidences drawn from the reviewed literature, paying special attention to the contents and their organizations suitability to the teaching of EFL to young learners. In other words, the potential impact that features in the contents of the textbooks could exert on students’ learning of and progress in the English language were analyzed with reference to contextual factors and aspects considered vital for EFL teaching to young learners of 6/7 to 9/10 years of age by consulting the literatures reviewed. Similar method of analysis has been used to evaluate primary EFL textbooks by Noordin & Abdul Samad (n.d.). Moreover, to find out whether or not the overall organizations and presentations of the contents of the sampled English textbooks underpin the principles to language and language learning suggested in the curriculum guide, they were cross referenced to one another. Doing this may enable the researcher to find out how realistic and appropriate the goals and the approaches are when compared to the available resources including teachers’ identified competencies, and quality of teachers training. The language and learning theories, pedagogies and resources suggested in the syllabus can affect young learners learning and thus worth capturing these data (Nagy and Willies, 2008). Brown (1995) and Cunningsworth (1995) suggest that it is essential in evaluating textbooks to find out whether or not its inbuilt methodology underpins the aims and the approach in the curriculum as well as confirm to the classroom context.

The generalized descriptions drawn for each code under the major categories were analyzed in light of the reviewed literature and conclusions drawn. Based on these drawn conclusions for each category the adequacy and relevance of grades 1-4 English textbooks and the grades 1-4 English curriculum were determined. The generalizations made for each category were compared and contrasted with what are suggested in the grades 1-4 English curriculum to draw any policy and practice relationships and to reveal how appropriate the curriculum and their respective textbooks are to fostering the required English language communication skills to the target groups.
4.7.1.2 The Course Catalogue for Language Cluster Diploma Program

The data drawn from the Ministry’s training curriculum policy were recorded following the codes that depict the objectives, time allotted, course contents, methods suggested for presenting and for testing the contents to identify the quality of their training to teaching English to the target groups (Dugarin & Andyaka, 2007). Surveying the curriculum policy the Ministry has stipulated to train primary first-cycle English teachers for the teacher training colleges to apply and examining their relevance to fostering the teaching and learning of English to primary school children and to achieving the goals targeted could depict the potential strengths and/or problems the teaching of English in primary schools might face (Dugarin and Andyaka, 2007). These organized contents under each of the codes were read repeatedly and then described in terms of the knowledge and skills they could contribute to prepare trainee teachers to the teaching of English to the target groups. Sample extracts were drawn and displayed to illustrate the generalized descriptions made to each of the codes. These described codes for each of the English courses suggested in the policy document were read and re-read meticulously to make generalizations on the time allocated and on the types of courses being offered under the two categories. The results were then presented and analysed in terms of the criteria derived from what the reviewed literature promotes primary EFL teachers to be competent with and what the English Syllabus and the English textbooks for Grades 1-4 expect teachers to perform. The results were also interpreted in light of the various information (for example the recruitment strategies, profiles of English teachers competences) the Ministry has ratified with regard to primary EFL teachers training to deeply understand the training program. Similar methods have been successfully used when Ujlakyne (2005) appraise Hungary’s lower primary FL training programs and when Dagarin and Andyaka (2007) evaluate the adequacy and relevance of the EFL syllabus in Slovenian and Croatian primary teacher education programs to promote primary EFL teachers’ actual classroom performances.

The analysis is expected to show whether or to what extent the results obtained are adequate and appropriate to equip prospective English teachers with the essential knowledge and skills to competently execute their English teaching duty. The analysis of the findings can also indicate the current state of the primary EFL teachers training in the country which could be used as reference to introduce possible changes and improvements that could exert positive impact on
the quality of the teacher training programs. The results could also be used to corroborate the results obtained from the classroom observations and/or the teachers’ questionnaire.

4.7.1.3 Classroom observation

The transcribed data, organized notes taken from classrooms, data drawn from each of the lesson plans were codified and classified by the researcher to assess teacher’s competences on the major categories. These codified contents were then given to my three colleagues qualified in TEFL and are teaching currently in Bahir Dar University, English department, for checking the presence or absence of the codes in the organized contents and the consistencies in the coding processes to assess teachers’ English proficiency and lesson planning and implementation skills.

Any variations identified were discussed and corrected or skipped. The coded data drawn from each of the transcriptions were clustered and reduced to depict individual teacher level of performances on the codes under each of the major descriptors (language level and implementation). The coded data elicited from teachers respective lesson plans were also read and re-read to cluster with the data under the major descriptors above to further evidence each of the observed teacher’s competences on language proficiency and English teaching. For example, teacher’s ability to write clear objectives, the procedures he set to achieve the objectives and the procedures employed in the transcribed data as well as the grammar and spelling accuracies drawn from the lesson plans and classroom notes were cross-referenced and clustered so that individual teachers’ performance on each of the major descriptors could be witnessed. Data organized under language level and lesson planning and implementation were further read meticulously and grown into memos and vignettes to evidence observed teachers English language proficiency level and English teaching skills which possibly indicate sample teachers’ overall deficiency and/or proficiency of teaching English at primary level. These data were further studied and then reduced in a summary form so as to evidence the extent and quality of English practice children are provided in the observed primary classrooms. In discussing the results, references are made to the sample lesson extracts drawn from classroom data, lesson plans and use of blackboard and the sample transcribed and appended data.

The findings derived out of the obtained qualitative classroom data are thus expected to depicting information with regards to teachers’ level of English language and instructional skills as well as
the kind of English practices students are exposed to in the classroom. The findings are then analyzed in detail with reference to criteria suggested by various authorities (Raya, n.d.; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005) that primary EFL teachers to be competent with in terms of language level and English teaching to determine their overall competences to teaching English to primary school children. Besides, literature reviewed on the teaching of EFL to primary school pupils are used to interpret the data reported. What is more, the onset announced and the goals targeted in the Ministry’s policy to teaching English to the levels and the procedures suggested to teaching the English textbooks are cross referenced to assess the policy and practice relationships. The claims of teachers in the questionnaire regarding their perceived proficiencies on English language and on teaching English were questioned or validated through cross referencing it with data gathered from classroom observations in the discussion stage (Cresswell, 2003).

4.7.1.4 Questionnaire

The data drawn and recorded from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire were read and re-read until similar ideas on the codes under the two major categories were combined. The combined data were then carefully studied again and then generalizations on the codes were drawn based the degrees of similarities on the code in focus; sample extracts and the generalizations made are displayed and analyzed to triangulate or otherwise the results obtained from the teachers’ self claimed competences to the scaled questions of the questionnaire.

4.7.1.5 Interview

The transcribed information of the six school principals and the two officials was further read and reread until it was categorised and reduced using category system, question and answer categories. It is advisable to have good understanding of the transcribed texts before embarking on re-codifying and categorizing them (Dornyei, 2007). The reduced data on each code were then carefully read and generalized. The results were displayed in a fragmented form under variety of themes during discussion to contradict, supplement and triangulate the results obtained from other sources and avoid repetitions of ideas. In qualitative data analysis, trustworthiness and credibility are achieved by conducting iterative analysis, seeking negative or contradictory examples, seeking confirmatory data through methodological triangulation, and providing
supportive examples for conclusions drawn (Given, 2008). The reduced transcriptions of the school principals and the officials are attached herewith as appendices (see Appendix F) so as to make good understanding of what the school principals and the authorities say on the issues.

4.7.2 Quantitative data

This section presents the analyses of teachers’ responses to the close-ended questionnaire which can through light the methods pursued to analyse the quantitative data.

4.7.2.1 Questionnaire

In order to generate results that describe teachers’ personal characteristic (sex), and professional background (qualifications, in-service training, and experiences on English teaching), the organized questionnaire data were computed using descriptive statistics, percentages. The results for each category were then interpreted based on the potential impact each of the results could exert on the teaching and learning of English to the level through referring to findings propounded in the examined policies of the Ministry and to the reviewed literature on the subject under study.

In order to describe sample teachers’ overall perceived language level and lesson planning and implementation skills, the data drawn from the close-ended questionnaire were organized based on the number values on the five points Likert scale (excellent, 5; v. good, 4; adequate, 3; basic, 2; and weak, 1). The teacher responses to each of the codes that fall within the first three scales (5, 4 and 3) are taken as ‘good’ competences and within the last two scales (2 and 1) are considered as ‘not good’. These organized data were then computed using SPSS software to generate results on teachers’ self claim competences on the English language, lesson planning and implementations and on English teaching appropriate to the target groups (lesson planning and implementation). The results were displayed graphically focusing on the major themes and compared and/or contrasted with the results obtained from open-ended questions in the questionnaire and from classroom observations so as to cross-validate or otherwise the findings and obtain an in depth understanding of the major themes. These data are further analyzed with reference to criteria derived from the reviewed literature on required EFL teachers knowledge and skills and what the curriculum (MoE, 2008) suggests first cycle English teachers to perform and what the Ministry holds with regard to teachers expected competencies (MoE, 2010).
CHAPTER FIVE
PILOT STUDY: RESULTS AND MEASURES TAKEN

5.1 Introduction

A pilot study is a small scale implementation of a larger study or of part of the larger study. It can be conducted for various research functions. Pilot study can be viewed as feasibility study. As a small scale implementation of a larger study, it can be used to examine potential concerns before launching the main study and to determine whether the full study can be accomplished (Given, 2008). That is, it forewarns a researcher when there is concern that a full-scale study may not be possible due to concerns about instruments, procedures, cost and other issues.

It can also be used to try out the adequacy of the data collection tools and procedures that the researcher plans to employ in the main study and revise the tools and procedures prior to they become operational based on what the trialing reveals (Chang, n.d.; Cresswell, 2005; Dorney, 2007). It provides an opportunity to evaluate the likely success of the proposed data collection procedures, to determine sample size and the number of times of observations that appear to be realistic, to find out potential roadblocks of the proposed data analysis techniques. What is more, it can be used to accustom the researcher with the data collection and analysis procedures (Kiely and Rea-Dickins, 2005; Given, 2008).

Even though this study employed various methods and procedures to respond to the overall research questions, the classroom observation and the questionnaire were trialed to see if the research instruments were working according to the specified objectives, plan and procedures. The main objective of the pilot study in this research was thus to try out the adequacy of the research instruments, sampling and analysis techniques as well as procedures that could be made use of in the main study. The classroom observation checklist which was designed to draw qualitative data from pilot teacher’s live English classroom was trialed as it has identical research objective with the questionnaire-examining teachers proficiencies both in the English language and teaching primary English-though this was conducted externally by the researcher. Therefore, any terminology and/or procedural problems with regard to the use of these instruments were detected and rectified before launching the main study which could make the instruments more reliable and the information retrieved more valid.
5.2 Sampling

The sampling techniques pursued to select schools, grade levels and teachers to pilot the research instruments are presented under this section.

5.2.1 Schools

For the pilot study, two government primary schools in Addis Ababa were purposefully selected -- Menelik I Primary School and Beherawi Betemengist Primary School. I chose the two schools because they were relatively more convenient to me and were close to my working and living area so that cooperation could safely be secured and time and cost that might be unwisely spend to go to farther schools could be spared to do the research work. Government schools in Addis Ababa followed similar English syllabus, textbooks and were administered by one education bureau and thus whichever schools selected, far or nearby, can bring no difference in trialing the instruments.

The schools in Addis Ababa were selected to try out the instruments as the English syllabus they employed and the qualifications of their teachers seemed to be similar with those found in the actual research site as they followed what the Ministry of Education suggests to the level (MoE, 2002; ICDR, 2004). Besides, trialing the instruments in these schools that have got good years of experience in primary teaching might rather have contributed to ensure the quality of the research instruments. Therefore, whether conducting the pilot study in schools found in Addis Ababa, where the researcher was working, or in schools of the actual research site may effect no difference to achieve the purpose of the pilot study, identifying and eliminating problems related to the instruments and the procedures before launching the main study (Chang, n.d.).

5.2.2 Grade Levels and Teachers

In order to try out the instruments, grades one to four were selected as they are mirroring the grade levels of the main study. One section from each grade level and their respective English teachers were sampled out using random sampling technique to be included in the pilot study as all pupils and teachers in all sections of each sample school use identical textbooks and prepare for the same classroom tests. Thus, a total of eight English teachers were selected and 16
classroom observations of their live lessons, two lesson observations in each teacher’s class, in the two pilot schools were conducted.

5.3 Description of the Instruments

In order to generate data which may decide the degree of teachers’ proficiency in the English language and in primary ELT, classroom observation and questionnaire were prepared and trialed. Following are the descriptions of the instruments trialed.

5.3.1 Classroom Observation

The major aim of piloting the classroom observation was to see whether or not the semi-structured observation checklist and the steps set earlier were perfect enough to generate data that may answer the research question about teachers’ level of English and English teaching skills and the classroom English practices pupils are exposed to. The frame work designed for the observation checklist includes English language proficiency level, lesson planning and implementation (see Appendix B). The items considered in these major categories mirrors those that has been used by Raya (n.d.), Al-Mutawa (1997) and Kiely and Rea-Dickens’ (2005) for the same intent. The lesson plans the teachers prepared for the lessons observed were also heeded to examine teachers lesson planning skills as well as to assessing teachers’ grammar and spelling accuracies which is vital to determine teachers’ English language proficiency.

Thus, teachers’ level of proficiency in the English language were assessed based on the classroom data obtained in terms of the extent of classroom English language they employed, and the quality of their pronunciations, grammar, and spelling in their live classrooms as well as the quality of English in their lesson plans.

The teachers’ primary English teaching skills were also assessed through capturing data from their lesson plans and from their classroom performances. Data that revealed teachers lesson planning skills was captured through reviewing their lesson plans pursuing the templates- the clarity of the objectives, alignment of the objectives to the prepared lesson, revision of the previous lesson, presentation of the new lesson, and suitability of the teaching aids. Teachers implementation skills were also assessed through eliciting data from their live classroom performances focusing on the codes- teachers ability to clarifying the objectives to students,
following lesson procedures, degree of use of the teaching aids, variation in teaching techniques, pupils participation, use of body language, motivating pupils to like the lesson and participate, use of interactive teaching methods, teachers knowledge on the subject, teaching methods to present the lesson at appropriate levels, and classroom management. The quality of the classroom procedures teachers actually employ to teaching the lesson to primary school children and/or the degree of the relationship between what the pilot teachers plan to implement and what they actually put into practice indicate teachers’ competence or otherwise in implementing the lesson plan and in attaining the lesson objectives.

5.3.2 Questionnaire

The framework for the questionnaire was constructed by adapting questionnaires that have been used for similar research intents and by reviewing research evidences on effective EFL teaching practices to primary school children (Raya, n.d.; Gilberts and Lignugaris-Kraft, 1997; Al-Mutawa’s 1997; Moon, 2005; Kiely and Rea-Dickens, 2005). The three major categories (Language level, lesson planning and implementation) that the questionnaire was framed with were taken from the questionnaires, while the items in each of the categories were adapted to fit to the purpose. For example, to obtain teachers’ views on their training and their observed lessons as well as to make the data retrieved from the questionnaire more reliable, open-ended items were added. Reliability of a questionnaire is addressed through increasing the number of questions in the questionnaire (Seliger and Shohamy, 1987; Cohen et al., 2005).

5.4. Procedures of Administration

To retrieve genuine data relevant to the study in focus, permissions were secured from both the school management and the first cycle English teachers. I approached two government primary schools found in Addis Ababa to secure permissions to conduct the pilot study. I visited these schools a number of times to meet their respective principals and talk about the issue. I courteously approached each of the school principals and revealed myself and the purpose of my visit after I showed them a letter of support produced from the AAU, DFLL.

After having frequent informal discussions, both professional and cordial, with the principals, a good rapport was established and then I proceeded with enquiring them to allow me access to their schools. The principals of the two schools volunteered and subsequently escorted and
introduced me to the deputies and informed them to fully cooperate to access to every site he needs to piloting the study. Through the deputies again, I was transferred and introduced to the teachers who were then teaching English in the first cycle grade levels. We compromised convenient dates and periods for me to observe their two consecutive classes and places to meet before they enter into their respective classrooms. The teachers were courteously informed that information gathered from observing their classes and from the questionnaire they filled in would be kept strictly confidential and anonymous. Each pilot teacher subsequently volunteered to allow me to sit in their classes and to fill in the questionnaire.

The draft questionnaire was the second research instrument that was tested to look into to what extent the language used in the questionnaire can convey the message intended before it is used for the main study so that any possible problems related to terminology that might affect teachers’ understanding and interpretation can be rectified in the final versions. The teachers were made to fill in the questionnaire after the second observation so that they can give their true account of their English teaching performances.

In view of this, sample teachers involved in the trial were asked to comment on a) any difficulties they might experience in answering or understanding the questions b) any terminology that might cause confusion c) any feelings they might have about lay-out presentations. The teachers demanded more time to fill in the questionnaire and then a compromise was reached for teachers to bring the filled in questionnaire and to report problems they might have encountered in the following day. Pilot teachers were then given the options either to give me written report or to inform me orally the problems they might have run into when providing me back the filled in questionnaire.

The teachers escorted me to the classroom based on the convenient time we set together and introduced me to the class and provided me a sit at the back corner of the classroom so that I could clearly observe the classroom dynamics and captured field notes following the observation checklist and as it happens. Students in all observed sections welcomed me sitting up from their seats and exchanged greetings in chorus in English with me when entered into the classrooms. I then began to observe the lesson as a non-participant observer sitting at the back so that the smooth flow the teaching learning processes were not interrupted and relevant information was captured. These captured data were then read carefully soon after the observations until the
information gathered were put under each of the codes for every observed teacher. These captured qualitative classroom data were expected to reveal pilot teachers level of competences both on the target language and implementation.

The pilot teachers in the two schools gave me their lesson plans on their own accord which I immediately got the plans copied and gave them back for the teachers to use them in their English teaching. I was told by the teachers that it is mandatory for all teachers to have their lesson plans while conducting their classroom lessons. Each of these lesson plans was subsequently studied until the codes beneath the lesson plan and language level categories were filled in to determine teacher’s actual lesson planning skills.

The class-size in the eight sections of the four grade levels were found to be 39 and 33, 74 and 40, 41 and 34, and 42 and 40, respectively from grade one to four in the two schools. Student-teacher ratio was 43:1 which could create problem on pupils to get teachers’ attention and to participate. When the school bell rang and after the teacher announced the end of the lesson time, I parted the class paying farewell to the pupils.

The pilot study was conducted from 20 to 24 December 2010 when teaching staff were busy- for example-arranging grades, setting exam schedule and preparing for classroom and final tests as they were close to the end of first semester. The time I spent in these schools to conduct the pilot study also enabled me to have a good rapport with these subjects and to raise issues about ELT in their respective schools which I included while reporting the pilot data. I finally thanked all staff for their cooperation in spending their time and effort to piloting the instruments and then paid them farewells before leaving each school.

The implication it has to the main study is that I need to establish a good rapport with the sample schools principals and teachers of the main study to obtain their consent to conduct the main study. Producing consent letter which announces the sole purpose of the research and my identity further convinces the staff to allow me access to information in the sample schools. The two classroom observations, the observation checklist as well as the procedures followed to obtain data were found producing natural data which demonstrated teachers’ real classroom performances and the actual classroom scenario.
5.5 Analysis of the pilot data

Data that depicts the degree of teachers’ level of English and primary ELT competence were derived from classroom observation and prepared lesson plans, as I evaluated, and from the questionnaire, as perceived by the teachers themselves, in the pilot study. These data were also assumed to throw light on the actual classroom practices of the teaching and learning of English in the sample primary schools. The analysis of the data captured from classroom observations and lesson plans were mainly qualitative, while the data collected from teachers’ questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Thus, methods of analysis of both the qualitative and the quantitative pilot data are discussed hereunder.

5.5.1 Analysis of the qualitative data

The qualitative data elicited from classroom observation and from reviewing teachers lesson plans were expected to reveal information on teachers’ level of English and skills of teaching English to primary school children.

The qualitative data obtained from observing each of teachers’ live English classrooms were read and reread until information under the predetermined codes of the two major categories were codified and clearly recorded. The information recorded under each of the codes of the major categories-language level and implementation—were combined so that each of the pilot teachers’ levels of competences on these topics could be determined. Each of these qualitative data was further carefully read and then recombined the information under similar codes to find out all pilot teachers’ level of proficiencies on the same topics. The qualitative data used to decide teachers’ level of proficiency were organized and clustered focusing on the codes-degree of classroom English use, teachers’ command of the English language, levels of accuracies on pronunciation, grammar and spelling. These data were again studied thoroughly and made them to grow into memos and vignettes and displayed to show pilot teachers’ levels of English language.

Teachers ELT skills was reported in terms of their lesson planning and implementation as main categories. Teachers skills in lesson planning was reported through studying and clustering the qualitative content drawn from reviewing the lesson plans pursuing the predetermined codes-
clarity of objectives, following the defined objectives in preparing lessons, revising the previous lesson, presentation of the new lesson, appropriacy of teaching aids.

The captured qualitative data that depicts teachers’ implementation skills were also thoroughly studied and clustered following the codes—teachers ability to clarifying the objectives, following lesson procedures, degree of use of the teaching aids, variation in teaching techniques, pupils participation, use of body language, motivating pupils to like the lesson and participate, use of interactive teaching methods, teachers knowledge on the subject, teaching methods to present the lesson at appropriate levels, and classroom management. These combined data were further carefully read and re-categorized to grow them into major theme teachers’ implementation skills and displayed.

The qualitative data drawn from pilot teachers’ lesson plans depicted each of the pilot teachers’ competences on lesson planning and levels of accuracies on grammar and spelling. The data on teachers’ grammar and spelling level of accuracies were then clustered with the above classroom data pursuing similar codes to supplement the data that depict teachers’ English language level. The other drawn data that depicts each of the teacher’s lesson planning skills were also read carefully and re-categorized the information captured following the codes to determine all pilot teachers’ lesson planning skills. These data were then read thoroughly and made them to grow into memos and vignettes and presented to depict pilot teachers’ competences on lesson planning.

The finding thus revealed teachers proficiency in both the English language and teaching skills which determined their overall competences in the teaching of English to primary school children. The findings were further evaluated and explained using the reviewed literature on the teaching and learning of EFL, paying special emphasis on the teaching of languages to primary school children.

5.5.2 Analysis of the quantitative data

Data obtained from teachers’ questionnaire (for close-ended questions) were collated, tabulated and entered into a computer using SPSS software to generate results which describe teachers’ perceived competences on each major category. The data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide percentages, mean and standard deviation so as to describe teachers’
background information and perceived competences on the three major categories-language levels, lesson planning and implementation.

In order to reveal pilot teachers global teaching competences to teaching English to primary school pupils and the variation that exists among their competences, the scores mean value and standard deviation were computed, respectively. Bivariate Pearson Correlation Coefficient was also used to examine the relationship, if any, between teachers’ perceived level of English language proficiency and their perceived English teaching competences (lesson planning and implementation).

Using the pilot data as evidences, pilot teachers English language levels and ELT competences were not reported as findings albeit handled as was not the main intent of the pilot study. The main purpose of the pilot study as discussed at the outset was to try out the instruments and the procedures followed before using them in the main study. Thus, issues related to the classroom observation and its elicitation procedures as well as the questionnaire and its administration including the problems identified while piloting the instruments were reported as findings and the changes made following the findings were reported as measures taken. Following these, conclusions were drawn.

5.6 Results

The pilot revealed that the research questions set with regard to teachers levels of English and primary ELT competences and the classroom English practices primary pupils are exposed to are researchable. The data collection tools and the procedures tried out to obtain and analyze the data were found correct, with some identified and subsequently rectified problems, to effectively execute the main study. To ensure reliability of the questionnaire Cronbach’s Alpha was calculated for the total number of pilot respondents. This was found to be (0.91) indicating high reliability of the close-ended items of the instrument.

The pilot further depicted that the experience I got during classroom observations can be used as an asset to observe and take down true field notes while launching the main study (Wajnryb, 1992). The items included in the observation guide were found focused on the right traits, sufficiently detailed and defined covering all possibilities to answer the research question, the
degree of teachers English and ELT competences to primary school children whilst demonstrated the teaching and learning classroom practices of primary English.

The pilot also revealed that the numbers of classroom observations were sufficient to yield the required result that demonstrated teachers’ proficiency both in the English language and in the English teaching and thus adding extra observations for the main study is unlikely to produce special findings. The results of the pilot study also showed that I was able to manage to observe and elicit relevant and sufficient data as planned without having co-observer and video-recorder.

The pilot result also showed that teachers did not seem to provide their genuine account while evaluating their own true performances in terms of their English language proficiency and teaching methodology when compared to my evaluation and their own report to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. This discrepancy forewarned me to consider two points before the administration of the questionnaire for the main study. First the discussion I had with the pilot teachers about the sole purpose of the research prior to conducting classroom observation and having them fill in the questionnaire might not be sufficient to convince them to truly reflect to the questions in the questionnaire. Second, the three-point-scale (Excellent, acceptable and weak) the pilot questionnaire used might not give the teachers enough options to truly rate their primary ELT competences. Based on the evidences found in the pilot study, the following measures were taken to pave the road to the main study.

5.7 Measures taken

The questionnaire has been revised in line with the pilot teachers recommendations as well as what the researcher has felt appropriate to be revised taking lessons from the filled in questionnaire.

The pilot disclosed that enquiring teachers to fill in the questionnaire and return the day it was dispatched were found unworkable as all demanded more time. Thus, sample teachers of the main study would be required to complete the questionnaire and return the next day after it is dispatched.

The pilot also revealed that teachers would like to have the option to use Amharic to respond to the open-ended items as they seemed to face difficulties to write in English as much information
as they could. In view of this, the instructions to the open-ended questions of the questionnaire have been amended so that sample teachers in the main study can use Amharic as an option to express their thoughts.

The pilot also indicated that some of the wordings and order of the questions be altered slightly. Some of the teachers skipped some of the questions in Parts I and III of the questionnaire unanswered due to the layout of the questions. The questions that were presented combined under one serial number in Part I and III of the questionnaire were then separated and reordered. Another suggestions have been to questions referring to teachers’ qualifications and major/minor parts to be altered to include L1 and English as there are no one subject to be majored.

5.8 Conclusions

The research methodology designed and the procedures discussed to pilot the research instruments (classroom observation and the questionnaire) were found effective to meet the research objective set earlier as were evidenced in the pilot study. The variables included in the observation checklist were found appropriate to be used without major change for the main study, but the language and the form used in the questionnaire were amended as per the problems identified in the pilot study. The pilot thus justified that the research questions were viable and that the reliability and the validity of the research instruments as well as the procedures followed were enhanced to generate data that could show teachers’ ‘real world’ performances and meet the study objectives.
CHAPTER SIX

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE ANALYSES OF THE GRADES 1-4 ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

6.1 Introduction

In order to find out how adequate and appropriate the grades 1-4 English textbooks were to promote the students basic communication skills, the language contents were examined in terms of the adapted framework qualitatively. The results obtained and the discussions made are then presented following the frameworks adapted hereunder. The results obtained are also compared and contrasted with the contents of the grades 1-4 English syllabus to find out any discrepancy they might have. Thus, this chapter presents both the results obtained and the discussions made as well as the embodiment of the syllabus into the reviewed textbooks.

6.2 Results and Discussions of the Analyses of the Grades 1-4 English Textbooks

In this section, the results of the analysis of the grade 1-4 english textbooks and the discussions made subsequently are presented

6.2.1 Structure

In order to promote primary first-cycle students’ basic communication skills in English, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) prepares and distributes one English textbook for each grade: English for Ethiopia Student’s Book Grade One, ENGLISH FOR ETHIOPIA Student Book Grade Two, for example. Each of the student books that are currently in use does not have workbook for students to further supplement their classroom English language learning. The textbook authors prepare teacher’s guides for each grade level student book - for example- Teacher’s Guide for English for Ethiopia, Grade One (MoE, 2008). The guides and the student books are not attached to any supplementary materials such as pictures, photocopiable sheets (for arts, crafts, games, etc) that could make student’s English language learning easier. In addition, there are no video/audio-cassettes or CDs that could provide students a variety of language inputs; teachers are rather suggested to recount the stories and to sing the songs and chants using the transcripts enclosed in the teacher’s manuals.

The findings depict that the teaching and learning of primary first-cycle English in Ethiopia is structured based on the teacher’s manuals and student books with little or no supplementary materials. In language improvement programs, the use of EFL textbook to young learners should
only be one of the several resources to address children’s natural curiosity to explore new things and to make their classroom EFL learning more enjoyable and faster (Dow, 2004; Mendez and Lopez, 2005; Brown, 2006). Technological tools such as video, computer, and internet are children’s favourite ways of learning. The use of such new materials can bring forward exquisite activities to involve students and to generate many meaningful contexts for using the target language (Balbi, 1997; 2008; Lobo, 2003; Mendez and Lopez, 2005). They further underscore that a textbook to young learners has to include workbook, teacher’s guides (bilingual if important) embodying key to the exercises, teaching tips, syllabus, transcription of the audio CD, extra activities, flashcards, photocopiable cutouts, games, audio CD for both teachers and students with songs, stories, dialogues, rhymes, and chants. Structuring the teaching of English only on student book can hinder students’ inclination, for example, to draw, colour or write on the pages and restrict their motivation to practice the target language (Mendez and Lopez, 2005). Therefore, the only use of textbooks in first-cycle classrooms can hardly contribute particularly in Ethiopia where the goal is to develop children’s communication in the English language.

6.2.2 Goals

The analysis of the grades 1-4 English teacher’s guides indicate that the major aim of the English student books is to build students oral communication whilst cultivating students reading and writing skills in line with the curriculum policy.

In light of the overall oral communication aims, the textbook authors also notify teachers the learning outcomes they should focus on while planning and delivering the lessons in each unit:

Learning Outcomes. Students will be able to:

- Exchange greetings and give their names and grade.
- Name objects in the classroom environment.
- Follow classroom instructions.
- Identify and read alphabet letters e, a and t.
- Use writing implements correctly. (Unit 1 of grade 1)
- Understand the questions with the words who and what
- Respond appropriately to the questions with this or that
• Identify and read the alphabet letters $i$, $s$, and $h$.
• Compose questions and sentences orally.
• Draw patterns using circles, curves and straight lines. (Unit 3 of grade 1)
• Name and locate objects in the classroom.
• Give and follow directions.
• Greet each other (Unit 1 of grade 2)
• Talk in simple terms about transport.
• Describe basic modes of transport in their area.
• Ask and answer questions about how they come to school.
• Listen to short sentences and identify visual clues.
• Use social expressions from units 1—10
• Read and write sentences about transport
• Use language patterns: don’t/doesn’t and are/aren’t
• Copy words and fill gaps in sentences.
• Sing a song.
• Recite a poem/chant. (Unit 13 of grade 2)
• talk about objects and where they are located and say where they are from (Unit 1 of grade 3).
• ask for quantities of items and identify basic shapes (Unit 2 of grade 3).
• talk about classroom/school rules and read a digital clock(Unit 3 of grade 3).
• describe their school (Unit 1 of grade 4).
• talk about their height and weight (Unit 2 of grade 4)
• describe their daily activities(Unit 6 of grade 4).

The guides also note that the student books target to fostering the development of students positive attitude toward learning the English language through helping students create a link between their mother tongue and English and through praising students focusing on their strong points. Goals can indicate the learning needs to be cultivated, and when related to primary children, the goals of teaching FL can encompass two main areas: communication skills directly and the other relates to non-language components (cognitive, affective, social and cultural) (Planet, 1997; Richards, 2001; Nagy and Willis, 2008). Non-language outcomes can represent
desirable or optional byproducts of the teaching and learning processes; they are essential requirement for YLs sustained and meaningful involvement in the process of EFL learning and thus they are issues in the EFL teaching and learning process to pay attention to (Richards, 2001). The underpinning principles of the constructive approach contend that young learners acquire the language when they are motivated and made ready to take part in particular lessons to purposefully and meaningfully use the language rather than to merely practicing the language. Primary FL learning can thus render children various benefits in addition to the ability to communicate, but prioritizing the major aims may help to decide the program types (Richards, 2001; Nagy and Willis, 2008). Accordingly, the social, emotional and motivational aspects of children’s EFL learning were not targeted separately as the syllabus and the textbook follow competence based model to EFL teaching and learning. Such model of EFL teaching, however, improves teachers’ classroom EFL teaching as it links instruction to measurable outcomes and performance standards (Richards, 2001). As illustrated above, the expected outcomes stated in the teacher’s guides focus on aspects students are expected to perform after doing the lessons in each unit that can guide teachers’ instructional focus. This implies that the methods suggested for teachers to present the contents embodied in the English textbook focus on cultivating students’ actual performances using the language.

In order to enable students understand the questions with the words *who* and *what*, and respond appropriately to the questions with *this* or *that*, the suggested teaching procedures in Lesson One of Unit 3 of grade 1 teachers guide contain various activities for teachers to implement. Teachers are first recommended to give direct explanations on the focused relative pronouns and demonstrative adjectives using the classroom context and then to pursue the following teaching procedures to help pupils understand the questions with words ‘who?’ and ‘what?’ and respond appropriately with ‘this’ or ‘that’:

*Tell students that question can begin with the words who or what. Say:*

**Who is this? Who is that?**

*Point to a student who is close to you and say:*  
**Who is this?**

*Point to another student who is not close to you and say:*  
**Who is that?**

*Walk around the classroom and repeat the two questions several times*
Model by pointing to a student and telling the class that when the question is ‘Who is this?’ we say ‘This is …’ When the question is ‘Who is that?’ we say ‘That is …’

Point to a student who is close to you and ask:

**Who is this?**

*Answer by saying:*

**This is….**

Point to someone else who is not close to you and ask:

**Who is that?**

*Students should answer by saying:*

**That is….**

Find three students who are sitting next to each other. Point to one of the students in the group and ask the other:

**Who is this?**

*The student will say:*

**This is ….**

Tell that the student to point to someone else in the class who is not close and ask:

**Who is that?**

*The other student will say*

**That is …**

Practice this a few times with different groups of students.

Tell all students practice saying the sentences in a group of three or four. They must point to when they ask the question. Another student in the group will be asked to respond.

The procedures suggested to enable students perform the outcomes encourage teachers to use the classroom students to demonstrate the use of the focused languages which are also relevant for students classroom interaction-for example- to ask/identify new students or to inform individual students in a classroom or otherwise. The frequent interaction teachers are suggested to make with groups of students round the classroom using the focused languages can give students practical experience to understand the words and their use in communication. The support students get from teacher’s explanations and illustrations of the use of the languages in a
classroom context and from observing selected students’ role plays in front of classroom can assist students to understand and meaningfully use the required languages. Students are subsequently demanded to work in groups using the preset languages to ask and identify different students who are close and far in the classroom. The activities are real to students’ experience of asking and telling about students in a classroom that can reinforce students’ performances to ask and know different students who are near or far from them using the question words and the demonstrative adjectives. These show that the activities suggested for students to listen and carry out are in coherence with the expected learning outcomes set. Similar instructional procedures (Lesson Two) are also suggested to enable children understand and use the question word *What* and to respond appropriately with the words *this/that*.

Students are given additional opportunities to practice the focused languages when teachers are suggested to revise the previous lesson and to teach the contraction form of the practiced language patterns (*Who’s that/this? What’s this/that? That’s ___*) using the activities embodied in Lesson Three. Lesson Four begins by revising the previous lesson and then moved to introducing students to various pronouns (girls, boys, teacher, she/he) by giving students practical examples and capitalizing on the studied language patterns (*Who’s that/this? What’s this/that? That’s ___*) which can also secure students future use of the question words and the demonstratives. The next activities in Lesson Eight also enquire teachers to teach the differences in using the question words *who* and *what* when asking for persons and for objects in the classroom which can also reinforce students actual performances to ask and respond using the question words and the demonstrative adjectives. The next activities also revise and then reinforce the use of the practiced languages; for example, activities in Lessons Seven, Eight and Nine recycle the use of these words but in different situations, introducing new words such as *boy/s/girl/s/this/these*, to provide students enough experience to attain the outcomes targeted. This implies that students are allowed to frequently use the focused language by varying the situations in classroom after receiving sufficient guidance from various sources including the teacher, visuals and peers. This could depict that the expected learning outcomes that each unit aims students to be competent with and the various contents and the activities students are required to perform and the support teachers are suggested to follow in the teacher’s guides appears to be coherent.
In order to enable students name and locate objects in the classroom, the next activity in Lesson One of Unit 1 of grade 2 enquire teachers to revise the names of various classroom objects through going round the classroom to ask selected individual students to answer naming the pointed classroom objects such as book, pencil, bag, desk, bench, chalkboard, duster, ruler, rubber, pen, window, door and floor using the sentence patterns: 

*T: What is this/that?  SS: It is a/an....*

The subsequent activity also demands teachers to hold a classroom object and ask students the locations of the object (e.g. duster) by placing it in different places around the room using the specific sentence patterns for students to practice:

*What is/are this/that/these? Where is/are the (duster/s). The (duster/s) is/are (near) the (door). They are/It’s (near) the (door).*

The next activity also enquires individual students to use the pictures of the classroom objects in the student book to tell the class the names by pointing to the picture using the studied language pattern (*It is a/an__*_). Teachers are also suggested to pair students and to show them pointing to different objects for students to answer and then to summarize the lesson by telling students that they have remembered the names of classroom objects they studied in grade 1. These activities thus can provide students opportunities to understand and practice orally the names of the objects and the use of the specific language patterns to ask and locate the position of the objects in line with the expected outcome.

The next activity also enquires teachers to put different classroom objects in the empty bag by naming them one by one for students to listen to the words and see the objects. Teachers are then required to invite several students to come to the front and put their hands in the bag and feel the object and tell its name following teachers question using the contraction form of the studied language patterns (*T: What’s this/that?  S1: It’s a/an __*). The individual student is also required to show the object to the class naming it aloud. Teachers are then suggested to repeat the activity with the whole class until students are acquainted with the names. The activity further provides students opportunities to interact with their teacher to understand and meaningfully practice the names of classroom objects.

The subsequent activities also enquire teachers to clarify the use of contractions and to define the position words (prepositions) by illustrating their use in classroom contexts. The teacher demonstrates the use of the prepositions *in, on and under* by changing the places of the selected classroom objects using the language patterns studied earlier in this lesson (*What is this?  This is...*)
Students are further required to listen to the teacher and point to the picture in the student book that represents what they heard. The teacher’s guide suggest teachers to arrange students in pairs and to allow them to practice the language patterns and the prepositions in, on and under by taking turns to ask and locate the positions of the objects. Teachers are further required to give students chances to reflect what they have learned and to remind students what they have learned. Teacher’s clarification and students involvement in doing the activities focusing on the here and now can give students meaningful experiences that are coherent with the expected outcomes.

The first activity in Lesson Three of Unit 1 of grade 2 teacher’s guides demand teachers to review the use of the preposition words students have studied in the previous lesson and link them to the new preposition words (near, outside and inside) following similar instructional procedures. (Where is the __? The __ is near the __. The __ is inside/outside the classroom) Students are further required to play games to ask and tell using the language patterns (Where is (students name). S/he is inside/outside the classroom. Who is inside/outside the classroom/circle? (Student name) is inside/outside the classroom/circle) each other those students (boys and girls) inside and outside the classroom and the circles they make in groups to practice the use of the language patterns and the prepositions in contexts that are true for them while the teacher is supervising all students participation and proper use of the languages. The next activities under Lesson Three demand students to place the flash cards with the printed names of larger classroom object in, on or under the objects and then to tell the class where each card is placed. Students are subsequently invited to copy the object words from the chalkboard into their exercise books.

The first activity in Lesson Four demand teachers to make revisions of the names of classroom objects and the use of the prepositions in a classroom context. The next activity enquires students to listen to a story by raising their hands when they hear classroom objects and by clapping for
position words. Students are further required to apply the practiced words and language patterns through playing *I Spy* game.

Activities in Lesson Five demand teachers to review the names of classroom objects and position words using real objects, picture cards and flash cards as well as to draw pictures of their own choice secretly in different places for their partners to guess where the chosen object is using the language patterns. The next activities also demand students to sing songs and do gap filling activities to give students sufficient experience to the names of classroom objects and to the languages of asking and telling the locations of different classroom objects. These indicate that the learning outcomes targeted are coherent with the different contents and activities students are required to engage in. Ethiopian students have little opportunities to use the English language outside the classroom and thus setting the outcomes focusing on the contents and activities of their classroom and then gradually beyond classroom experiences such as home, nature, and society can give students real experience in the languages (Shin, n.d.; Cameron, 2001).

The presentation of the names of the classroom objects and the position words in various activities in Unit 1 of grade 2 student book demand teachers to clarify and illustrate the names of the objects and the use of the position words and students to frequently listen and take part to carry out the activities interacting with their teachers and their partners. Such frequent exposure for students to listen to and to use the practiced languages can give them adequate practice to attain the learning outcomes. The multiple presentation of the names of the classroom objects and the position words in different forms (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and contexts are necessary conditions for successful language learning (Kolsawalla, 1999).

The sample contents above also depict that the expected outcomes embodied in the teacher’s guides put emphasis on what students actually do using the languages after going through the activities under each Unit. The outcomes related to grammars above focus on their use such as ‘name and locate objects in the classroom’ rather than on their usage which may indicate that students are expected to ask and tell the locations of objects in classrooms using the prepositions studied by changing the positions of the objects to actually convey and/or receive messages. These may indicate that the textbooks target grammars focusing on their use and the activities also encourage students to understand and use them in context, not in isolation focusing on its
usage, integrating them with the oral and reading skills in line with students’ cognitive development.

The learning outcomes teachers are expected to plan and pupils are expected to attain through working the activities in most of the lessons of the English student books are stated in terms of the knowledge and the performances pupils should display using the studied language in their environment. The sample extracts above also demonstrate that the learning outcomes are specific and measurable as they are stated using specific languages to inform teachers to direct the teaching and learning of the lessons comprised in each unit. Even though YLs are susceptible to quickly forget what they have attained, the specific outcomes targeted can help teachers to check students’ comprehension of the focused language during delivery and during practices. These indicate that the expected learning outcomes encompassed in the teacher’s guides and in the syllabus (as they are same) are realistically achievable for the target groups as the contents and activities suggested in the guides and employed in student books are mostly adequate and appropriate to their age and environment and the languages grow in line with their experience in the English language. (See 6.2.3.4 for detail illustrations below).

The fact that the large number of activities embodied in the grades 1 and 2 student books are devoted to listening and speaking when compared to reading and writing (see section 6.2.4), however, demonstrate their inconsistency with the demand students are required to read the printed instructions the grades 2 English student books made to bear. The learning outcomes targeted in the grade one English teacher’s guide focus on enabling students to write, name and identify English letters and to recognize some printed words and simple sentences until Unit 9 where students are coming to know the sounds the English letters represent. This implies that grade 1 students are not yet ready to decoding information from the printed instruction. This could indicate the inconsistencies between the oral emphasis given to the first two grade levels and the insufficient support students are provided in grade 1 student books to cultivate students’ true reading skills and the printed instructions students are demanded to read to do the activities embodied in grade 2 student books. This is also against the emphasis the learning outcomes the grade 1 student book placed up on. Such inconsistencies in the outcomes targeted and in the activities embodied in grade two and above could disrupt the whole flow of the teaching and learning of English to promote the attainment of the goal. This indicates that the demands of the
activities embodied in the grade 2 student book and the support students are provided to carry out the activities are not balanced and are incoherent to the learning outcomes targeted and to the overall oral emphasis given to the level. These imply that the learning outcomes students are expected to attain are not in line with the activities embodied in grades 2-4 student books due to the undeservedly demand students are required to understand to do the activities and then with overall communication aims.

6.2.3  Approach to language

This section describes how language is viewed, the kinds of language inputs that YLs are exposed to, and how new language is introduced and subsequently practiced in the classroom, and the language contents selected and organized by analyzing the activities and the contents embodied in the English textbooks and their respective teacher’s guides. The analyses could thus reveal whether or to what degree the principles and theories that underpin the language contents in the textbooks are communicative in an age appropriate ways.

6.2.3.1 Theory of Language

The contents and the activities embodied in the first cycle English textbooks centered on topics that are interesting and familiar to students. Besides, the language contents encompassed in the grades 1-4 English textbooks includes other curricular subjects that can give students chances to genuinely use the language. (See section 6.2.3.5 below). The themes thus up on which the contents and activities are designed seem to have considered first-cycle children’s world and are likely to be interesting and relevant to the target groups to engage students in communication.

The learning outcomes in the syllabus and teacher’s guides (see section 6.2.2 above) indicate that students are expected to use the language to express their ideas focusing on the specific themes in every unit, and not to build up their knowledge on its usage. They are stated in terms of what students are expected to use with the language rather than what teachers are expected to teach in each unit. The songs, games, riddles, poems, role plays, drawings, movements, mimes, gestures, TPR activities, stories, chants, and rhymes are some of the playful activities embodied in the grades 1-4 English textbooks that engage students to use the language communicatively. The procedures suggested for children to sing the songs, for example, Classroom Objects (Lesson Seven of Unit 1) and Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (Lesson Four of Unit 2) inform children
to listen carefully looking at the texts and then to sing the songs accompanying them with action movements such as pointing to, playing eyeglasses with fingers, and touching the appropriate body parts as they are named to make the activities communicative.

Ask students to look at the pictures of the boys and girls in Lesson Four. Point out head, shoulders, knees and toes. Ask students to point to each body part as you say its name. Tell students that they will be singing a song called, “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Objects</th>
<th>Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Show me the table.</td>
<td>Head, shoulders, knees and toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show me the floor.</td>
<td>Knees and Toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show me the chalkboard.</td>
<td>Head, shoulders, knees and toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show me the door.</td>
<td>Knees and Toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Motion with hands.)</td>
<td>Eyes and ears and mouth and nose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to the table.</td>
<td>Head, shoulders, knees and toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to the floor.</td>
<td>Knees and Toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to the chalkboard.</td>
<td>Head, shoulders, knees and toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point to the door.</td>
<td>Knees and Toes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Use pointer finger.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the floor.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the chalkboard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look at the door.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Put fingers around eyes-like eye-glasses)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tell students to stand up. Sing the song to students. Tell students every time they hear the name of a body part they must touch it or them with both hands.

Sing the song once more. Teach the song line by line with actions. (Teacher says the line, students repeat it.) Sing the song again with students joining in. Sing the song at different speeds (very fast to slow).

Lesson One of Unit 4, grade 1 teacher’s guide enquire teachers to prepare red, yellow and blue flash cards and objects and cloths and pictures of these colours to introduce students to the new colour words.
Place the red flash card in the shash board to show students the colour red. Point to the red flash card and say:

**This is the colour red.**

Ask students to repeat the colour word together out loud.

Show each of the red objects and pictures that you brought to school. Ask students to look at the objects and pictures. Point to each object or drawing and say: **This is a red** ____. Examples are: **This is a red sweater. This is a red dress. This is a red ball.** Tell students to repeat together out loud the sentences after you. Ask individual students to stand up and come to the shash board where the objects and pictures are placed. Tell each student to point to the object or picture and say:

**This is a red** ____.

Play the game, **I Spy.** Look around the classroom for an object that is red: example, a red dress.

Tell students:

**I spy (see) something that is red.**

Ask students to guess what the object is that you spy (see). Ask individual students to guess the object. Tell students if they are correct or incorrect with their guess.

Example of how to play **I Spy:**

**Teacher:** I spy something red.
**Student:** Is it the shirt?
**Teacher:** No, that is not what I spied.
**Student:** Is it a card?
**Teacher:** Yes, I spy a ____.

*If the guess is correct, say:

**Yes, I spy a red dress.**

*When the guess is incorrect, say:

**It is not what I spy.**

*If several students guess incorrectly, say:

**I spy red dress. What colour is the dress?**

*Students should answer together out loud.

**That is a red dress.**

*Repeat the game several times using different red objects.
The guide further suggests for teachers to employ similar procedures to enable children identify the other English colour names, blue and yellow and to bring the lesson to an end by telling students that they learned the English names of the three colours.

The above extracts can indicate that the methods suggested for students to sing the songs and to play the game follow similar procedures. The teacher demonstrates and has students drill the languages in focus and then let students sing the song and play the game by changing the names of the objects and the body parts. The songs, rhymes and poems involved in the reviewed student books are combined with orders or movements to make students’ language learning meaningful and enjoyable. The actions students are expected to perform when singing songs or saying rhymes or chants or poems, and the repetitive languages (Show me..., point to...or I spy...or Is it...) the texts have can make most of these activities playful and meaningful. The repetitive languages the texts use can help young learners understand the language and easily memorize them and the physical movement accompanied is suitable for kinesthetic intelligence and for all children in general as there is a lot of movement and fun (Lobo, 2003; Balbi, 2008). Students’ use of the language in tasks and activities (songs and games) that involve students mind and body can help students to meaningfully experience the language and assimilate it (Khan, 1995; Lobo, 2003; Balbi, 2008).

The languages used in the songs/rhymes/chants or poems are also linked to the outcomes targeted. The songs enquire children to use the language in a meaningful way, for example, to supporting lexical items to make order or describe the body. Similarly, the game, I Spy, stimulates children to listen to the rules carefully, drill potential languages vital for playing and then use or reuse the language to ask and guess what has been spied which also depict that the language focused are functional for children’s classroom life. Engaging students in such enjoyable activities can provide children the momentum to continue with the activities which provide them more exposure to the language input and more chance to practice the English language communicatively. This also depicts the potential such playful activities may have in boosting children’s desire to purposefully and meaningfully use the language to win the game. The activities thus encourage students to listen to and understand the languages before applying them to communicate depicting the underlying principles that comprehension pave the way for production and that the English language is viewed as a means to communicate.
A lot of TPR activities such as listen and act/point (Lesson Seven, Nine, and Ten of Unit 1, Grade 2), look the picture/read the labels and tell the position of the objects (Lessons Two and Three of Unit 1, grade 2), read and draw a picture (Lesson Eleven of Unit 1, Grade 2), point to and tell the name (Lessons Four, Five, Six and Seven of Unit 1, grade 2), look and say are also included to help children to meaningfully use the language. These playful activities are suitable and are directed towards promoting students affection and basic communication skills. YLs often find it worth learning the target language in order to play a new game (Khan, 1995; Balbi, 2008).

The underpinning principles that such activities are based on seem to be then that language is viewed as a tool to communicate and that language learning to be based on comprehension precedes production in line with the constructive approach to teaching second language to young learners.

The contents and the activities suggested for teachers to follow encourage students to listen to and repeat controlled language samples that are demonstrated by teachers and then to work in low controlled or free-practice activities interacting with their teachers and their peers that involve students much language use consistent with the learning outcomes targeted. The consistency between the learning outcomes and the contents and the activities students are suggested to engage in as well as the overall communicative aims the teacher’s guides note indicate that language is viewed as a tool for communication. What is more, the songs, rhymes, chants and poems that students are required to sing and say through accompanying them with actions, and the games, riddles and puzzles encompassed in teacher’s guides and student books demand students to use the language meaningfully and are age appropriate. These and the other activity types drawn from grades 1-4 teacher’s guides and student books (see Appendix G) demonstrate that language is viewed as a tool to communicate.

The teacher’s explanation to clarify a word or particular language patterns and his effort to demonstrate and/or to model the use of certain language patterns for children to construct sentences of their own and interact with a partner/s as well as the stories their teacher read out loud can also be heeded as a comprehensible inputs which can also witness the theoretical underpinnings of the activities embodied in the activities that language is viewed as a means for communication. The underlying principles in the activities encompassed in the reviewed English
textbooks embedded under the chosen topics thus depict that comprehension precede production and that language is viewed as a means to communicate.

6.2.3.2 Language Input

The grades one and two student books do not seem to be suitable for children’s independent use as many of the texts, instructions or backing support are provided by the teachers as suggested in the teacher’s guides. Even though the grade 2, 3 and 4 student books bear printed instructions that could give some leeway for students to work the activities independently unlike the grade 1 which is devoid of printed instructions, few of the imperative language inputs to properly implement the activities in the student books are provided by the teachers.

The teacher’s guides demand teachers to make oral clarifications focusing on the suggested language contents and to exemplify and model their use in a context. Students are also expected to repeat aloud following their teacher and understand the use of the specific languages and then reuse them to exchange true information in a controlled and then freer ways. Teachers are also suggested to read aloud story texts or sing songs for students to listen and act on as they are required. The letters/words/phrases and sentence patterns teachers write on the blackboard and/or included in the textbooks are also the other language inputs for children to listen/read and act on to improve their proficiency and learning mechanisms. The interactions students are required to make with their teachers and peers in their respective classrooms are also a good language input to improve their knowledge and then their language learning. These show that the main language input grade 1-4 students are expected to act on and develop their proficiency in the English language depend on listening to the teachers and reading the words or phrases and sentence patterns written on the blackboard and in the student books.

These could imply that teachers’ ability to speak the English language and to clarify the language in a way that are comprehensible to the target groups are crucial to serve as a basis for much of the language input learners receive and the language practice that takes place in the classroom. This may further show that teachers’ classroom role is more crucial to earlier grades than to later grades where learners can do activities in the textbook by themselves independent of the teacher. The language inputs students are suggested to act on through listening to their teachers and
reading what are written on the blackboard and in their student books play crucial roles in order to activate and develop students learning mechanisms (Williams, 1995).

6.2.3.3 New language is introduced

The English For Ethiopia Student Books are the main tool in the hands of the learners. Depending on the English language experience first cycle students have, the textbooks employ various methods to assist children understand the new words/phrases and language patterns.

To find out how new language is introduced in the reviewed English textbooks, the following extracts are randomly drawn from grade 1 teacher’s guide:

**LESSON ONE (Unit 3)**

**Focus:** Listening, Speaking

*Explain to students that we use the word this to refer to things that we can touch or things that are close to us. We use the word that to refer to things that we can point to or that are not close to us.*

*Tell students that questions can begin with the words who or what. Say:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who is this? Who is that?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Point to a student who is close to you and say:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who is this?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Point to another student who is not close to you and say:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who is that?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Walk around the classroom and repeat the two questions several times. Model by pointing to a student and telling the class that when the question is “Who is this?” we say, “This is __.” When the question is “Who is that?” we say, “That is __.” Point to a student who is close to you and ask:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who is this?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Answer by saying:*

| This is ______. |
Point to someone else who is not close to you and ask:

**Who is that?**

Students should answer by saying:

**That is ________.**

Find three students who are sitting next to each other. Point to one of the students in the group and ask the other:

**Who is this?**

The student will say:

**This is ________.**

Tell that student to point to someone else in the class who is not close to and ask:

**Who is that?**

The other student will say:

**That is ________.**

Practice this a few times with different groups of students.

The subsequent lesson, Lesson Two, begins by revising the above lesson and then put forward similar instructional procedures to enable pupils ask using what and respond using the words this/that:

*Introduce the language patterns:*

**What is this? What is that?**

*Hold up a pencil and say:*

**This is a pencil.**

*Hold up a pencil and say:*

**What is this? This is a pencil.**

*Point to another pencil and say:*

**That is a pencil**

*Point to a pencil and say:*

**What is that? That is a pencil.**

The activities in Lesson Three also employ similar methods and similar words and language patterns but this time the activities are made to grow to using their contracted form:
What is this? What’s this? Who is that? Who’s that?

This/That is a duster or That’s a duster.

Lesson Four enquires teachers to introduce learners to new words teacher by pointing to himself and girls/boy by having girl and boy students in the class to stand up to help pupils practically experience the languages. This activity is then grown to introduce learners to the pronouns she/he capitalizing on what has been learned previously (girls/boys):

Write the words girl, boy, and teacher on the blackboard. Then draw a picture beside each word. Point to each word and tell students to repeat after you. Point to a girl and say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is Almaz. SHE is a girl.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make your voice louder when you say she. (This will let students know that this is a new word that they must learn. The word she means a girl.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Point to a boy and say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is Abebe. HE is a boy.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make your voice louder when you say he. (This will let students know that this is a new word that they must learn. The word he means a boy.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The teacher is also suggested to ask students to look at the pictures in Lesson Four of student book and to point to the words he/she. The teacher is also asked to choose two students (a boy and a girl) to role play the languages before the class, and afterwards to arrange students into groups to practice the languages through asking and answering each other:

Who’s this? This is ....She is a girl. Or He is a boy.

These extracts depict that various strategies such as the use of classroom objects and pupils, and situations, and pictures which learners can see and experience as well as reuse of known words or phrases are employed to introduce pupils to the new words.

The grade 1 teacher’s guide also note that teachers use gestures, mimes and actions to help children understand new words/phrases such as stand up (by raising their hand), sit down (by lowering their hand) (Lesson One, Unit 1 of grade 1) or act looking- I see with these (my eyes), act listening—I hear with these (my ears), act eating—I eat with these (my teeth) (Lessons three and Four of Unit 2, grade 1) or put the book under the table or put two sticks on the book or put the stone on chair (Lesson Four of Unit 12 of grade 1). These imply that teachers are expected to
use body languages and demonstrations to make new words and sentence patterns comprehensible to pupils in an age-appropriate ways in line with the constructive approach to teaching FLs to YLs.

Students are introduced to English expressions and names of classroom objects such as *pencil, book, bag, duster, table* through using imperative sentences (such as stand up, sit down, show me a bag/pen) (Lesson Two of Unit 1) and playing game (what is in my bag?) (Lesson Three of Unit 1 of grade 1). These words and sentence patterns students have practiced are also used as a foundation to introduce children to new words and sentence patterns through playing a different game in Lesson Five *What is in My Bag?*. The guide inform teachers to play this game with students through first modeling with individual students and then with the whole class.

**What is in my Bag?**
(Have a bag of school objects to pull out: pen, pencils etc.)
What is in my bag? 2X
A pencil, a pencil
A pencil is in my bag
Or
**What is in My Class?**
(Point to the larger objects in the room)
What is in my class? 2X
A door, a door
A door is in my class.

These imply that children can understand the newly introduced words and sentence patterns such as *class*, and *A...is in my...* capitalizing on the other words learned in the previous lessons such as *door/pencils and what is in my bag?* Students are also encouraged to understand new words and/or sentence types by varying the situations (What is in my bag/classes/pocket) and repeating the languages (What is in my bag/class? A *door/pencil is in my bag/class*). The actions teachers and students employ such as pulling out pictures from the bag and pointing to the object can also assist students to understand and memorize the new words. These imply that the songs, games and chants encompassed in the textbooks are also used to introduce children to the new words/sentence patterns through accompanying them with various actions such as touching, pointing to, clapping and through using similar situations and repetitive languages.

Lessons One, Two and Three of Unit 2, grade 1 pursue similar teaching procedures ‘to enable children show and name the English names of their body parts’:
Lesson One

Focus: Listening, Speaking

Methodology:

➢ When teaching new vocabulary, use visual aids such as pictures or real objects.

One Body Part

Teach the following body parts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>eye</th>
<th>ear</th>
<th>face</th>
<th>head</th>
<th>hair</th>
<th>mouth</th>
<th>tooth</th>
<th>nose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

After you name the body part, ask students to repeat after you together out loud. As students name the body part, have them point to that body part and say:

This is my ___.

Tell students to repeat the name of each body part again together out loud after you say. “This is my ___.” Repeat the words several times more quickly until students are repeating the sentence fluently (smoothly and with variation in voice).

Tell students to follow your instructions as you model how to show different body parts. Say:

Show me your ___.

Say each of the body parts from the list above. Students will point to the correct body part and say:

This is my ___.

Say the sentence together out loud several times, naming a different body part each time.

Tell students to work with a partner and take turns saying:

This is my ___.

Show me your ___.

As students do this activity, walk around the classroom. Check that the correct English word is being used to name the body part.

Tell students to work in a small group of three or four to practice using body part words in sentences:

Show me your ___. This is my ___.

Walk around the room and check that the correct word is being used to name the body part being shown.
Lesson Summary: Ask students what they learned today. Reinforce their answers by telling students that today they learned how to name parts of their body using English words.

Lesson Three begins by reviewing the body part words and proceed to:

**More than One Body Part**

*Explain that some body parts are in pairs (two). Show a picture of or point to two eyes, two ears etc. Say:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Singular body parts</th>
<th>Plural body parts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eye</td>
<td>Eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ear</td>
<td>Ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooth</td>
<td>Teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>Hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot</td>
<td>Feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toe</td>
<td>Toes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arm</td>
<td>Arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leg</td>
<td>Legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger</td>
<td>Fingers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Show a picture or point to each real body part (singular and plural).

This is my___. These are my___.

The procedures in the above extracts show that students are introduced to the new body part words using their own body parts and teachers made pictures and pictures in the student book. Capitalizing on the practiced words and sentence patterns such as ear, eye, Show me____, and This is___, students are introduced to the new pronouns my and your while practicing the names of the body parts in Lessons Two and Three. Lesson Three also introduce children to new words and sentence patterns such as ‘these’, ‘plural and singular’ building on the known words:

The above extracts indicate that the reviewed textbooks employ variety of situations to practice known words and sentence patterns in the same theme that can give students a context to easily understand and practice the required skills in an integrated form. Body part words are introduced
to students through creating contexts for students to listen to and speak various meaningful sentences, while at the same time they are also encouraged to associate the sounds of the words with the written symbols by pointing to the labels in the pictures or pointing to words written on the blackboard. Students are still required to use these words to learn grammar (my/your, is/are, and plural /singular nouns) in a meaningful ways.

Such thematic organizations of the language lessons to introduce students to new words and practice them appears to be suitable to the target group as all the languages treated under the unit focused on the same theme ‘body parts’ that students have identified most of the words to practice different skills capitalizing on them. Grammar items are also treated in a meaningful way focusing on the theme treated in the unit in line with students' cognitive development.

To further illustrate how the reviewed textbooks organize language lessons to introduce students to new words building on the known words, it seems worth examining the teaching procedures suggested to activities in Lessons Four, Six, Eight, and Nine of Unit 1 of grade 1.

Lesson Four inform teachers that the focused skills are listening, speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing and then defines kinesthetic approach to help teachers understand its importance to teach students to read and write English letters and some concepts using body movements. Teachers are also recommended to revise the previous lessons and link them to present activities in Lesson Four; the extract below shows the steps suggested to teaching reading and writing of the English letters t, e and a one by one:

*Explain to students in their mother tongue that they will learn how to read and write one English letter at a time and that will help them read and write words in English.*

**The Letter t**

*Write t on the chalkboard and say:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>This is the letter t</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As you write this letter say:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down, across</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face the chalkboard and demonstrate how to write this letter in the air, using big movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As you write the letter in the air say:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is the letter t—down, across.

You also could draw an imaginary line from your head to your knees and say, “Long line down.” and an imaginary line from shoulder to shoulder and say, “Line across. This is the letter t.” Ask students to stand up. Tell them to write the letter t in the air with you. Say the name of the letter and say the direction of the movement as you show how to write it.

Ask students to show a partner how to make the letter t in the air. As they make the letter, have them say,

This is the letter t—down, across

Tell students to use two fingers side-by-side to form the letter t on top of their desks while saying the name of the letter. Then ask students to trace the letter t in their student book.

Then tell them to write the letter several times in the air.

Write the following letters which are in student book and on the chalkboard:

| t | t | a | t | E | t | t | e | a | t | a | t |

Ask individual students to:

Stand up and come here.

Use your hands (gesture) to show students to come front of the class.

Say:

Point to the letter t.

Each student must point to each letter t and say:

This is the letter t

Tell students to do the same activity with a partner using the letters in the student book.

Lesson Summary: Tell students that they learned how to read and form the letter t.

The next lesson (Lesson Six) enquires teachers to write a-z on the chalkboard and to frequently read out loud the names of the letters and let students repeat each letter in chorus. It further notes for teachers to teach “The Alphabet Song” using the same procedures suggested for teaching the song in Lesson Three:

1. Practice the song before you go to the class.
2. Sing the song a few times for students to hear.

3. Use gestures to help them understand the words.

4. Sing the song line by line and have students repeat after you. Do this many times.

5. Sing the whole song together.

6. Have just the girls sing the song with you, then the boys.

7. Have groups of students sing the song, if possible, without your help.

8. Finally, sing the whole song together out loud. (From Lesson Three)

The Alphabet Song

a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n o p
q r s t u v
w x y and z

Now I know my a, b, cs
Next time won’t you sing with me.

Repeat the song and encourage students to repeat together each line out loud after you and then to sing along with you.

The textbook follows similar teaching procedures as in the above extract to teaching reading and writing of the letters a and e in Lessons Six and Eight by changing the direction words such as ‘round, down’ for writing letter a and ‘across, round’ for letter e. The reviewed textbooks follow identical teaching procedures to enable students identify, read and write the English letters.

The extract demonstrates that the reviewed textbooks organize language lessons to assist students to identify, name and form the English letters through integrating them to the development of students’ oral skills. Teachers are suggested to name and draw the letters on the blackboard/in the air using direction words for students to listen, repeat and draw the letters in the air using direction words. Teachers are suggested to use direction words accompanying them with actions to show students how to write the letters and to help students understand the new direction words; and students are also subsequently required to draw the letters in the air or on the desk using the direction words which also cultivates students listening and speaking skills in line with children’s natural tendency to be physically active. The next activities give the responsibility for students to ask and answer the letters in pairs which also enhance students listening and speaking skills:
St1: What is this? (pointing to the letters or drawing the letters in the air using direction words)

St.2: This is t/a/e.

Children are further required to sing The Alphabet Song to reinforce pupil’s identification and naming of the letters and build on some new words and sentences such as ‘Now I know…’.

Lesson Nine also employs various activities to reviewing the three letters studied in the preceding lessons and to introducing new words and sentence patterns:

…sing “The e-a-t Song” together out loud. Give one letter card to each child. Students should stand up when their letter is called out. The song can be sung faster and faster.

The e-a-t Song  
(Tune of BINGO)  
e – a…e – a – t  
e – a …e – a – t  
e – a …e – a – t  
e - - a - - t  

…Review the English letters t, e and a. Write all the three letters on the chalkboard and ask the class to name them together out loud.

Draw the following table on the chalkboard:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>e</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The guide then enquires children to match the shaded letters with the similar letters in a row using new language patterns which integrates students naming and identification of letters to developing their listening and speaking skills:

This is letter e/a/t, and this is letter e/a/t.

Activities that introduces learners to English letters using This is letter t/a/e (Lessons 4,5,&6 above) grow to introduce new words and compound sentence patterns such as This is letter a/t/e, and this is letter a/t/e when doing the matching activities (Lesson 9, Unit 1). This again grows to introduce pupils to new sentence pattern:
The known English letters e-a-t and language pattern-This is...are used as a foundation, for example, for children to understand the new words ‘same’ and the conjunction ‘and’ and compound sentences joined by ‘and’ by simply carrying out the activities. The various types of activities children are provided to enable them read, write and identify the English letters are also used to build up their vocabulary powers and new sentence patterns in meaningful ways which are also vital to improve their listening and speaking skills. These imply that the reviewed textbooks organize language lessons to prepare students to identify, name and write the English letters through meaningfully practice the language skills putting emphasis on cultivating students’ oral skills. These encourage students to study the English letters while at the same time they are made to practice their listening and speaking skills-listening and using some new direction words and sentence patterns capitalizing on the already introduced letters.

To make the new languages embodied in the textbooks understandable to children, teachers are also advised to translate them into L1 as indicated in the extracts above. Teachers are advised to use L1 at different times while teaching the textbooks, for example, to tell the names of the new words included in the textbooks, to translate some stories, to clarify instructions on how to do activities and rules on how to play games.

The extracts also indicate that teachers are suggested to begin new lessons by reviewing the previously learned lessons and creating links with the new ones to support students’ comprehension of the new words while at the same time the known ones are recycled which is in line with the principles advocated in natural and constructive approach (i + 1).

These indicate the grades 1-4 English textbooks use various instructional strategies such as pictures, body languages, contextualized sentences, repetitive languages and situations, concrete objects, reviewing previous lessons and link them to the present one, use of L1 and known words/phrases to help students understand the new English words. Most of the strategies suggested are also in line with the principles propounded in the constructive approach and the characteristics children naturally have for second language learning.

Children eagerly explore to understand and use the language through the physical activities (Hammer, 2001; Cameron, 2001). Thus directing their English language learning on playful and
fun activities may help children to develop positive attitude towards learning and using the language and then to attain the outcomes more rapidly.

6.2.3.4 Language use

The grades 1-4 English textbooks employ various strategies to encourage students practice the newly introduced languages. To enable students ‘exchange greetings’ and ‘give their names and grade levels in English’, the grade 1 teacher’s guide in its first unit suggest various activity types for teachers to implement such as greeting students and making self introductions and ask others name in classroom context using the suggested words and expressions (Good morning/good afternoon, My name is … What is your name?) for students to understand, having students repeat the words and expressions aloud, allow selected individual students to role play the functions (greeting and making self-introductions) using the preset expressions modeling their teachers before the class, give students options to work in pairs reusing the sentence patterns by personalizing the information while the teacher is supervising all students active involvement and proper use of the language patterns.

Activities in Lesson Two add new language patterns such as My father’s name is …’, ‘I am in grade one. on what are practiced earlier following teachers’ explanations and demonstrations as in Lesson One for students to understand, repeat and work in pairs to greet and know each other using the preset languages with little or no teacher’s support. The next activity in Lesson Three demands students to sing a song Good Morning Song which also add other greeting expressions and their appropriate replies accompanied with gestures. Listening to teachers when using the language in a classroom context can help students understand the desired expressions, repeating the languages can assist students to get used to the sounds involved and secure their future use, and reusing the languages to act out the functions before the class and in pairs can further broaden their experience and then to internalize the languages to perform the targeted outcomes. Students’ involvement in singing the song reusing the various greeting expressions accompanying them with actions can help students to meaningfully use the languages that could further cultivate students performances on the outcomes targeted. The activities students are required to work individually and in pairs are controlled in the sense that students’ language use are limited to the predetermined word options and sentence patterns by only personalizing the names.
The other activities in the same theme (Unit 1) expect students to identify and name classroom objects. To enable students perform these at the end of the unit, the grade 1 teacher’s guide enquire teachers to hold or point to individual classroom objects and say their names aloud alone and then together with students, to name the objects aloud and students to point to the called out picture/s and/or object/s in the classroom, to give students opportunities to work in pairs by changing roles (Lesson Two) modeling the earlier activity (to name and point to the objects in the student book pictures and/or in the classroom). The next activity demands teachers to clarify and illustrate the use of the preset languages vital to name and identify the classroom objects before giving students chances to work in pairs/groups. Students are then given the chances to further practice the preset languages by changing roles (such as S1: Show me...S2: This is ...). The next activity also enquires teachers to introduce the game and clarify the rules for students to follow and then to play the guessing game with the whole class using pictures of classroom objects that s/he has prepared for students to pick up and guess the correct names. Teachers are also required to put forward the given rules for students to follow and then to give them chances to play the game in pairs for students (for example, some students hide pictures in their pockets and/or bags while others draw and guess the name of the object using the preset languages What is in my bag/pocket?, ‘This is...’) (Lesson Three). Teachers’ clarifications of rules and the preset languages and their illustrations of the use of the preset languages can provide students chances to listen and understand; and students involvement to repeat and then to use the preset languages on their own are also in line with the expected outcomes and the focused listening and speaking skills.

Activities in Lesson Five also enquire teachers to call out the name of the objects loud and students to point to the pictures repeating the called out names aloud, to order students to show/point to the objects gathered on the table using the preset sentence patterns (T: Show me...(pointing to the object) S1: This is ...), to clarify students the rules and allow them to play a game What is in my Bag?. Students language use while carrying out these activities can enrich their vocabularies of classroom objects which at the same time cultivate their listening and speaking skills, and their pointing towards the pictures repeating the words aloud could help students to see the letters in the words and to associate the printed words with their sounds which can also address students pre-reading and pre-writing skills and thus in line with both the outcomes targeted and the focused skills (listening, speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing skills).
The activities in Lesson Seven also demand students to place the cards with printed names of classroom objects on their real objects and to sing a song ‘Classroom Objects’ that could further enrich students’ words power on classroom objects in line with the aimed skills (listening, speaking, pre-reading and pre-writing skills). These imply that the activities students are provided to perform are controlled as the words and sentence patterns students are required to use and practice are written on the blackboard and the contexts are specified that can make their performances predictable.

In order to enable students understand and use the verb have when used with the pronouns I, you, he and she, the activities such as listen, listen and repeat, use the preset sentence patterns to ask and answer questions in pairs in Lessons One, Two, and Three of Unit 6 of grade 1 (see the extracts below in section 6.2.3.5) encourage students to meaningfully practice the language. Students’ involvements in doing these controlled activities are then used as a foundation for students to listen to and understand the story The Goat and to do the open-ended comprehension questions in Lesson Four. The uses of the different forms of the verb have practiced in the earlier controlled format grow to activity types that are low controlled and less predictable as these activities demand students to describe the pictures attached and then to understand the listening text with various connected sentences and answer comprehension questions with less controlled languages.

Haile has a goat. Adonay holds a rope to lead her goat. Biyana holds a stick to drive his goat. Sara has a bucket to milk the goat. Wessene has leaves to feed her goat.

Children can understand the new words embedded in the story such as holds, leaves, lead assisted by the learned words and structures and using the pictures accompanied the story. The repetition of the structures such as Haile has..., Adonay holds..., Biyana holds... can also hint students to understand the story. Students are also required to fill in gapped sentences with the words have or has. These indicate that students are provided with a variety of activity types to practice the use of the different forms of the verb have through role playing, games, listening and reading the story texts and answering the comprehension questions orally, and gapped filling activities.
In order to equip learners with the ability of describing their families using possessive adjectives and of reading words, phrases and sentences associated with family members, Lessons One, Two, and Four of Unit 7 of grade 1, for example, employ various controlled practice activities:

The teacher is required to prepare pictures of different families with different family sizes to introduce learners to the different family words such as father, mother, brother, and sister. The guide suggests teachers to use L1 to help students understand the word family. Students are required to come forward in front of the classroom and to point to the picture following teachers’ explanations and questions:

T: Who is the mother / father / brother / sister?
St: This is the mother / father / brother / sister. (pointing to the pictures prepared using the preset phrases). Other students together follow the student to say the sentences aloud.

The teacher uses the pictures prepared to elicit languages from individual students:

T: How many people are in the family? (Counting the people in the pictures together with students)
T: There are five people. (Students together repeat aloud)

The teacher is then required to use L1 to tell what older people mean and ask:

T: How many older people are in the family? (Counting together with students)
T: There are two older people. (Students repeat)

The activity goes on with the other words sisters/brothers to help children practice the predetermined words and sentence patterns. The next activity also demand teachers to use L1 to explain the new words like and different to help children understand and use them to talk about how their families are similar or different to the family they see in the picture.

Children are also encouraged to discuss to a partner how their families are alike or different from the family in the picture using L1. Afterwards, a sample of sentence patterns such as My name is .... I am... years old. I have ... sisters. I have ... brothers. My father’s name is .... My mother’s name is .... are given for teachers to model and help pupils practice describing their families in
English. Teachers are then required to give students chances to model him and use the words and the sentence patterns to practice describing their family in a controlled way.

Activities in the next lesson are also used to introduce pupils to pronouns such as *my/your/ his/ her* following similar procedures as in the above to help them tell about their families and other people by personalizing the information:

> What is your/his/her/my name? followed by My/your/her/his name is ....

The teacher is suggested to explain the pronouns by constructing contextualized simple sentences using pupils in the classroom and then to give students chances to construct identical sentences and exchange their personal information using the pronouns by getting them into groups of three:

> St1: My name is ...  St2: Your name is ......  St3: Her/His name is...

Lesson Four begins by revising the family words using another family picture as suggested to teachers. This activity again is extended to reviewing the pronouns and including new sentence types:

> Dawit’s sister’s name is Meaza.
> Her name is Meaza.

The teacher further illustrates the use of the pronouns to enable children describe their family:

> What is your father’s/mother’s name?       My mother’s/father’s name is ....
> T: How many brothers/sisters do you have?
> St1: I have two/three sisters. What do I have?
> T: You have two/three sisters.

The teacher then is required to demonstrate the use of the pronouns using sample sentence types for pupils to understand and to correctly produce them. This is then followed by an activity that enquires students to get in to pairs and use the newly introduced words and sentence patterns such as *How many...? I have.... What is your fathers/mothers name? My/Your/Her/His name is…* to ask and tell each other about their family.

After having students understand and practice the use of the pronouns in various controlled sentence patterns, the next activity in Lesson Five require students to use the languages learned to describe the family pictures pretending to be one of the boys/girls in the pictures which is less
controlled as it is up to the students to decide the extent of the details they want to give to describing their family and drawing their family picture.

These indicate that in order to enable students to describe their families using possessive adjectives and to read family words, phrases and sentences, the teaching procedures suggested enquire students to understand and to repeat and to role play using the preset words/sentence patterns by personalizing the information which are also vital for students to understand the story Families and answer the comprehension questions.

The comprehension question enquires students to sort out one thing in the story that is alike or different from their family and tell to a partner which is more open and students may use the languages they have studied earlier-for example- ‘I have one brother and the girl in the picture has one brother or I have two sisters but the boy in the picture has one sister’. The next activities invite students to write the words mother, father, sister, and brother into their exercise book and then to listen to the stories again pointing to these words which familiarize students to reading and writing family words as the activities encourage students to associate the letters in the words with their sounds and concepts to remember. The other comprehension question enquires individual students to retell the story to a partner using the languages freely relying on their memory. These imply that both controlled and guided practice activities are employed to progressively promote pupils’ English language use and then their English language learning. In both controlled and free practice activities, teachers give children chances to use the language and complete the activities with appropriate guidance. The questions that require students to listen and read the story and that enquire students to listen again to compare the characters in the story with themselves and that requires students to retell the story can depict that stories in the reviewed student books use variety of activities to give students different experiences (to listen, speak, read, and write) and to speed up their English language learning. These indicate that the methods employed to enable students to describe their family and to read family words and sentences seem to be coherent and encourage students to use and practice the language.

The above extracts thus indicate that the outcomes students are expected to perform at the end of each unit and the various activities embodied within each unit for students to carrying out appear to be coherent as the kind of languages students are expected to progressively practice mirror what are targeted in the expected outcomes.
The earlier activities in grade 1 student book which focus on familiarizing students to individual words/phrases and expressions using imperatives and question and answer methods gradually grow to include stories commencing from unit 6 onwards that demand students to listen/read and understand stories which are cognitively more demanding. Besides, the various input rich oral directives that mainly demand students to use non-verbal responses and refer to concrete features of the environment such as ‘show me letter a’ or ‘touch the window/desk’ makes decoding of the directives content easier.

The grade 2-4 student books employ a number of stories and short and long reading passages that are related to the main themes for students to listen/read, speak and write which are cognitively more demanding when compared to the types of activities in grade 1 student book. The grade 1 student book enquires students to listen to and understand listening/reading text beginning from Lesson Five, Unit 6 (The Goat) which are cognitively more demanding when compared to the earlier lessons which focus on identification and qualification of objects and events using distinct words, phrases and sentences. The activities thus help students to identify the names of classroom objects or body parts or numbers or colours or animals using concrete objects and ‘here and now’ situations, where meaning is conveyed through visual and physical contextual clues and moves to a more abstract context where the focus is more on the language itself. This can then illustrate that activities embodied in students textbook are typically organized from concrete to more abstract to gradually cultivate students’ knowledge on the theme and build up their English language experience. This shows that the lessons in the grades 1-4 textbooks are organized and sequenced in an increasing order of difficulties to enrich their knowledge on the topics and then their English proficiency in line with students’ level of experience in the topics and in the English language. (See also Appendix G for the types of activities embodied in each grade student book).

Grade 1 student book employ lessons that introduce students to English small letters and then to the sounds they correspondingly represent to cultivate their basic reading and writing skills, while lessons in grade 2, 3 and 4 student books includes a lot of stories and short and long passages (the size and numbers increase as the grade level increases) to cultivate students true reading and writing skills. What is more, the reading and writing activities are organized in such a way that student's letter writing and letter naming fluency that begins in Unit 1 are cultivated
before they are introduced to the sounds of the letters, Lesson Five letter sound \(g\) (ge-Amharic), Lesson Six-letter sound \(q\) (kiw-Amharic), Lesson Eight-letter sound \(e\) (e-Amharic), Unit 9 of grade 1, which are also prerequisites for the forthcoming true reading activities. This can also be a case in point to manifest how activities are linked and built up on one another to make new languages understandable for children. The grade 1 student book also demands children to name and copy English letters and words written on the blackboard before they are asked to write them from their memory-for example- students are required to use their memory about the story *Akilo Primary School* to read and write five sentences about the school and check the facts with their partners (Unit 1 of Lesson Seven, Activity 3 in grade 4 student book). This could witness that the textbooks are structured in increasing levels of difficulties. The last unit of grade 1 and earlier units of grade 2 student books introduce students to English capital letters and to true reading and writing activities to progressively build up students reading and writing skills which are more cognitively demanding when compared to the earlier letter reading and identification activities. This implies that the contents of student books are structured from simple to difficult activities to progressively build up students reading and writing skills. (See Appendix G for detailed activity types in the four skills)

The English lessons in Unit 5 of grade 1 and in unit 2 of grade 2-for example-demand children to read and write English numbers and to count various objects in English and to practice adding and subtracting numbers to solve problems in English (Mathematics). Activities in Lessons One and Two of Unit 10 of grade 2 student book also require children to study a map of a house and name the rooms (such as bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, garden, yard etc) in the map and to draw a map of their house (my house has 3 rooms) or their neighborhood to practice the English language using the lexical items introduced earlier. Similar activities in Lesson Seven of Unit 3, grade 3 enquire students to study the school plan and to point to the place in the map repeating aloud the name they listened called out (Geography). Students are also required to use the African map in Lesson Six of Unit 3 in grade 3 student book to ask each other to point to Ethiopia and to tell two countries close to Ethiopia in the map. (Geography). Activity 2 of Lesson Four in Unit 3 introduce students to various weather words through pictures and reading passage *Weather Report* and Activity 1 of Lesson Ten in Unit 4 enquire students to find out the various seasons and the special activities during the rainy season and the dry season through pictures and reading passage *Rain Maker* in grade 4 student book (Geography). Lesson One of
Unit 2 in grade 3 student book enquire students to name and count the different animals and objects in the pictures (Math and science). In the same unit, the grade 3 student book further enquire students to count the different shapes in the picture and write their names and numbers (circle, triangle, rectangle, square, line) (mathematics). Lessons Four, Six and Twelve in grade 2 student book require pupils to talk about the weather using weather words such as sunny, rainy, cloudy, cold, hot (Science) which are another manifestation of the cross curricular link the first cycle English textbooks establish to provide children chances to interact genuinely using the language. The last unit of grade 1 textbooks also demands learners to freely talk about what they learned in mathematics, environmental science and aesthetics lessons using appropriate English words. These can depict the link the English lessons have with other curricular subjects which are motivating and involve students’ language use focusing on both the contents and the language. Such focuses on other subject contents seemed to be in line with students’ background and can motivate pupils’ participation to genuinely use the language and are parallel to the principles underpinning the communicative/constructive approach.

The reviewed grades 2-4 English student books also include activities such as ‘tell to class what you know about a donkey’ before singing the song Ten Little Donkeys (Lesson Five, Unit 5), ‘tell class what you know about families’ before listening to and reading the story Families (Lesson Five, Unit 7), ‘describe an animal using as much English as possible for others to guess’ (Lesson Four, Unit 9), ‘think of different ending to the story Mother Rat and Her Nest and discuss with partners’ (Lesson Nine, Unit 10) that provide students different chances to use and practice the English language. The student books also comprises of activities such as ‘look at the pictures and guess what the story is about’, ‘answer comprehension questions’, ‘read the jumbled sentences and reorder them as per the three stories you have read and listened’ (Lessons Ten and Eleven, Unit 2). Playing games, doing puzzles, solving problems, writing and solving riddles, making survey (e.g. food and drinks survey), and using songs and rhymes are other activity types that are motivating and involve language use. The summary sections each unit encompassed sometimes enquire students to reflect what they have been learned. (See Appendix G for detail activity types that require various degrees of language use). The reviewed textbooks thus employ various activity types ranging from more controlled activity types which often restrict students both in given context and in the language to low controlled activities that allow students to freely practice and extend their language skills. The frequent chances students are given in every unit to
meaningfully use the languages appear to be adequate in their amount and balanced in their format to fostering the attainment of the learning outcomes.

The analysis of the procedures suggested in the teacher’s guides also indicate that the initial strong support teachers provide to help children to understand the use of the preset language patterns through clarifications and constructing simple contextualized sentences are gradually transferred to supervisory role, overseeing students’ active involvement in doing the activities and proper use of the introduced languages in a meaningful context. Teacher’s encouragement of students to engage in doing the activities individually and/or in pairs/group can also contribute to children’s independent work. These indicate that the reviewed student books demand teachers to give instructions and afterwards to provide chances for students to experiment the languages taught and drilled which are vital for developing their own English language learning mechanisms and for their independent study.

Current research shows that students can assimilate the new languages and develop their basic communication skills when they get opportunities to actively use the language while doing the activities in the classroom (Pinter, 1999; Harmer, 2001; Richards and Rodgers 2001). The views of the constructive approach to FL development stress the importance of social interaction and genuine communication, paralleling recent developments in the Communicative Approach to language teaching (Brewster, 1995). Teacher’s support and encouragement for pupils to experiment the language they have practiced encourages children to take responsibility to self English learning apart from what teachers can do in classroom consistent with the principles advocated in natural approach (Krashen and Terrel, 1983; Pinter 1999).

However, different authorities such as Williams (1995) and Harmer (2001) have various stances on such instructional procedures (Presentation, Practice and Production model) which include the use of drills to teaching FL to young learners. Such drilling and practice focused activities seem to be against children’s natural predispositions to intuitive language learning. Demanding young learners to frequently repeat focused sentence patterns may force them to easily get bored and abandon the learning and using of the language which may question the appropriacy of such activities to children’s cognitive and language development (William, 1995). William further notes that it is not different from the teaching of language structures and thus should be avoided.
from young learners’ classrooms. In slight variation to William, Harmer (2001) describes such activity types as the ‘weak version’ of the communicative activities and contends that they can prepare children for the communicative activities to come as long as they are few in content. In line with Harmer, Cameron (2001) warns that young students must be prepared to make sense from such practice activities through telling them the expected outcomes and presenting the languages in a meaningful ways. Recent researches on YLs EFL learning have confirmed that imitation, repetition and formulaic speech are first strategies to be employed (Cameron, 2003; Brown, 2006). Most teachers of YLs would argue that the language is only put to use after enough exposure. A child always tries to apply what he learns in his context and does not seem to store up knowledge for later use (Ur, 1996; Dereboy, 2008). Even holistic models require some discrete language teaching time in addition (Brewster, 1995). Even though interactive activities mainly promote young learners language learning, practicing certain language patterns through repeating/drilling can also contribute to the target language development (Cameron, 2001). These imply that the tasks and activities encompassed in the reviewed student books demand proper care when presenting in classroom to teaching the target language to children.

The sampled extracts above and the activity types that require children to make physical movements, sing songs, say rhymes, chants or poems, play games, puzzles or riddles, listen and tell stories, role play, draw pictures or describe pictures, solve word problems related to other curricular activities, work activities individually and/or in pairs or groups can demonstrate that the reviewed books present the English language in a variety of ways to cater young learners different interests and preferences. Such varieties of task types, oral and written, provide students opportunities to use a wide range of language to enhance children’s language acquisition. The student books support visual learners’ English language learning through using a variety of colorful illustrations and picture cards that teachers are suggested to supplement some activities in the textbooks. Auditory learners are provided with various opportunities to hear and repeat various vocabularies, phrases and sentence patterns. The textbooks also address these learners English language learning through embodying songs, poems, stories and chants. Kinesthetic students reinforce their English language learning through carrying out Total Physical Response (TPR) activities encompassed in the textbooks. Children are very much linked to their surroundings and are more interested in the physical and the tangible (Shin, n.d.). The reviewed student books, however, lack technologically mediated and hands-on activities to assist tactile
students manipulate various concrete things such as measuring, cutting and pasting papers and cards to make things (aeroplanes, masks, puppets) that are significant to improve students English language acquisition. These show that the task and activities embodied in the grades 1-4 English textbooks heed various students’ learning styles to make children’s classroom English language learning easier. Children understanding comes through applying their senses (hands and eyes and ears), and sensory modalities include the visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic (Gardner, 1993; Lobo, 2003; Lo, 2006; Balbi, 2008). Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1993) identifies several abilities including bodily-kinesthetic, musical, spatial, linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Many studies show that hands-on activities that involve young learners in doing or making crafts or cut outs can motivate students to stay on doing the activities using the language and can fix the language more easily (Lobo, 2003; Balbi, 2008). These indicate that the reviewed student books seem to cater for various students’ potential in the different learning styles and intelligent types while working at the same time towards improving students English. Creating a multi-sensory and multi-media learning environment in young learners’ EFL classrooms do not only facilitate students EFL learning, children’s overall personality growth is also equally addressed (Gardner, 1993; Cunningsworth, 1995; Lobo, 2003; Lo, 2006; Balbi, 2008).

In line with the curriculum, variety of activities and classroom organizations such as individual work, group/pair work, for example, are employed that allow and encourage young learners’ interactions. Student-centered instruction consists of shifting the focus of classroom activities from the teacher to the students; it also involves using a variety of activities as well as a classroom structure, such as a group work, that provide children the best opportunity to learn the most. (Williams, 2003; Wang, 2007).

6.2.3.5 Language contents

The tables of contents of the grades 1-4 English student books indicate that the contents embodied are structured based on 15 (grade 1) and 14 (grades 2-4) thematic units, respectively. The themes that the contents in grade 1 student book organized are ‘Greetings’, ‘Parts of the Body’, ‘What is it called in English?’, ‘Colours’, ‘Counting’, ‘Objects that We Have’, ‘My Family’, ‘Describing People’/ ‘Animals’/ ‘Objects’, ‘Finding People, Animals, Objects’, ‘Commands’, ‘Abilities’, ‘Likes and Dislikes’, and ‘Learning at School’. The themes that the
contents in grade 2 student book structured are ‘In the Classroom’, ‘How Many Books’, ‘What Colour is your Bag?’, ‘Parts of the Body’, ‘I Have a New Pen’, ‘Days of the Week’, ‘Time to Eat and Drink’, ‘What an Amazing Animal’, ‘My Likes and Dislikes’, ‘Who Lives in This House?’, ‘A Frog Can Jump’, ‘What are You Wearing?’, ‘I Walk to School’, and ‘Look at The People’. The contents in grade 3 are also structured on ‘At School’, ‘Ten Oranges, Please!’, ‘You Must Have Fun’, ‘Let’s Wash Our Hands’, ‘My Father Looks After the Children’, ‘What are the Children Doing?’, ‘Revision’, ‘Thirteen Months of Sunshine’, ‘My Mother has Long Hair’, ‘On the Farm’, ‘What Do You Do Every Day?’, ‘Do You Like Playing of Football?’, ‘A Nurse Works in a Clinic’, and ‘Revision’. The themes that the contents of each unit of grade 4 student book organized are ‘My School’, ‘How Tall are You?’, ‘It was Hot Yesterday’, ‘Let’s Keep Fit’, ‘My House’, ‘What Time is It?’, ‘Revision’, ‘What Would You Like to Eat?’, ’Where is the Market?’, ‘What is Your Uncle’s Job?’, ‘Look Out! A Lion is Coming’, ‘What is it Made Of?’, ‘Where Were You Yesterday?’, and ‘Revision’. In addition to the contents on the themes, each unit in grade 1 student book encompass three English letter contents structured from the most to the least frequented English letters—begins with letters t, d, and l and ends with x, j, q and z and not in alphabetical order. These indicate that the themes up on which the contents and activities center on are environments that are familiar and close to students to make them suitable to students’ cognitive and socio-cultural experiences. The structured format also allows students language to grow in line with their experiences in the themes/topics. Most of the topics up on which the contents and activities are selected over others are known and popular topics from young learners’ course books (Shin, n.d.; Khan, 1995; Kirkgoz, 2006) and so could have seemed familiar and interesting to the target group. In a FL language context, students’ needs to use the target language are likely to be centered on classroom/school and thus tasks are classroom activities that can gradually grow with their experience (Holderness, 1995; Cameron, 2001).

The contents and activities in Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 3 help students to identify and name the different classroom objects, body parts and types of cloths. The activities in the next units enable students to recognize and use colour names to qualify different colour cloths and objects studied in the previous units. The activities in Unit 5 are also designed to enable students to count objects, read and write numbers in figures and words using the studied classroom objects, cloths, and body parts. The activities in Unit 6 encourage students to talk about things they possess capitalizing on the languages they have studied in the previous units such as how many
pens/pencils or how many ears/eyes they/you/s/he have/has. The subsequent topics such as ‘Families’, ‘Describing People’, ‘Describing Animals’, and ‘Describing Objects’ are also linked in such a way that the knowledge and languages students experience in the previous units are also used as objects to study the new contents and languages. What is more, the organizations of the themes enable students to identify and name various objects/body parts/different types of cloths before studying colour words to qualify and differentiate various objects/people. The subsequent themes are also organized so that students can relate and classify the contents that are cognitively appropriate to sequence activities. These imply that the topics up on which most of the contents and activities are chosen are logically organized to gradually build students knowledge and English language communications.

The contents and activities under each theme or unit of the student books are also organized into eleven and twelve teachable lessons following a topical format. The contents and activities under the theme ‘Greeting’ focus on introducing students to greeting and parting expressions, making self introduction and asking other’s names, classroom instructions, introducing names of classroom objects and words related to teacher and pupils, songs on greetings and partings and on classroom objects, guessing games, and reviews. The English letters are also frequently presented in range of letter related activities such as listening to names of the letters, role playing using the selected letters, using songs, and drawing pictures and letters in the air. Unit 2 ‘Parts of the Body’ comprises of contents on introducing names of body parts, imperatives, and singular and plural body parts, riddles on functions of the body parts, songs on body parts-heads, shoulder and Hokey –Pokey, yes/no game on body parts. Unit 7 ‘My Family’ contains contents on introducing family and family words, draw and describe family pictures, copy family words written on the blackboard while at the same time listening to their sounds, listen to a story Families, listen again the story pointing to the selected words, and answer comprehension questions, telling the beginning letters of the family names. These imply that the series of lessons embodied in each unit are organized centering on major theme that can provide students appropriate context to meaningfully use the language and adequate opportunities for recycling languages from lesson to lesson (Shin, n.d.).

Unit 5 of grade 1 under the theme Counting also encompass activities such as listen and repeat the numbers and number words pointed, count the objects/animals following their teachers, sing
number songs, play bingo and yes/no games, counting classroom objects and tell their number and names. Activities in Lesson Seven also demand teachers to hold up number cards for students to read and clap the number of times the number on the card indicates. The next lesson demand children to count the English letters and write the correct numbers beside the counted letters. Similarly, the contents embodied in ‘How Many Books?’ (Unit 2 of grade 2) also center around enabling students count set of objects, identify and name number words and numbers using various segmented activities. These short and varied activities are organized centering on the same theme and are linked to one another to teach pupils counting objects/pictures/letters and reading and writing numbers and number words maintaining their interest on the topic.

Grade 2, Unit 1 ‘In the Classroom’ are organized on activities such as greetings, self-introduction and asking others’ names, introducing names of classroom objects, prepositions, wh-questions, pronouns and verb and their contractions, songs using greeting expressions, instructions, and contractions, games, imperatives, listen/read a story and do comprehension questions. The contents under the theme ‘Days of the Week’ (Unit 6) are organized on activities such as naming days of the week, ordering the days using ordinal numbers, rhymes, songs, describe activities you do on certain days, exchange greetings, talking and writing about the weather, story, draw and describe. The contents under the theme ‘Time to Eat and Drink’ (Unit 7) are structured using various activities such as read aloud, counting food pictures and write their numbers, copy the chant and write the names of the pictures choosing from Word Bank, buying food/drink items in a shop using polite words, counting numbers, singular/plural words, categorizing words into categories such as food to eat and drink, food from plants and from animals, odd and even numbers, short/long words, syllable, stress/unstress syllables, and riddle. The activities up on which the contents in every unit are organized are varied to interest students and linked thematically to provide students opportunities to repeatedly use and practice the words/phrases under different contexts. (See Appendix G for details)

What is more, the grammar singular/plural contents recur several times in the reviewed student books under varying themes and contexts such as ‘Body Parts’ (Unit 2) in Lesson Three (e.g. eye/eyes, hand/hands), ‘Colours’ (Unit 4) in Lessons Three and Six (for example, This/These is/are a skirt/shoes/shirt/shirts) in the grade 1 student book, and ‘How Many Books’ (Unit 2) in Lessons Six and Seven (They/He have/has pen/pens, carrot/carrots, hand/hands, stick/sticks),
‘Parts of the Body’ (Unit 4) in Lesson Two (I have one head/two hands/two eyes), ‘Time To Eat and Drink’ (Unit 7) (fish/fish, tea/tea, apple/apples), ‘What an Amazing Animal’ (Unit 8) in Lesson Three (camel/camels, wing/wings, lion/lions), and ‘My Likes and Dislikes’ (Unit 9) in Lesson Five (Fill in the gaps using their singular or plural forms following the picture/s) to help students to store in the long term memory and to realize when using the language.

Student’s practice on identifying and using English numbers under the theme Counting (Unit 5) is recycled in Lesson Nine of Unit 6 under the theme Objects That We Have (Unit 6). It reintroduces children to contents of counting objects in English under different situations such as asking and telling the number of books/pencils students have (I have a pen/pencil or he/she has a pen or what do you have or what does he have?) or clapping/touching body parts/hop the number of times the number on the flash card indicates. The grade 2 student book also reintroduces students to reading and writing of the numbers and a set of objects to teach students counting under various themes such as ‘How Many Books?’ (Unit 2), ‘What Colour is Your Bag?’ (Lessons Five and Nine of Unit 3 such as I have (two) (red) (pens/cards); S/He has (three/five) (red/blue) (balls/pens); students use the numbers on the blackboard to make addition and subtraction to get the value of the colours-3-2=1 (blue)), ‘Food and Drinks’ (Lesson One-count the food objects, Lesson Five-shopping food items, Lesson Seven, Eight, Nine and Eleven of Unit 7-counting forwards and backwards using number lines related with fruits). In teaching ‘How Many Books’, the classroom objects such as table, door, desk are also reused to make new sentences such as what is/are on the table? Where is the duster? How many…there are …,or to help them understand short reading passages and a story text such as

*There is one ball. She has one ball.* (Picture of a girl with a ball).

*There are two balls. He has two balls.* (Picture of a boy with two balls).

‘Ten Oranges’ (Unit 1) and ‘How Tall are You?’ (Unit 2) in grade 3 and 4 student books, respectively, also reintroduce children to counting, reading and writing numbers. In addition to the revisions teachers are advised to make at the beginning of most of the lessons and the two revision units in grades 2-4 student books, it is also common to see the last lesson in each of the units allocated to revising the language contents covered. This implies that the textbooks organize contents in such a way that each new lesson begins by warm up activities that could
review the previous language lesson and link to the present lessons and end up the day’s lessons by asking students to tell what they have been learned or by giving short summary which can also show the degree of the repetition of the previously taught language contents.

The contents of grade 1 student book under the theme ‘Greetings’ (Unit 1) include contents such as greetings and self-introductions as well as identifying classroom objects; the grade 2 student book on similar theme ‘classroom Objects’ (Unit 1) also encompass similar contents to enable students to identify and locate some classroom objects and to exchange greetings. The grades 3 and 4 English textbooks also encompass contents on similar themes ‘At School’ and ‘My School’. The contents of grade 1 student book under the themes ‘Parts of the Body’ (Unit 2), ‘What is it called in English?’ (Unit 3), ‘Colours’ (Unit 4), ‘Counting’(Unit 5) are repeated in the contents of grade 2 student book under similar themes ‘How Many Books’ (Unit 2), ‘What Colour is your Bag?’ (Unit 3), ‘Parts of the Body’ (Unit 4). The grades 3 and 4 student books are also organized on similar themes such as ‘Let’s Wash Our Hands’ (Unit 4) and Let’s Keep Fit’ (Unit 4), respectively, talks mainly about body parts. The contents such as ‘duster, pen, table, sticks’ as well as ‘counting numbers and objects’ under the themes ‘Greetings’ and ‘Counting’ in grade 1 are reused under the theme ‘How Many Books’ such as ‘pen, pencils, books, sticks and counting them one to twenty’ to make various sentences-‘what is on the table?’ ‘The book is under the table’. This then indicates that the reviewed student books are also organized recycling some of the themes and the contents across grade levels. The number of words included in each unit and grade level varies: each unit in grade 1 student book encompass on average 23.07 vocabularies while each unit in grade two student book contain 46.86 vocabularies. The total number of vocabularies in grades one and two student books are 346 (36, 33, 27, 35, 33, 27, 13, 8, 42, 28, 33, 40, 21, 29 and 32) and 656 (33, 26, 44, 34, 62, 59, 62, 75, 19, 105, 34, 54, 37 and

The sampled information above thus entail that the contents around which children’s English language is cultivated are organized in thematic format and in cyclical sequence both within and across each grade level student book. Children’s motivation to working on activities centered on same theme can be maintained and children’s natural tendency to forget and to work with
interest are also addressed as the activities suggested are short and varied and the contents are recycled. These indicate that the organizations of the contents of the reviewed student books consider students’ developmental characteristics.

The sampled extracts above and the activity types appended also indicate that the reviewed teacher’s guides and student books encompass functional and notional, linguistic content, and educational contents under the chosen themes. In relation to functions and notions, the contents in the reviewed guides and student books accommodate greetings, polite remarks and requests, how to ask questions and how to respond to questions raised, describing people, animals and things, talking about weather, time and places, number, colour, comparison, ability, and possession and others. The vocabulary contents related to English names of objects, animals, cloths or body parts, adjectives of colour, size etc. or action words like show/touch/walk/jump are relatively richer and are presented, for example, accompanied with concrete objects, pictures, actions and gestures and building on the known words.

In addition to being a model for their accent in English, teachers are also suggested to give explicit instruction on pronunciation focusing on pronunciation contents such as pronouncing final-s/-es sound, contracted forms, syllable, word stress, falling and rising intonation, comparing English letter sounds with Amharic letter sounds, identifying the beginning and ending letter, reading aloud, sounds of various words. The grammar contents comprises of imperatives, verb forms such as ‘am, is, are, or have/has, personal pronouns, time and place prepositions, singular/plural nouns, demonstrative adjectives such as this/that/these/those, simple present, present continuous, and their question and negative forms, wh-questions’. Most of the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation contents are integrated with the practice of the four language skills reinforcing children’s skills of communication without being treated in isolation in line with the principles of the constructive/communicative approach and children’s levels of cognitive development.

Children are introduced to the English names of classroom objects such as door/bag/window using teacher’s clarifications, pictures and concrete objects and to function words like touch/show through actions and simple contextualized sentences. Afterwards, children are required to carry out the activities in pairs by changing the names of objects and by taking turns:
**St1**: Touch/Show me the window/door/bag.

**St 2**: This is the window/door/bag (acting out the order by touching the called out object)

**St1**: Who is a student with red shirt, brown headband and black skirt?

**St2**: Genet is with red shirt, brown headband and black skirt.

The vocabularies (like bag/shirt/show), structures (such as the pronouns and the imperatives) Show me...’, Touch your... This is... are thus dealt in a contextualized and meaningful ways.

In addition, activities in Lessons One, Two and Three of Unit 6 of grade 1 textbook introduce pupils to the different forms of the verb have so as to enable pupils understand and use the verb have when used with the pronouns I/s/he/they:

**Lesson One** (Unit 6)

**Focus**: Listening, Speaking

Explain to students that they will learn to use the verb have in different forms in order to show what people possess. Pick up a pencil. Hold it up for the class to see and ask students what the name of the object is that you are holding. Ask a student to tell you the name of what you are holding.

Tell students to listen to the sentence. Say:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have a pencil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask students to pick up their pencils and repeat together out loud:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have a pencil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walk around the classroom. Ask individual students to stand up and repeat their sentence while holding the pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After students repeat the sentence, give the pencil to a student and tell students to listen to the sentence. Point to the student and say:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You have a pencil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ask students to work in pairs. One student will say:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I have a pencil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The other student will say:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You have a pencil.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeat this several times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write the word have on the chalk board. Explain that this is what the word have looks like in writing. Hold up a book. Ask students:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| What is the name of the object? |
Say:

I have a book.

Ask individual students to answer. Say:

Pick up your book. What do you have?

Ask students to answer by saying:

I have a book.

Walk around the room. Ask individual students to repeat the sentence while holding a book. Give the book to a student and tell him/her to listen to the sentence. Say:

You have a book.

Take the book back and ask:

What do I have?

Students will answer:

You have a book.

Ask students to repeat several times.

Ask students to work with a partner. One student will say:

I have a book.

The other student will say:

You have a book.

Repeat this several times.

Hold up a pencil and a book. Ask students to name the objects you are holding. Say:

I have a pencil and a book.

Ask students to:

Pick up your pencil and book.

Ask them to repeat together:

I have a pencil and a book.

Walk around the room. Ask individual students to repeat the sentence while holding a pencil and a book. After students repeat the sentence, give the pencil and the book to a student and tell the class to listen to the sentence. Say:

You have a pencil and a book.

Ask the class to repeat this sentence several times.

Ask students to work pairs. One student will say:

I have a pencil and a book.

The other student will say:

You have a pencil and a book.

Repeat this several times.

Similar instructional procedures are suggested for pen and a bag.

Lesson Two also follows similar instructional procedures to help students understand the different forms of have and use them with the pronouns she and he but this time the activities grow to include compound sentences such as ‘I have a pencil, and she has a pencil’, ‘I have a pencil, and he has two pencils’. Lesson Three introduces pupils to different objects that they can
play with such as **ball, rope, stone** and then enquire students to use the different forms of the verb **have** to playing a ‘guessing game’:

**I am thinking of an object that you could use when you play.**

*Tell students to listen as you say three sentences describing the object.*

**It is round. It bounces. It is red.**

*Use gestures for the word bounces so students know its meaning. Ask students the question:*

**What do I have. It is ___. It ___. It ___.**

*Ask students to guess what it is by saying:*

**You have a ___.**

*When they have given the correct answer, ask students to say together out loud:*

**She/He has a ___.**

Students are then expected to follow suit to describe the object/s they play with for other students to guess and then practice the use of the different forms of the verb **have** in a meaningful way. Students are then required to model the teacher and few volunteer students to carry out similar activities in groups which also witness that the grammars included in the textbooks are treated in a classroom context rather than in isolation which consider children’s levels of cognitive development.

To further witness that most of the language forms are treated in a meaningful way, one can refer to sections 6.2.3.2 and 6.2.3.3 above for the language forms such as the prepositions in Lesson One of Unit 1, grade 2 student book, the pronouns **my/your, girl/boy and she/he**, demonstrative adjectives **this/these** and **plural and singular** nouns of Lessons Two and Three of Unit 2 and Lesson Four of Unit Three, grade 1. Similar procedures are also used in the grades 3 and 4 textbooks.

The prepositions (Activity 2 of Lesson three, Unit 1) in grade 4 student books are also recycled and presented in established classroom contexts integrated with the four skills.

**Directions:** Study the picture. Copy the sentences into your exercise book. Fill in the gaps with the names of the objects in the picture.
1. The _____ is on the desk.
2. The _____ is under the table.
3. The _____ is near the door.
4. The _____ is in front of the book.
5. The _____ is behind the boy.
6. The _____ is between the teacher and the door.
7. The _____ is on the wall opposite the chalkboard.

Teachers, however, are advised sometimes to make explicit teaching without spending long time to help students be conscious for their accuracy in using the language. For example, teachers are advised to clarify the language items such as ‘plural/singular nouns’, ‘she/he’, and ‘this /these /that’ without spending much time and then to go to demonstrate their use through constructing meaningful sentences. When teaching the pronouns she/he (Lesson Three of unit 3 of grade 1), teachers are advised to introduce first the words boy, girl and teacher using classroom pupils and the teacher himself/herself and by drawing pictures beside each word. The teacher then says pointing to the girl in class,

*T: This is Almaz. SHE is a girl.*

Again pointing to a boy, the teacher says: *This is Abebe. HE is a boy.*
In addition, Lesson Two of Unit 7 of grade 2 seem to suggest teachers to give direct explanation of the language forms to enable students understand the names of the food items and distinguish between plural and singular forms of nouns:

*Review singular and plural nouns with students. Ask individual students to name some foods. Write these names on the chalk board in the singular form. Point to the singular nouns that individual students named and you wrote on the chalkboard. Say them together out loud. Remind students that when we want to talk about more than one, we usually add an -s to the word.*

**When we want more than one, we usually add –s or –es to the end of the word. Some words do not add -s or –es, e.g. fish, meat, bread, water.**

**Drinks do not normally add –s, e.g. tea, coffee, milk.**

Then write the plural form next to the singular form of each word on the chalkboard. Point to each word and tell students to say together out loud the singular and plural forms of the words.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One</th>
<th>More Than One</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one apple</td>
<td>Two apples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One bean</td>
<td>Fifteen beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One cabbage/carrot/egg/potato</td>
<td>Ten cabbages/carrots/eggs/potatoes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students are subsequently required to choose a picture of something to eat in Lesson Two of their student book to construct sentences with their singular and then plural form of the words to assist students use the singular/plural forms in a meaningful ways using the following sentence patterns: *This is ___.(an apple, for example). We can eat ____-s/es. (apples).* Students are further required to categorize the food items into things we eat and drink as well as into food from animals and from plants which can also help students to understand the names of the food items and then their singular and plural form. These imply that most of the language forms treated in the grades 1-4 textbooks are presented integrated with the major skills with little explicit instructions to reinforce children’s accuracy of the language. The textbook thus put emphasis on fluency (flow of ideas) with minor focus on the accuracy of the grammatical forms. These also indicate that the grammars focused seemed to be selected and sequenced based on what the particular activities demand which could mean then that the grammars are structured in line with
students’ cognitive complexity. Grammar items can be selected and sequenced via the needs of the tasks/activities (Williams, 1995).

However, insignificant number of un-contextualized activities such as Lesson Four, Unit 6 of grade 1, as depicted beneath, are also included pursuing the above meaningful and contextualized practice activities for students to practice answering isolated grammar questions:

Ask individual students whether the verbs, has or have, fit in each of the following sentences. After one student answers, ask the class to repeat the sentence together out loud with the correct answer.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I ___ a stick. (have)</td>
<td>7. You ___ a goat. (have)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She ___ a bag. (has)</td>
<td>8. I ___ a rope. (have)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. He ___ a bucket. (has)</td>
<td>9. She ___ a pen. (has)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, the grades 3 and 4 student books also enquire students to fill in some or any (Activity 3 of Lesson Eight, Unit 2) and the given pronouns (I them he us me him) (Activity 1 of Lesson Four, Unit 2) into isolated sentences without building any context:

Copy the sentences into your exercise book. Fill in the gaps with the word some or any.

1. Do you have _____ eggs?
   Sorry. I don’t have _____ eggs today.
2. I’d like _____ bananas, please.
   How many?
   I’d like one kilo, please.
3. I’m hungry. Please give me _____ bread and _____ tea.

In your exercise book fill in the gap with the correct pronoun from the Word Bank.

1. Salfore is tall. _____ am tall like _____.
2. Hanfato is tall. _____ is also thin.
3. I am heavy. She is heavy like _____.
4. They are short. I am not short like _____.
5. We are fat. He is fat like _____.

In line with the suggestions in the grades 1-4 English syllabus, the textbook authors include few isolated grammar questions to prepare students with the national examinations. This implies that most of the activities that deal with structures are presented in contexts without separately
dealing them heeding children’s level of cognitive capacities and natural tendencies to use language without analyzing it (Brumfit, 1995; Cameron, 2001; Balbi, 2008) and such inclusion of isolated sentences could be the washback effect of the grades eight, ten and twelve national examinations which are all multiple choice items.

The results of the analyses of the contents encompassed in the student books in sections 6.2.3.1 and 6.2.3.4 above demonstrate that the grades 1-4 student books include songs and games that are communicative to help students to use the language in context.

The reviewed student books comprise songs such as Good Morning Song, Goodbye Song, The ‘Alphabet Song’, ‘Number Song’, ‘Classroom Objects’, ‘Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes’, ‘Hokey-Pokey’, ‘Colours’, ‘Ten Little Donkeys’, ‘If you are Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands’, Little Elephants Song, The Contraction Song, The Birthday Song, Food Chant, Rainbow Song, Ways to Say Goodbye, and Glad to See You that are accompanied with physical movements to make students learning fun and enjoyable.

**If You’re Happy and You Know It** (Lesson Six of Unit 1 of grade 2)

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, stand near a friend.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, stand near a friend.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, and you really want to show it,

If you’re happy and you know it, stand near a friend.

(Clap twice)

If you’re happy and you know it, sit on your chair.

(Stamp feet twice)

Repeat as in verse one

If you’re happy and you know it, sit on your chair.

(Wave twice)

Repeat as in verse one

If you’re happy and you know it, shout ‘I am!’

(Shout the words I am one time)

Repeat as in verse one
**House Song** (Lesson Four of Unit 10)

In my house there is a door.  
I go in. I go out  
(Mime opening or walking through a door.)  
In my house there is a door.  
Come in, please.

In my house there are windows.  
I look in. I look out.  
(Mime looking left and right.)  
In my house there are windows.  
I see you.

In my house there is a bathroom.  
I can wash. I use a bowl.  
(Mime washing and drying your hands.)  
In my house there is a bathroom.  
There is soap here.

In my house there is a kitchen.  
I can cook. I can eat.  
(Mime cooking and eating.)  
In my house there is a kitchen.  
There is food here.

In my house there is a bedroom.  
I dress there. I sleep there.  
(Mime getting dressed and sleeping.)  
In my house there is a bedroom.  
My bed is there.

In my house my family lives.  
Here we work. Here we play.  
(Mime holding hands.)  
In my house my family lives.  
All together.

**Number Song** (Lesson Three of Unit 5 of grade 1)

One, two, Three, Four, Five  
Once I caught a fish alive  
Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten

Then I put it back again.

Some of the songs such as *Good Morning*, and *Goodbye songs*, *Alphabet Song* and *Number Song* are shorter containing few simple sentences, while songs like ‘*Hokey-Pokey*’, ‘*If You are Happy and You Know It*’, ‘*School Days*’, ‘*House Song*’, and ‘*Old Yakob had a Farm*’ appear longer and contain simple, compound and complex sentences. The song *If You are Happy and You Know it*,
... (see the sample above) could present structural difficulties to students, but most of the songs such as *Number Song*, *House songs*, *School days* are simple in structure and vocabulary used. These imply that most of the shorter and longer songs are manageable for the age-groups to remember, comprehend and sing as their contents use simple sentence structures and vocabulary and many repetitive words/phrases and are sung accompanied with actions. (See also section.6.2.3.1 above for other song texts). The suggested methods also encourage students to frequently repeat and practice the song contents with their teacher before they are required to sing by themselves. Most of the songs are also found in various young learners’ course books that could witness their suitability to the target groups (Kirkgoz, 2006). These indicate that most of the songs included in the first-cycle English student books are suitable and appropriate to the target groups to practice the desired words and/or language patterns as they involve repetitive contents and actions for students to transfer meaning.

Games are activities with rules and clearly defined goals for students or players to follow and work towards practicing the targeted language and thus students compete or cooperate to play and win the game adhering to the rules set to practicing the language in focus (Khan, 1995). To depict whether and to what extent the games and riddles comprised in the reviewed student books are competitive and/or cooperative, the common procedures suggested to play the games and the riddles were analyzed and sample extracts are attached herewith.

Lesson Ten of Unit 12 of grade 1 and Lesson Nine of Unit 3 of grade 2 student books enquire children to play a team game after having students understand the rules and practice the preset languages to play the game individually:

*Play a team game. Team A tells a student from Team B to draw something on the chalkboard. Team B gets a point if the student draws correctly. To control the activity, the teacher can have picture cards, and Team A picks a card and tells a student from Team B what to draw. The teacher awards a point to Team A for the correct command and a point to Team B for drawing the correct object.* (Lesson Ten of Unit 12 of grade 1)

*Divide the class into two groups. Pass out one set of colour cards to each group. Play a team game. Tell students that when you call out a colour, they should race to give you the card.* The
team which gives you the card first wins a point. The team with the most points gets to enter the classroom first. (Lesson Nine of Unit 3 of grade 2)

These imply that such games require children to cooperate in their respective groups to win the games as there are no individual winners in the game.

From among the competitive games embodied in the reviewed student books, sounds game and Simon Says game can demonstrate their presence in the student books and their contribution to ELT to the target group.

Lesson Six of Unit 9 of grade 1 presents sound game to enable students identify letter sounds and recognize the initial sounds for letter c by providing them first various words which begin with the letter c such as cat and then enquire students to play sounds game:

Play the Sounds game. Explain in mother tongue that when students hear a word beginning with the ke (Amharic) sound, they should stand up and repeat the word. Read the words slowly:

| fish | dog | cow | cat | head | can | mother | car | come | move | crocodile |

Students will stand up or stay standing when they hear the ke sound and repeat together out loud the word with the ke sound that was just said. They will sit down or stay seated if they do not hear the sound.

In enhancing students understanding of the English names of body parts, Lesson Six of Unit 2 of grade 1 enquire students to play a Simon Says game focusing on individual performances:

Play the game Simon Says. Explain to students that they must do what you say if you say “Simon says” before the command to touch a body part. Example:

Simon says, “Touch your nose.”

All students must touch their nose. Next say:

Touch your hair.

Tell students that no one should touch their hair because you did not say, “Simon says.”

Tell students to touch the different body parts. Sometimes you will say, “Simon says.” Sometimes you will NOT say, “Simon says”. Students will stand up for this game. If a student touches body part when you have NOT said “Simon says,” she/he must sit down. The winners are the students who are still standing when you stop the game.
The Sounds Game thus provide students various opportunities to frequently listen to various words to identify and say the word/s with the specified letters and sounds (letter c and ke-sound) to win the games which give students a good practice to develop students’ receptive and productive skills. Students’ natural desire to win the game also encourages them to stay in the game practicing the languages. The extract for the later game also show that the rule enquire game leaders to give instructions using ‘Simon says’ and vocabularies of body parts and players to listen to the instructions and respond accordingly which can give students opportunities to listen to and use the language. Besides, the riddle (Activity 1 of Lesson 6, Unit 1) in grade 4 student book enquire students to read the riddles and write their answers before playing with their partners through asking and answering the riddles which encourage students to read, write, listen and speak the language while competing among each other to win the game.

Students desire to play and win can make pupils stay motivated in the game using the English language. This implies that games are activities embodied in student books to encourage YLs to use the language while attempting to understand the rules and to communicate among each other in order to compete or cooperate.

What is in my Bag?, Yes/No game, Memory Game, Simon says game, and I Spy game, Sounds game, Odd One Out game, number and letter Bingo and the riddles such as Listen and Guess the Animal, What is in the Box?, What am I?, Donkey, Donkey, goat appear to be competitive due to the individual effort each emphasize, while cooperative games such as ‘team games’, ‘mingle game’, ‘clapping game’, ‘Memory Game’ are where groups effort are valued.

These show that the games and riddles the reviewed textbooks embody for children to play with to English learning seem to be both competitive and cooperative. A game is played when one or more student players engage in competition or cooperation for pay offs according to a given set of rules (Khan, 1995). Children’s interests to work individually and/or cooperatively interacting with others are thus addressed. Besides, the inclusion of such playful cooperative and competitive games can foster children’s motivation and ensure learning as the amount of time children spend working on the language input can increase (Khan, 1995; Tongue, 1995; Moon, 2005). Children learn new English words or phrases mainly incidentally through allowing them to play and to interact using the new languages with teachers and their partners (Shin, n.d.; Driscoll, 1999; Cameron, 2001). The fact that the songs, the games and the riddles involve
repetitions, competitions and actions can provide YLs fun and interest to get involved and use the target language; and YLs often find it worth learning language in order to play a new game (Khan, 1995; Rixon, 1995).

These show that the themes up on which language contents are chosen and the thematic format and the cyclical sequences used to present the contents as well as the activity types wrapped under these contents seem to respect students’ background and interest and appear to be parallel to the overall aims of the EFL teaching-improving student’s oral communications.

The results of the analysis of the contents of the grades 1-4 English textbooks under the category Approach (section 6.2.4) thus indicate that the topics chosen are desirous for the target groups, grammar is treated in context with few explicit grammar teaching, activities encourage students to understand, drill and then meaningfully use the language, most of the activities embodied present the four skills in an integrated form, teachers are suggested to use classroom English with minimum L1 though textbook authors actually suggest teachers to use L1 frequently for different purposes such as to inform some vocabularies, clarify stories, give instructions, and teachers are also suggested to encourage students to use the language to exchanging information. These show that the assumptions and principles underpinning the CLT approach as defined by Harmer (2001) in a communicative continuum (between strong and weak communicative activity types) are also reflected in the tasks and activities embodied in the grades 1-4 English student books. What is more, the embodiment of interesting topics and playful activities, recycling of contents and activities, varied and fragmented activities that focus on here and now situations, use of TPR activities, games, songs, chants, poems, riddles, and stories accompanied with pictures, use of movements, gestures to help students understand the new words and practice them in context, students involvement in group/pair work, and similar others show the use of the principles recommended in the constructive approach to teaching EFL to young learners. These could make the approach employed to present the contents and the activities embodied in the textbooks are mainly age-appropriate to promoting students English language acquisition. However, the suggestions given for teachers to use Amharic or L1 in different places while delivering the textbooks could minimize teachers’ use of classroom English language; These show that the approach employed are ‘weak communicative’ mingled with aspects suggested in the constructive approach to teaching FL to young learners.
Proponents of primary EFL teaching suggests that students learn most effectively when they are involved and they are involved when they are interested and thus the use of activities and contents that are enjoyable and appropriate to their cognitive development are crucial (Gardner, 1993; Cameron, 2001; Moon, 2005).

Even though there are no direct answer to set down as the best way to teach EFL in primary classrooms, contents and activities that features the SLA researches to EFL teaching and the constructive approach to second language development or main stream primary practice model can exert great influence to enhancing young students language acquisitions (Brumfit, 1995; Brewster 1995; Balbi, 2008).

6.2.4 Treatment of the four skills

The reviewed guides suggest teachers the methods they should follow to presenting the lessons embodied in the textbooks and the skills they should focus on while presenting the lessons. The skills suggested to be focused on are given at the beginning of most of the lessons in the teacher’s guides classifying them into listening, speaking, pre-reading, pre-writing, reading, and writing. The skills focused in grade 1 student book includes the pre-reading and pre-writing skills to also prepare students for true reading and writing skills, while the skills in grades 2-4 student books mainly focus on cultivating the four main skills. The pre-reading and –writing skills which are also called emergent literacy skills are the reading/writing behaviours that YLs should develop before involving them in true reading and writing activities (Grant, 2001; Westwood, 2001; Cameron, 2001). These include the training of basic skills of marks on books (prints) such as understanding print on the page conveys meaning to those who can ‘read’ and that ‘readers’ can convert this print into spoken language, understanding where a reader begins to read a story and processes the print from left to right across and down the page while reading a story(Grant, 2001;Westwood, 2001). This also includes how to handle implements and form letters and pictures so as to develop children’s skills of writing.

Among the activities included in grade 1 English textbooks, 19.61 percent is apportioned to listening comprehension while 8.44 percent to speaking activities. Other activities devoted to both speaking and listening skills (such as Listen and repeat, Listen and sing a song, or Listen and answer) make up 29.69 percent. However, activities that treat both reading and writing
comprise 42.11 percent. Therefore, 57.89 percent of activities in grade one English textbook are devoted to improving students’ listening and speaking skills which imply that much of classroom time is allocated to cultivate children’s oral communications. From 1215 activities encompassed in grade 2 English textbook to improve children’s communication skills in the English language, 61.40 percent (40.58 percent to listening-235L + 258L/S-and 42.06 percent to speaking-253S + 258L/S) is devoted to practice the listening and speaking skills, while the reading and writing activities encompass the rest, 38.60 percent. This implies that, akin to grade 1 textbook, grade 2 textbook put more emphasis on developing pupils listening and speaking skills. The above data thus witness that the grades 1 and 2 reviewed guides and textbooks put more emphasis on enhancing students’ oral and aural skills.

From 1141 activities embodied in grade 3 student book, most of the activities (30.15 percent) is devoted to reading, while listening (23.31 percent), speaking (19.19 percent) and writing (18.58 percent) activities takes the others share. From 1026 activities treated in grade 4 student book, students are encouraged to mostly engage to reading (33.43 percent) and writing (28.17 percent) activities, when compared to the amount of time they are required to spend to doing listening (22.22 percent) and speaking (16.18 percent) activities. Unlike what are suggested in the syllabus and teacher’s guides, the grades 3 and 4 student books demand students to dedicate most of their time doing reading and listening and reading and writing skills, respectively.

The analysis in section 6.2.3.4 above show that the reviewed textbooks employ controlled and free practice activities that demand children to engage in listening and talking ranging from practicing specific words/phrases and sentence patterns to freely use the language. The procedures suggested in the teacher’s guides and student books demand teachers to directly teach words, phrases and sentences and make frequent clarifications and demonstrations of a particular language items that can convey specific information to students. The procedures suggested further enquire teachers to sing songs/chants/rhymes accompanying them with actions, to explain game rules, to read aloud stories or to interact with students and to allow students to interact with their peers that can give students various chances to cultivate students’ listening skills. Besides, the grades 1-4 textbooks engage students in various listening comprehension activities such as ‘listen’, ‘listen and act’, ‘listen and snap’, ‘listen and point’, ‘listen and mime’, ‘listen and draw’, ‘listen and read at the same time’, ‘listen and write the answer’, ‘listen and match the sentences’
(see section 6.2.3.4 and 6.2.3.3 above and Appendix G for details). These imply that the reviewed textbooks employ various listening activities to provide students with sufficient comprehensible inputs that are crucial to improve children’s English auditory and print skills.

Activities suggested in the first units of grade 1 teacher’s guides such as ‘look the mimes and tell’, ‘look what is pointed and tell the object’, ‘study the picture and tell the possible story’ make a focus on classroom objects or body parts or cloths or their locations and/or numbers for students to practice the speaking skills. The first activity in Lesson Seven of unit 7 enquire students to make self-introductions, and the comprehension activities after listening/reading the story Families enquire students to interact through comparing themselves with the characters in the story and to retell the story to the class. Besides, ‘make a survey and report’, ‘make a list of classroom objects and compare each other’s answers’, ‘write five sentences about what you see in the picture and share your answers with your partners’ also enquire students to interact and to reflect in various degrees. Such activity types integrate all the four skills for children to practice emphasizing speaking and listening. The activity types which focus on the teaching of the two skills (listening and speaking) include ‘listen and sing a song’, ‘listen and repeat’, ‘listen and play game’, ‘listen and act out’, ‘listen and retell’, ‘listen and say the rhyme’, ‘listen and say the chant’. The procedures suggested in the teacher’s guides and the activities embodied in student books enquire students to engage in reflection and in talking with their teachers and with their peers to exchange various information. The various activity types drawn thus proved that the reviewed textbooks employ activities that encourage students both to make self-expressions and to make interactions orally. (See Appendix G for details).

Students, in Lesson Two of Unit 4 of grade 1 student book, are introduced to the English letters while at the same time they are working to improving their listening and speaking skills which can then witness how skills are presented in an integrated form:

**LESSON TWO (Unit 4)**

**Focus:** Listening, Speaking

*Use the colour flash cards to review the colours red, blue, and yellow. Ask students to play the game *I Spy* with a partner to find objects that are red, blue, and yellow.*
The letter c

Write c on the chalkboard and say:

This is the letter c.
As you write this letter on the chalkboard, say:
Round to the left.
Face the chalkboard and demonstrate how to write this letter in the air, using big movements. As you write the letter say:
This is the letter c—round to the left.
Ask students to stand up. Tell them to write the letter c in the air with you. Say the name of the letter and say the direction of the movement as you show how to write it.
This is the letter c—round to the left.
Ask students to show a partner how to make the letter c in the air again. As they make the letter, have them say:
This is the letter c—round to the left
Then tell students to use two fingers to form the letter c on the top of their desks while saying the name of the letter. Tell students to trace with their fingers the letter in Lesson Two in their student book.
This is the letter c—round to the left.
Tell students to write the letter several times in the air

Write the following letters which are in the student book on the chalkboard:

| e | c | A | n | C | t | c | c | i | O | c | r |

Ask individual students in English to stand up and come to the chalkboard. Then ask those students to:

Point to the letter c
Each student must point to each letter c and say:
This is the letter c
Do the same activity with a partner using the letters in the student book. (Spor et al., 2008, p.51)
The above suggested instructional procedures evidence that while students are introduced to the reading and writing of the letters c, they are also introduced to and made to practice various words and sentence patterns orally.

*This is the letter c-round to the left. This is the letter d-round, up and down.*

Similarly, Lessons Four, Six, Eight, and Nine of Unit 1 of grade 1 (see section 6.2.3.3 above) encompass English letter related activities such as listen, listen and repeat the called out letters, listen and point, name pointing to the letters, mime the letters in the air that enquire children to practice writing, naming and identifying the English letters as a basis to developing students reading and writing skills through integrating them with their listening and speaking skills.

The next activities also enquire students to write, identify and read the English letters.

**LESSON NINE**

Focus: Listening, speaking, pre-reading, pre-writing

*Review all letters learned: a, c, d, e, f, h, l, n, o, r, s, t*

*Explain that some letters are tall, and other letters are short. Write each of the letters listed above on the chalkboard. Tell students that they will look at the letters to think about how they are the same and how they are different. Tell students to think about whether the letters are tall or short.*

**The letter a and the letter o are the same. They are both short.**

*Ask students to:*

**Talk with a partner how other letters are short.**

*Ask individual students to share which letters are short. Ask students to:*

**Talk with a partner about the letters that are tall.**

*Ask individual students to share which letters are tall. On the chalkboard make a large t-chart. Ask students to tell you:*

**Which letters are short and which letters are tall?**

*As they say the letters, write them on the t-chart. Example:*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short letters</th>
<th>Tall letters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a, c, e, i, n, o, r, s</td>
<td>d, f, h, l, t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Point to each letter and ask students to say each letter together out loud and tell whether the letter is short or tall.

Ask students which letter there are more of, short or tall, in the box. Students will say:

There are more ____ letters in box.

Explain that we can make patterns with lines. On the chalkboard make short and long slanted lines in two directions. Describe them as you write them (short slanted line, long slanted line). Ask students to draw these lines in their exercise book.

To help students identify the names and practice writing the shapes, the activities encourage students to see the letters on flash cards, students book and on the blackboard, mime writing the letters in the air, on their desk and on each other’s back, feel and visualize the letters in their mind while others write on their back, and listen to and see the teacher saying the shapes aloud while at the same time writing them on the blackboard. These imply that the various activities the textbook employs demand students to listen, write, feel, and see the English letters. Such multi-sensory experience of the letters is vital to enhance children’s early reading and writing skills (Cameron, 2001; Westwood, 2001).

The above extracts thus show that various activities presented to teaching reading and writing of the English letters are also used to enhance students oral skills as students are required to construct different sentences orally based on structure of the letters: ‘the letters a, o, c are short letters and the letters l, d, t are tall letters’ or ‘there are more short letters in the box’ or ‘there are less tall letters in the box’. Learners practice writing and reading of the letters through frequently miming and naming them and students listening and speaking skills are also cultivated using the letter shapes as objects to talk about. These indicate that the activities also encourage students to identify the shapes of the letters through helping them compare the length of each stroke relative to others in the letters, and the roundness or straightness of the shapes of the letters. Studying letters in groups can help students to easily remember their shape when reading or writing words and/or texts which is vital to build up students reading and writing skills (Westwood, 2001; Cameron, 2001). The procedures suggested to introduce English letters thus include direct instruction, and through building contexts capitalising on their shapes. Identical teaching
procedures are suggested in the teacher’s guide to presenting the remaining English letters. (See also the extracts in section 6.2.3.3 above). The alphabet songs are also employed to cultivate students reading and writing of the letters in a more appealing way. Written letters have names, shapes and sounds and thus learning the alphabet names a/A, b/B, c/C …is frequently a key part of teaching reading though not as vital as learning how letters are used to represent sounds (Westwood, 2001). Knowing alphabet names and their order can also assist YLs to understand the English writing system and in using dictionaries later on.

These indicate that students are given chances to practicing their listening and speaking skills while at the same time they are building on their letter naming and identification skills. This may then witness that the earlier textbooks employ activities that integrate the four skills putting emphasis on cultivating students’ oral skills.

After equipping students with the letter naming, writing and identifications, the reviewed textbooks, beginning from Unit 9 of grade 1, introduce students to the sounds that each of the English letters represents separately through associating them with their corresponding Amharic sounds. For example, Lessons Six presents letter c separately as it has a ke-Amharic sound, Lesson Seven presents d separately with de-Amharic sound, and Lesson Eight presents a with a-Amharic sound. Each of this activity is also followed by having students to listen and repeat words that begin with ke-, de- and a- sounds such as ‘cat, cow, can, dog, door, dance, ant, apple, am’ looking at the printed words in the student book (Lesson Six, Unit 9 of grade 1 student book).

The subsequent activities also demand children to apply this letter-sound knowledge in meaningful ways through listening and repeating various words focusing on their first and end sounds remembering the first letters and the sounds they correspond. The ensuing activities also demand students to categorise the given words based on their first and/or end sounds and to play ‘Sounds Game’ that demand students to listen to different words and ‘stand up’ or ‘clap’, for example, when they hear a word that begins with the specified sounds (such as ke-, de- and a-sounds) to consolidate students knowledge of letter-sound correspondence and to improve their spelling skills through segmenting the spoken words (Thogmartin, 1997; Westwood, 2001; Grant, 2001). The subsequent activities demand students to think and come up with words they remember that begins with the given letters. The activities thus first demand students to identify
the sounds each of the English letters represent by associating them with their corresponding Amharic sounds without any specific context; but the subsequent activities enquire children to apply this letter-sound knowledge to identify, for example, the initial letter, final letter sound from the common printed and then spoken words that are meaningful to children. Similar teaching procedures are followed to equip students with this phonemic skill for the rest of the letters. To further enhance students’ letter-sound correspondence knowledge, the grade 1 textbook also demand students to practice listening and reading texts that involve words in particular with those letters associated with /v/ as in Feven, /w/ in Weldu, Weinshet and Wendimu and /z/ in Zinash though each text consists of several phonemes.

Some of the activities that introduce students to the English letters and then to their corresponding sounds as indicated above are presented and practiced separately before students are required to apply this distinctly practiced knowledge to words they know (initial letter, final letter, for example) in a meaningful way. Similar activities could also teach students that words are made up of individual sounds (called phonemes) represented by letters (Thogmartin, 1997; Westwood, 2001; Grant, 2001).

The other activity types the reviewed textbooks employ to equip students with phonemic awareness through direct instruction include ‘name the English letters and say their corresponding sounds’, ‘name the objects in the picture and write the words in their alphabetical order’, ‘think of a word that begins with the called out letter and tell to the class’, ‘copy the letter chart matching the capital and the small letters’, ‘arrange the words in their alphabetical order and say them aloud’, ‘listen/read one and more syllable words and sort out as short and long’, ‘listen and raise your one finger if the stress is on the first syllable’, ‘two fingers if the stress is on the second syllable and three fingers if the third is stressed’, ‘listen the letter and say the animal word that begin with it’, ‘read the letters and say the sounds they represent to your partner’, ‘unscramble the scrambled letters to get words of the day and write them’, ‘copy the letter chart and write words that begin in each letter’, ‘listen and write’ (spelling test), ‘fill in the missed letters referring to words in the Word Bank’, ‘fill in the gapped words with their appropriate letters choosing from the Letter Bank and write them’, ‘match the pictures with the words that each represent and tell the beginning sounds of each word’. These show that the
reviewed textbooks employ synthetic and analytic phonic approach to enhance their word recognition and decoding skills.

The activity types such as ‘Listen to your teacher reading plural words and then write z if the ending sounds like /z/ and s if the ending sounds like /s/’, ‘ask your partner to spell 10 spelling words from units 1-6’, ‘write the-s and –es form of the verbs given’, ‘write three more funny sentences about family members making each word in the sentences begins with same sound’, ‘write list of verbs that end with –ing’, ‘write words that end in-s/-es or –ies’, for example, can also demonstrate that the later grade level textbooks employ activities that could help students to make analogies of the sounds of similar spelling patterns while reading new words (analogic phonic approach). However, words that have similar spelling patterns such as light, night, fight, or say, pay, day, ray that could enrich their sight vocabularies and that could help children to make analogies to read new words are not adequately included. This could reduce the quality of the reviewed textbooks. Such activity types are features of phonics work with a focus on selecting particular phonemes and associated graphemes and practicing recognizing these (Westwood, 2001; Christie, 2005). Westwood also writes that many studies conclusively note the importance of explicit instruction in the phonemes-letters link. Such aspects of phonemic skills students may develop through working the activity types in the three strategies are presumed to be vital by researchers for YLs’ reading development (Thogmartin, 1997; Westwood, 2001). Equipping students with blending phonemes to sound out words and segmenting a word into its separate components are vital phonological skills that can secure students reading progress (Westwood, 2001). They are vital to enhance students’ phonic decoding skills (Christie, 2005). These imply that the reviewed textbooks employ various types of letter-sound related activities through both isolating and integrating them with common words to equip students with word identification and decoding skills.

Proponents of phonics approach to the teaching of reading to children support the teaching of letter-sound correspondence in a meaningful way and argue that the teaching of phonics is essential as a foundation for all reading behavior (Thogmartin, 1997; Grant, 2001; Westwood, 2001; Christie, 2005).
The other activity types employed in the reviewed textbooks such as ‘listen/read rhyme songs’, ‘listen/read the stories/passage’, ‘read the “Days of the Month Rhyme” with your teacher and then write it in your exercise book’, ‘read the chant “Ethiopia Our Country” with your partner’, and various games, poems and songs that engage students holistically with the texts can enhance children’s phonological knowledge in addition to cultivating their oral and aural skills (Thogmartin, 1997; Westwood, 2001; Grant, 2001). Children phonemic awareness develops without direct instruction if they are made to engage in oral and aural classroom interactions and more particularly if they are made to listen to many stories or other texts, to listen to/repeat/read aloud a lot of songs, poems and rhymes and to play games (Thogmartin, 1997; Grant, 2001; Westwood, 2001). In countries where its use is mainly restricted in classrooms, the training needs additional direct instruction to help YLs learn the phonological features of the English language that could offset possible short comeings in EFL situations.

The analyses thus show that the textbooks employ tasks and activities that come under three developmental stages to enhance YLs’ word identification and thus their reading development. These include logographic, alphabetic and orthographic stages of development that underpin principles of the phonics approach (Westwood, 2001; Grant, 2001). That is, some of the activities demand students to remember whole-word through frequent exposure to their written form including in oral and aural activities, while others encourage students to identify the letter names, shapes, and their corresponding sounds and still others help students to attend and recognise various larger cluster of letter units that represent syllables, morphemes or pronounceable parts of words such as prefix, suffix, and roots (orthographic stage). Christie (2005) identifies similar stages dividing them into phonemic awareness, graphemic awareness and lexical analogy in the development of word identification. Many authorities (such as Westwood, 2001; Chrisie, 2005) agree that YLs practice of the latter stage is only possible after abundant practice and exposure to letter-word and texts.

In addition, Lessons One and Two of Unit 1 of grade 1 student book require children to listen to and repeat the English names of the classroom objects by pointing to their corresponding pictures and then to their labels to enable children recognize the whole words by associating them with the pictures and the sounds they symbolize. Lesson Ten of Unit 7 of grade 2 demand students to say words in the Shopping List aloud following their teacher, to copy the words into their
exercise books, and then to listen to and put a check mark next to the words they heard called out in the Shopping List. Besides, Lesson Two of Unit 4 of grade 2 student book enquires students to listen to and point to each word on the blackboard touching their body parts at same time. The grades 3 and 4 student books also demand students to read the stories while at same time listen to their teacher reading aloud. The other activity types such as ‘listen and point to the pictures with their labels’, ‘listen looking at the words’, ‘listen tracing the letters and words’ can encourage students to recognize the printed words by associating them with the sound and the concept they represent. This may depict that the reviewed textbooks also use meaningful activities that may enhance students’ sight vocabularies and spelling skills then their reading and writing skills.

Lesson One of Unit 1, grade 2 student book enquire students to remember the English names of the classroom objects such as ‘book’, ‘pencil’, ‘bag’, ‘duster’, ‘table’, ‘desk’ through question and answer methods using the sentence patterns they have previously learned:

T: What is this? What is that? (Pointing to an object)

S: It is a/an ___.

The teacher is further suggested to teach position words ‘near’ by placing the objects in different places around the room:

What is this? Where is the (duster)? The (duster) is (near) the door.

The next activity in Lesson Two further demands students to repeat aloud the English names of classroom objects following the teacher. Individual students are subsequently required to come to the front of the classroom and match the flash cards with the name of the objects to the real objects they represent holding up for other students to see. Such meaningful activity types also encourage students to identify English names of classroom objects orally by associating them with the printed words and the concepts they represent.

The next activity demands teachers to define position words or prepositions (words that tell where something can be found) and to teach students the use of the position words such as on, under, and in using classroom context.

On the chalkboard write the word on. Model by putting a duster on a desk. Say:
This is a duster. The duster is **on** a desk.

Where is the duster? Where is the duster? It’s **on** the desk.

Ask students to listen to you and then say:

**The duster is on** a desk.

*Repeat together out loud:*

**The duster is on** a desk.

This activity enquires students to practically understand the use of the preposition **on** by changing the objects for students to subsequently apply in classroom context. Teachers are required to write the word **on** on the black board saying it aloud for students to look at and to repeat it aloud. Such activity types focus on cultivating students’ oral skills which also familiarize students to the key printed word **on** by associating it with the sound and the concept it symbolizes. The teacher’s guide suggests identical teaching procedures to teaching the other prepositions ‘under’ and ‘in’. Students’ oral and printed skills are thus simultaneously addressed (whole language approach). These imply that the reviewed student books employ word recognition activities to cultivate students reading and writing skills while mainly students oral skills are addressed (whole language approach) (Cameron, 2001; Naggy and Balbi, 2008) in line with the emphasis the syllabus espouses.

The grade 2 teacher’s guide further suggests teachers to call students to come to the front of the classroom and pick up an object, name the object and place it **on** or **under** the table or **in** the bag and then to tell the class their locations using the preset sentence patterns by only choosing the preposition words to cultivating students oral skills: *This is a …. The book is ... the table. It’s ... the table.* Students are then required to work in pairs to frequently interact through asking and answering questions to oral practice the use of the position words by changing the locations of objects such as pen/pencils/book to ensure their future use.

After getting through these oral activities, students are further required to listen to/read their teacher reading the labels aloud and then to point to the picture that represents the sentence read out loud in the student book. (see Lessons Two and Three below). These imply that students are encouraged to use cues from the spoken words, the printed words and the picture to answer the questions (pointing to the right picture).
LESSON TWO

Directions: Tell the position of the duster.

The duster is on the desk  The duster is under the table  The duster is in the bag

LESSON THREE

Directions: Tell the position of the basket.

The basket is near the door  The basket is outside the house.

Such activities can cultivate students oral and reading skills in tandem as students are required to listen/read and understand the labels in Lessons Two and Three above and to point to the right picture. Unlike the procedures suggested in the teacher’s guide, the instruction given in the student book also demands students to tell the position of the objects in the pictures assisted by
the prompts in the pictures and their word recognition skills and letter-sound link knowledge to decode the information in the labels. Similar activities that involve the practice of the four skills such as ‘Read the story as you listen to your teacher; then, order the pictures and retell the story’; ‘listen/read the labels and match them with their pictures’ are also included in the grades 3 and 4 student books. These also show that students can apply their oral language skills, letter/sound link knowledge and skills, visual memory (word recognition) skills, and picture reading skills to answer the comprehension questions which also signal the link between students’ phonological skills and reading ability (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Nagy and Balbi, 2008). In relation to this, Westwood underscores that children’s level of phonological awareness is the key for success to beginning reading. Therefore, children’s understanding of the sound feature of the English language including that speech sounds are made up of a string of individual words, and that words are made up of one or more syllables, and that syllables are made up of units of sound are crucial to learn how to decode words (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Christie, 2005; Nagy and Balbi, 2008).

The types of pre-reading and reading activities used as a basis for improving pupils’ reading skills include ‘listen and repeat naming letters’, ‘listen and point to the letters’, ‘name the alphabet letters’, ‘listen and look at the pictures with their labels’, ‘listen and say the name of the beginning letters of each word as you point to it’, ‘read and do’, ‘match words with their pictures’, ‘listen and fill in the beginning letters of the words’, ‘listen and fill in the beginning and ending letters of the words’, ‘read and act’, ‘which letters begin which word’, ‘name the English letters and say their corresponding sounds’, ‘listen and repeat the word that does not have the specific sound in the words called out’, ‘listen tracing the words’, ‘listen to the conversations and mark the words you heard from the list you copied’, ‘read aloud’, ‘Read the story with a partner’, ‘copy the words and read them aloud to your partner’, ‘match the animal pictures with their corresponding word and tell the beginning sounds of the words’, ‘unscramble the scrambled letters and write the correct words’, ‘fill in the missing letters/words choosing from letter-/word-bank’, ‘fill in the gap sentences’. Students are also required to engage in silent reading when doing activities in the student books like ‘read words/phrases and draw their pictures’, or ‘read the words and match them with their pictures’, ‘read and do’, ‘read the story silently and then retell the story in groups’, ‘reread the story silently and find seven action words and write them in your exercise book and then read them aloud to a partner’.
The pre-reading activities that focus on letters and their sounds and word recognition activities and the focus made on oral/aural skills development can thus be a basis for students to work on the true reading activities such as ‘fill in the gap sentences’, ‘suggest what might happen next in the story’, ‘suggest what might happen in the story using the title/picture’, or ‘match the text to the picture it represents’, or ‘read the questions and mime the actions,’ ‘Read aloud with your teacher/groups,’ ‘complete the chart after listening/reading the story’. In reading students move on from reading and identifying English letters to their corresponding sounds and from seeing and tracing the shapes of letters and words to reading words and short sentences which are also vital to develop students’ writing skills. The sequences of the activities in grades 1 and 2 students books thus indicate that many of the practice activities focus on oral skills and reading and writing activities are extensions of listening and speaking activities; but in grades 3 and 4 student books most of the practice activities are extensions of storytelling/reading activities. These show that stories and passages in grades 3 and 4 gradually become the major contents for students to practice listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. However, without providing grade 1 students with sufficient listening and spoken activities, students, commencing from grade 2, are required to read instructions and do the activities.

The reading acquisition activities and the sequence pursued seem to be both against and in line with the guidelines authorities put forward to teach reading to beginners:

a. Provide true reading activities after learners develop some spoken knowledge so that reading can become comprehension rather than deciphering symbols.

b. Use phonic method beginning from the most common letters and whole language approach focusing on the most common words.

c. Teach students the most common sound of the letter as they are useful for reading purposes. (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Nagy, 2008; Nagy and Balbi, 2008).

The activities in the grade 1 student book introduce students to the English letters through sequencing the letters from the most to the least common stressing the common sounds of the letters (for example the letter c is introduced as it has the sound in cat) and then to capital letters, consonants and vowels, syllables in the subsequent grade levels (phonic method). Whole language approach is also used to cultivate students true reading skills in the grade 1-4 textbooks in line with the guideline. The minimum learning competencies grade 1 students are expected to
acquire as the grades 1-4 syllabus (MoE, 2009) notes focus on naming and saying the sounds of the letters, point to letters named, and read 25 sight words related to people, animals, objects and colours initial letters. The analysis of the reading acquisition activities embodied in the grade 1 teacher’s guides and student book indicate that they are mainly restricted to word recognition and to identifying and writing of the English alphabets. The analysis also evidenced that it is at the end of grade 1 student book, unit 9, that students are introduced to the sounds the English letters symbolize. It is in the middle of grade 2 (Unit 7, Lessons One to Six) that students are introduced to consonant and vowels, stress / unstress, and syllables crucial to cultivate students decoding skills. Among others, students’ phonological knowledge, their ability to identify individual sounds and syllables that make up words are crucial to reading (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Nagy, 2008). However, against the MLCs the document put forward after the completion of the grade 1 textbook, students are required to read printed instructions in grade 2 without sufficient phonemic and/or spoken knowledge/skills. These may then signal that the amount and types of reading acquisition activities students may experience in grade 1 are unlikely to support students to decode the information from the printed instructions given to the activities embodied in the grade 2 student book.

Textbook authors should use talk as the only medium at least for the first two years or ‘before students are nine years of age at the earliest’ and thus enquiring students to decode information from printed instructions to do the activities could lead them to frustrate and abandon their English language learning (Cameron, 2003). Therefore, the printed instructions given to activities embodied in grade 2 English student book can make more harms than benefits.

The pre-writing and writing activity types that encourage students to develop their skills of writing in grade 1 and 2 textbooks include ‘draw patterns similar to the English letters’, ‘write the English letters using your body’, ‘listen and mime the letters in the air or on the desk’, ‘look and guess the letters mimed in the air’, ‘name the written English letters’, ‘write the letters between two lines’, ‘listen and draw’, ‘copy and match capital and small English letters’, ‘copy the letters and words/sentences’, ‘write all small and capital letters’, ‘match the English letters with their corresponding sound in Amharic’, ‘draw a picture and label it’, ‘copy the days of the week into your exercise book’, ‘write the days of the week in their correct order with correct ordinal numbers’, ‘write the days of the week three times’, ‘fill in the missing words in sentences
from a variety of aural or visual cues’, ‘sort out the longer and shorter words’, ‘Underline the vowels in the words’, ‘tell the stressed part of a word’. The grades 3 and 4 student books also includes writing activities such as ‘Guess your weight and fill in the gap sentences with the correct words choosing from the Word Bank’, ‘Copy the form and fill in the information about yourself’, ‘Fill in the form with the information about your friend for others to guess who she/he is in class’, ‘read the dialogue and complete the chart’, ‘use the information in the chart to write answers for the given questions’, ‘write a paragraph of five sentences about how you keep fit and healthy at home following the main idea: *There are many ways I keep fit and healthy at home.*’, ‘choose five body part words and write sentences for each’, ‘summarize the story ‘The Rain Maker’ in group’ (see Appendix G for details). The activity types thus encourage students to produce spoken/written work for others to listen/read and to reply by answering questions, making drawing, filling in a chart, labeling a diagram, and then to checking each others’ works and so on which indicate purposeful language use. In school contexts where reading and writing are vital for students future educational career, most of the reading and writing activities should be purposeful for the YLs in a well structured fashion (Williams, 1995; Cameron, 2001).

These indicate that various pre-writing activities are sequentially employed to prepare students with the means of writing and to write the shapes of the letters and identify their sounds prior to demanding students to express their feeling with written words. In writing, they progress from naming/miming patterns and letters to handling writing implements and from drawing pictures and identifying letter sounds and copying letters and words or phrases to identifying consonants/vowels, stress/unstress words, syllables and writing letters, words, phrases and very short sentences on their own and to paragraph and letter writing on their own. Writing skills demand YLs fine motor skills to shape letters and orthographic knowledge to combine letters that represent words (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Nagy, 2008).

The writing acquisition activities thus seemed to be in line with the four steps (preparation-consolidation-differentiation-integration) suggested by Nagy (2008) (citing Kroll, 1981) to beginning young learners that are also in with the recommendations by Ur (1996) and Cameron (2001). The analysis show that the grade 1 teachers guide and student book employ various writing acquisition activities such as ‘handle writing implements and then drawing pictures’, ‘mime the letters in the air/desk’, ‘Identify the letters and their corresponding sounds’, ‘repeat
the words that begin with b/d sound’, ‘unscramble the scrambled letters’ to enable students properly handle writing materials, shape/write letters and understand their combinations (preparation). The different activities that require students to identify the spoken names of classroom objects simultaneously introduce students to their written words, for example, a duster/desk being illustrated through a picture but with the word written underneath, ‘listen and point to the picture and printed words’ (Consolidation). The other types of writing activities such as the use of capital letters/small letters, consonant/vowels or stress/unstress, syllables evidenced in the analysis also enquire students to make out the written words as distinct from the spoken words (Differentiation). The obtained data also evidenced that the reviewed student books employ writing activities such as ‘draw a picture and label it’, ‘fill in the gaps with words/sentences’, ‘Fill in the daily weather grids’, ‘read the dialogue and complete the chart’, ‘use the information in the chart to write answers for the given questions’ where students contribute individual words or sentences as well as select the correct word and copy the words/sentences that can provide students various opportunities to supply printed words/sentences of their own (Integration).

The analysis thus indicate that the reviewed student books employ phonics methods which rely on the teaching of the sounds that the letters of the alphabet and/or their combination represent and whole-language approach mainly on meaning to gradually cultivate students reading and writing skills. Several authorities (such as Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Gersten & Gevea, 2003; Nagy and Balbi, 2008) argue that beginning to read and write the FL involves learning an entire new set of written symbols. They then contend that cultivating students letter-naming and their corresponding sounds, word reading, oral reading fluency, and comprehension can predict students’ future reading skills.

The sole use of phonics method before 1980s and whole–language approach in the 1980s to the teaching of reading and writing skills to the young learners proved failure in many countries like England, but the present trend since early 1990s in many countries is towards the use of phonics combined with whole language and meaning focused approaches (Cameron, 2001; Nagy and Balbi, 2008). Therefore, the use of combination of phonics method and top-down and bottom-up approaches seem to be appropriate to introduce students to the new set of written symbols and to gradually develop students reading and writing skills.
6.2.5 Texts and topics

The contents of the listening and reading texts embodied in the grades 1-4 English student books centered around topics that include animals (such as The Goat, Mother Rat and Her Nest, Animals Can, Necho The Donkey, The Black Cat, The Flies and The Goat), school (such as My Teacher, People and Objects We Find at School, Almaz at School, The Lost Butterfly, Pupils in Classroom, Geleta’s Week), activities in community (such as Families, Where is Feyisa, The Lost Ball, Help Me!, A Farmer and His Garden, Yonas and the Animals) that the target groups are familiar with.

The story text The Lost Butterfly (Lesson Four of Unit 1, Grade 2) talks about a student who lost his butterfly and is sitting sad in classroom and who finally recovered the butterfly after searching different places in classroom, assisted by his friends. The stories titled Yonas and The Animals (Part I, II and III) also narrate about two boys who lost and then found one of the animals they were looking after in the country side. The story about the small rat (Lesson Two of Unit 9, grade 1) talks about the small hungry rat when asking different big animals for food, but that finally got the food in a narrow hole. The story The Baby Bird (Lesson Nine of Unit 10, grade 2 student book) narrates about scary encounters that the baby bird faces when she leaves out of her living nest disregarding her parent birds’ advice. The situations in these texts center around the lives and experiences of student’s age and the characters in the stories can also evoke students to empathize for the lost birds, hungry animals, for example, which can stimulate their desire to listen to, read and talk about the characters and their activities using the English language. YLs tend to categorize themselves with story characters and thus become personally involved in the plot (Mattheoudakis et al., 2007). The stories create senses of suspense by introducing problems and evils for students to make predictions in the forthcoming incidents until they reach to the resolution of the incidents and thus students are motivated to listen to/read many of the story texts (Cameron, 2001; Chang, n.d.).

The fable Ant and Grasshopper (Activity 2 of Lesson Ten of grade 3 student book) enquire students to associate themselves with the animal characters (the farsighted ant and the careless grasshopper) and tell each other which animal they want to be to teach students the moral ‘better prepared earlier than suffering tomorrow’. The story Mothers Rat and Her Nest (Lesson Nine of Unit 10, grade 1) talks about a mother rat that makes nest for her and her babies to live in
stress the objects she sits on and she uses to make nest, while *Animals Can* (Lesson Six of Unit 13, grade 1) talks about what different animals can do, the story riddle *What’s in The Box?* (Lesson Ten of Unit 10, grade 1) describes the animal in the box for students to guess, and *My Little Brother* (Lesson Five of Unit 12, grade 2) narrates about a boy who usually does funny things to entertain and motivate students to listen and read the story with interest. The contents of the stories *Geleta’s Week* (Lesson Six of Unit 6, grade 2) and *We Like Our School* (Lessons Six and Seven of Unit 9) (Part I and II) narrate about the different activities students of their age plan to do and do during week days and weekends in the school and in their homes and/or surroundings; and the contents of *Families* (Lesson Seven of Unit 7, grade 1) also evoke children to see the different family sizes and how kids of their age living in cities and country side help their families doing various jobs. Besides, stories such as *Help Me!* (Lesson Two of Unit 12, Grade 1), *Let’s Make Injera* (Lesson Nine of Unit 12, Grade 1), and *Helping Mother* (Lesson Eight of Unit 5, Grade 2), *Yonas and The Animals* (Lessons Ten and Eleven of Unit 2, Grade 2), and *The Baby Bird* (Lesson Nine of Unit 10, Grade 2) also teach children some moral values such as complying with what fathers and mothers might say, helping one another in the family, establishing friendship, and a problem shared can make works easier that respect students’ ways of living. These imply that children’s exposure to these texts can also help them to critically weigh their ways of living, shape their own values, and think lives beyond their own by comparing and/or contrasting with what others in the listening and reading texts do. Stories of such types tend to provoke emotional reactions such as laughter, sadness, disappointment, anticipation and this tendency prepare YLs to listen to/read and talk and write about the plot and the characters involved in the stories which is vital to enhance their English language learning along with their social and emotional development (Mattheoudakis et al., 2007). The analysis further indicate that the contents and the activities encompassed in the texts seem to be appropriate and relevant to students’ experience and day to day lives which are likely to create interest in students to listen/read the texts and talk about them and promote students’ English language acquisition.

The contents of some of the story texts are also related to other subject areas of the curriculum. *Almaz at School*, and *Bizunesh at School* narrate about the subjects pupils learn and also the learning activities they do in classroom. *Best Friends* talks about two boys who usually fish, swim, skip rope, run and play other games, and *The Football Game* discusses about children who
go to football field (Physical Education); *A Walk through the Countryside* also introduces children to the different types of animals that live in forests, the story *Houses in Ethiopia* (Lesson One of Unit 10, grade 2) put emphasis on talking about the different types of houses and the different materials they are made of, and *Uncle Debebe’s House* narrates about people’s life in condominium stressing on how family members keep things and rooms clean (science). *Going Places,* and *Zubida and Hamid’s Visit* narrate about the different modes of transportation that are in use to move around cities and to go far places (social studies), *Yonas and The Animals* talks about science with reference to animals and the environment as well as the number of animals each character has and the animals they found after the trip to the water hole which also enquire students to count, add and subtract (mathematics). Story texts such as “Ashango Plays in the Mud,” (Lesson Seven of Unit 4) and “Ways to Keep Fit and Healthy” (Lesson Nine of Unit 4) of grades 3 and 4 student books include contents that require students to listen/read how to keep their body clean and how to keep themselves fit and healthy (Science). These imply that the contents of some of the texts are linked to other primary subjects to also promote students learning of other primary subjects.

The analysis of the contents embodied in the texts (such as mothers care for their children, how children come and go to school, children obey mothers and fathers’ order) indicate that most of the contents selected in the stories consider pupils background and respect the values and culture of the people in the country. Listening and/or reading texts that are culturally and/or experientially familiar to the target groups cue students to easily construct meaning (Ur, 1996; Cameron, 2001; Nagy, 2008; Nagy and Balbi, 2008). Through exposing early primary school pupils to situations of their experience including other curricular subjects, they can get genuine purpose for their language learning and for their learning in general which can invigorate their interest to use and practice the target language (Holderness, 1995).

The story *Families* (Lesson Five of Unit 7 of grade 1) describes about the families of three different students and thus listening/reading about the first can help students guess about the second and the third that can reinforce students’ comprehension of the story and future use of the desired languages. The story *Animal Can* (Lesson Six of Unit 13) also talks about what different animals can do using repetitive language structure by changing their names and abilities such as ‘animals can run. Giraffe can run. Animals can hop. A kangaroo can hop.’ to assist students
practice and grasp the use of the word *can* that has been also treated in the earlier lessons (Lessons Three, Four and Five). The story about the small rat (Lesson Two of Unit 9, grade 1) narrates about a sad and hungry rat that visits different animals to ask for food also employ repetitive language that changes for each animal. The story *Help Me!* (Lesson Two of Unit 12) also uses repetitive situations with repetitive languages while asking for help and commanding those involved to pull out his jacket from the bag. The story *People and Objects We Find At School* (Lesson Two of Unit 11, Grade 1) contain two settings-school and classroom-to talk about what is/are available in school and in classroom using repetitive language structures -there are/is…can you find them? The text *Where is My Cat?* (Lesson Eleven of Unit 3) *The Lost Ball* (Lesson Five of Unit 11), *Where is Feyisa?* (Lesson Four of Unit 11) help children to listen/read sentence structures using various contexts with repetitive languages such as various prepositions to locate the positions of the lost cat or ball in the stories. The story *Helping Mother* (Lesson Eight of Unit 5, grade 2) also uses repetitive language patterns for the different situations such as ‘we help her sweep the floor’. ‘We help her cook’. ‘We help her wash the dishes.’ These indicate that the repeated language patterns in one or more contexts in the texts could involve a lot of fun in the mime -‘birds can fly, monkeys can climb’ or ‘pulled, pulled’ or ‘Is he under the tree? Is he near the near the house?’ when read out loud or told. Such repetitive use of sentence patterns by changing words can assist students to guess the meaning of the frequently used sentence pattern and/or the words/phrases substituted to comprehend the story and to secure students’ future use of the sentence patterns and words.

The parallelism, or repetition of grammatical patterns that occurs across most of the texts, is likely to be helpful to young learners’ language learning. Such structured texts can assist pupils to infer meanings of words and then provide a natural support for their English language learning (Kolsawalla, 1999; Cameron, 2001; Nagy and Balbi, 2008). They further note that such predictable pattern of events and language can also make young learner’s comprehension of the texts easier because of factors of predictability in them in line with students’ zone of proximal development.

To make the texts suitable to the target groups and promote students English language learning, they are presented accompanied with pictures and different types of questions. The visuals accompanying most of the story texts as illustrated in sections 6.2.3.5 and 6.2.4 above and 6.2.5
below recycle vocabularies and structures students have learned earlier that might support students’ comprehension of and create interest in the story.

The introductory activities teachers are suggested to make such as ‘tell to class what you know about a donkey’ before singing the song Ten Little Donkeys (Lesson Five, Unit 5), ‘tell class what you know about families’ before listening to and reading the story Families (Lesson Five, Unit 7) or asking students to tell the class the place they have visited before the story ‘Going Places’ can create background knowledge for students to listen to and/or read or sing the various texts with interest. Besides, the questions that demand students to mime or make different movements while singing and/or listening to certain languages are also some of the questions that can make the song/story texts suitable to the target groups. The pauses teachers are suggested to make between the second/third reading of the story texts for students to recall or guess what happens next can also create interest in students to follow the story attentively. Through creating background in the stories and through involving actions while answering questions, students are encouraged to use the language and promote their English language learning. What is more, after reading the story texts, various opportunities are given for students to retell the story, or talk about the different characters (Lesson Five, Unit 7) or think of different ending to the story Mother Rat and Her Nest and discuss with partners’ (Lesson Nine, Unit 10), to draw a picture to check comprehension, to choose and write down some of the vocabulary next to the picture.

Presenting stories accompanying with pictures, activating students background with various questions before reading and/or telling stories, pausing in the middle of second reading for students to guess or recall, and giving chances for students themselves to retell or talk about the stories can create interest in students in addition to the language learning opportunities they provide (Cameron, 2001; Balbi, 2008). Storytelling will make more sense to the YLs if visual aids are used to contextualize the language contents; and the visuals provided afterwards also encourage students to rehearse the language of the story in retelling or rewriting (Brewster, 1995). Post-listening/reading tasks and language related activities also encourage students to rehearse the languages they have listened/read and to build up their speaking and writing competences (Mattheoudakis et al., 2007). Therefore, the support provided and the demand put
forward in listening and reading texts are likely to suit to student’s age and to enhance students’ language use to promote students oral and printed language acquisition.

Lessons One, Three and Five of Unit 14 of grade 1 provide activities to familiarize students with the letter sounds of v (ve-Amharic), w (we-Amharic) and z (ze-Amharic). The texts of the stories of Feven (Lesson One of Unit 14, Grade 1), Weldu, Weinshet and Wendimu (Lesson Three of Unit 14, Grade 1), and Classmates (Lesson Five of Unit 14, Grade 1) seem to be invented to familiarize students to the English sounds the letters v (ve sound), w (we sound) and z (ze sound) represent by embodying characters whose name begin and/or ends with the focused sounds. Lesson Four of Unit 6, grade 1 also seem to be invented to give students further chance to understand the different uses of the verb have. These imply that some of the listening and/or reading texts encompassed in the teacher’s guides and/or student books seem to be invented to create contexts to practice the languages students have learned and/or to reinforce their use in different contexts and thus may not be enjoyable to students.

When examining the stories embodied in the reviewed student books in line with the criteria Cameron’s put forwards, some of them lack the story qualities, while most fulfill. Cameron (2001) suggests that story texts for young learners need to be structured in this way -the introduction of characters, description of settings, the difficulties/evils created through sequences of events that lead to the resolutions made or the closing-indicate that some of the texts are not stories. Stories capture students’ interest more than non-story texts (Cameron, 2001). Therefore, the texts that lack story qualities need some adaptations to presenting the texts to make them interesting to the target group and work towards the attainment of the language learning outcomes. Along with the opportunities the texts create for learning language in a meaningful and motivating context, students’ sustained exposure to different text types such as dialogues, narratives, songs, and poems can promote students reading and writing abilities (Kolsawalla, 1999; Cameron, 2001; Mattheoudakis et al., 2007)

These then indicate that the contents and the activities that the texts center around, the structure of the story contents, the potentials of the stories to be read out loud in an enjoyable ways, and the link the contents have with other curricular subjects can all make most of the texts suitable to promote young learners’ English language acquisitions (Holderness, 1995; Lobo, 2003; Balbi, 2008; Nagy, 2008). The meaningful and comprehensible input students get by listening
to/reading such story texts introduce them to a number of words in context and their involvement in resolving the subsequent questions help them to assimilate the words into their growing lexicon and promote their language acquisition (Kolsawalla, 1999; Mattheoudakis et al., 2007). The many texts included in the reviewed English student books can make students English language learning suitable as story telling is associated with teaching through themes or topics (Kolsawalla, 1999).

**6.2.6 Lay out**

The front cover of the grade 1 student book contain a coloured photo that depicts a white gowned teacher and students with and without school uniforms sitting and standing inside a classroom and with coloured margins. The front cover of grade 2 bear a coloured photo of a teacher with white gown standing inside a classroom encircled by students with school uniforms with coloured margins. The grade 3 front cover bear a coloured picture of students without uniform standing in front of a classroom with students’ made pictures behind them, on the wall. The front cover on grade 4 student book contains a coloured picture of a female teacher standing among classroom students while the lesson is on progress. The variations in the decorations made on the cover pages to address students’ affection to English language learning may presume edition problems that can negatively affect grade 1 students’ interest to learning the target language as they lack coloured margins like the other three grades. All the covers use photographs rather than portraits of animals or otherwise that may interest children to learn the language.

Making the photographs and the margins of the front covers colored may positively influence students’ affection for English language learning, but the use of photographs of teachers and students standing in a classroom rather than pictures of animals or otherwise on the cover pages that could interest students and that are linked to the contents in the student books can hardly contribute to children’s English language learning (Mendez and Lopez, 2005).

The title of the units and the lesson numbers are printed in block letters and the font size of the former is consistently bigger than the latter in all units of the reviewed student books. These titles of the units and the lesson numbers are printed in colours in all units of grade 2-4 student books unlike the grade 1 which are printed on smooth white. Similarly, the top and bottom
margins of all the pages of grade 2-4 student books are coloured, while the top and bottom margins of all the pages of the grade 1 student book remained white, not attractive.

The font size of the contents of ‘letter writing’ sections and the story texts are bigger when compared to the letter size of the labels of the pictures in all units of grade 1 student book. The sizes of the letters of all the contents embodied in all units of the grade 2-4 student books are consistently big. The whole unit and lesson numbers, words in the Word Banks, song texts, one of the conversant sayings in conversation passages, and the even or odd numbers in the number tables of grade 2-4 student books are highlighted with various colours unlike the contents in grade 1 textbook that are smooth white. Each page in all the units of grade 1 student book has wide space, unlike the pages in all units of grade 2-4 student book which are less wide. The contents in all student books are printed in a legible way with quality printing to the target learners and no pages in all units of the reviewed books bear any smudges. The papers used to publish the books do not show the contents printed on one side to the other side of the page that could affect students’ comprehension of the contents. These indicate that the layouts of the pages of the reviewed textbooks are suitable and motivating to the target students though the layout of the grade 1 student book bear some edition problems in terms of letter size and coloured contents and margins.

The use of big fonts, wide spaces, coloured contents and margins with quality printing can make the layout of the reviewed student books suitable and motivating and the contents comprehensible to the target groups that could promote YLs English language learning (Chang, n.d.; Mendez and Lopez, 2005). The wide spaces each page has limit the number of words children are provided on each page and then can motivate and make the language contents visible and comprehensible to young learners of 7 to 8 years of age (Mendez and Lopez, 2005). The reviewed English student books present the language contents in a reader friendly ways using quality papers that do not show contents on the other side of the page, coloured visuals, wider gaps, and big font size suitable to promote young learners’ English language acquisitions.

The grades 1-4 student books encompass colourful pictures to make them attractive to the target groups. Young students like pictures (Halliwell, 1992). The pictures are ornamented with red, yellow, blue, green, purple, brown and grey colours (see the pictures above in section 6.2.3.5 and 6.2.4 and below). Drawings with basic colours-red, yellow, blue and green-are more bright and
attractive to young learners when compared to pictures with purple, brown and grey colours that look older, fainted and more serious (Shin, n.d.; Nodelman, 2003; Mendez and Lopez, 2005). The result thus shows that the reviewed textbooks use coloured pictures that could create interest in young students’ English language learning. For young students illustrations can also play an important role in textual interpretations. YLs scan the pictures first, then to the texts and then returns to the picture trying to interpret and reinterpret the picture in light of the words or vice versa. This implies, depending on YLs experience on learning the language, that providing YLs with pictures and texts can assist them to improve their oral and printed skills (Halliwell, 1992; Pinter, 1999; Balbi, 2008). A research in child psychology has shown that visual prompts more than any linguistic negotiation often pushes YLs towards the solution (Kuhiwczak, 1999; Pinter, 1999). They master easily what is concrete and tangible. It appears then evident that the coloured pictures encompassed in the student books provide children with sensuous pleasure and as an aid to comprehend and interpret the contents in the texts which are vital to improve students’ ability to read and write in English (Kuhiwczak, 1999; Chang, n.d.).

The sample pictures of classroom objects, body parts and cloths labeled with their English names in Lessons Two, Five and Seven of Unit 1 and Lessons One, Two, Three and Four of Unit 2 grade 1 and Lessons one and Five of Unit 3 and Lessons One, Two and Five of Unit Four of grade 2 student books can support students comprehension of the sounds and concepts of the labels. The pictures are simple and clear as they contain little or no details for students to directly understand each of the words said. The pictures can also support students to identify the letters in the words and the concepts they correspondingly represent which can also promote students ability to read and write in English.
We help her sweep the floor.

We help her cook.

We help her wash the dishes.

We help her make the bed.

We help her set the table.

We help her wash the clothes.
In addition, the first picture in Lesson Eight of Unit 5 of grade 2 illustrates children with broom and mop cleaning the floor and the text ‘we help her sweep the floor’ are directly related to hint students understand the story read out loud pointing to the picture and its label; the second picture also depicts a stove, cooker with vapor and a girl stirring the food inside to support students understanding of the listening and reading of the text ‘we help her cook’. The dishes and the children washing dishes in the third pictures also clue students to understand the text ‘We help her wash the dishes’ and to point to the pictures. The fourth picture also depicts a bed, bed sheet, blanket and children trying to cover the bed that can hint students to understand the text ‘We help her make the bed’. Similar pictures and labels are also used in grade 3 student books for students to match the sentences to the pictures (Activity 3 of Lesson Three, Unit 3 and Activity 2 of Lesson Two, Unit 3). These imply that the pictures attached to the texts can also cultivate students oral and aural and reading skills in addition to attracting young learners’ attention to the lessons.

The other activity in the same lesson requires students to use the pictures to retell the story maintaining the order in the story. Activity 2 of Lesson Six, Unit 3 in grade 4 student book also uses pictures to help students write sentences of their own.

*Directions: Study the pictures below numbered 1-4. In your exercise book write a sentence about the weather in each picture.*
The reviewed books are thus used pictures as references to elicit language production and to help students practice speaking and writing the language.

The pictures in Lesson Two and Three and Lesson Six of Unit 3 of grade 2 student book are directly related to the contents of the labels to support students’ comprehension of listening /reading the labels and answer the questions as the pictures clue students to remember the names of the objects (duster, the table, the basket and the house) and/or the position words (on/under or near) in the labels without teachers’ help.
Directions: Read the sentences with a partner and point to the pictures.

Father wears a blue sweater.

Berhanu wears yellow trousers.

Mother wears a red dress.

Almaz wears a short skirt.

Berhanu’s green T-shirt is dirty.

Almaz wears sandals.

Father wears black shoes.

The pictures in Lesson Eight of Unit 12 of grade 2 student book support students to identify what each of the people in the family picture represent by associating them either with the words representing the picture (mother, father, boy and girl) or with the types of the cloths each of the people in the picture is wearing (trousers, dress, skirt) to understand and point to the sentences. Students can also use the words used to describe the cloths (such as blue, yellow, short) in the picture to listen/read and understand the written sentences and match to the picture that each
sentence represents. The family pictures are thus integrated with the contents of the jumbled sentences directly contributing for students to read and understand the texts and answer the questions without teacher’s assistance.

The picture in Lesson Four of Unit 6 of grade 2 student book depicts a person carrying umbrella to protect himself from the rain tells students that the day is rainy, the next picture illustrates a person struggling to control his flying cap and blowing cloths that the day is windy. The picture also provides students other details- the sleeping grasses in his surrounding-that can further enhance students understanding of the weather (windy). These also show that the pictures provide students direct help to listen/read and understand the various weather words such as sunny, rainy, windy, cloudy, cold, warm and hot. The pictures can also help students to remember the words/phrases attached to the pictures and thereby developing their ability to read and write.

The pictures provided in Lesson One of Unit 7 in grade 1 student book also contribute for pupils to listen and understand teacher’s introduction of the concept family and the English words related to each family member mother, father, sister, and brother. Besides, the kid hugged in one of the pictures tells students that the parents have one daughter, while the other picture tells pupils that the parents have three children, one son and two sisters depicting the differences in family sizes. The picture is also supposed to elicit production from students to practice using the preset words and sentence patterns such as Who is the father/sister/mother/brother? This is the sister/brother/father. How many people are in the family? There are five people. How many older people/children are in the family? There are two older people/three children in the family. The picture in Lesson Five of Unit 7 of grade 1 student book also contribute for students to bring forth the various family words while attempting to tell each people in the picture. This can support students to listen/read and understand some of the key words such as father, mother, brother, sister in the story (Families) text. It can also be used to assisting students to draw similar picture of their own family to elicit language to comparing their family with the family in the pictures.

The analyses thus indicate that most of the pictures encompassed in the reviewed student book are directly related to the contents of the story or reading texts that can support students’ comprehension of the written texts without teacher’s help.
The pictures in Lesson One of Unit 2, grade 2 can help students understand the context and activate the language they may find vital to singing the *Number Song* such as *catch, fish, alive,* and *back* with the required actions. The picture provides support for children to understand the context in the text and then the language to sing the song with movement actions and with interest. Similarly, pictures encompassed in the reviewed textbooks such as Lesson Ten and Twelve of Unit 5, Lessons Nine and Ten of Unit 12, Lessons Four and Seven of Unit 14 of grade 2 can assist students to elicit production, both oral and written, to practice the English languages. The analysis thus indicate that pictures are also used to activate students background knowledge before listening and/or reading the contents embodied in the printed texts and to elicit language production.

The pictures of the people (such as girl, boys, woman, child) and the animal (dog) and the colour of the dresses the people in the pictures wear and of the animal in Lessons Six of Unit 2, grade 2 contain unnecessary details that may confuse students comprehension of the listening/reading texts. The book the girl in the picture holds, the fishing activities the boys are engaged in the next picture, and what the mother and her child are doing in the third picture, for example, appear to be unrelated with the information students are required to understand in the texts-to identify and tell the colours of the cloths people wear and of the dog-and thus they are likely to confuse grade 2 students attempt to understand the texts. The pictures of the rabbit and the zebra in Lesson Four of Unit 9 of grade 1 student book, for example, are detailed unnecessarily with grasses, bushes and trees which may divert student’s attention from understanding the English names of the animals-*rabbit* and *zebra*. The picture in Lesson Nine of Unit Twelve of grade 1 student book also details pictures not directly related to the information contained in the texts which may confuse student’s understanding of the processes involved in making *injera*. The first picture in the process details plants, standing sack that reads ‘teff’, and water flowing from the tap into a bowl on a table, but the label below it reads *she takes the teff and warm water*. The unnecessary details contained in the picture such as the plants, the table, the water from the tap have no relevance to understand the text and thus may distract pupils’ direct understanding of the concepts conveyed in the texts. The illustrations provided to the stories in Lesson Ten and Eleven of Unit 2 of grade 2 (Yonas and the Animals Part I, II and III) lack details for students to get support and understand the stories. When Yonas leads the animals towards the hole to have them drink water or when Hakim gathers firewood or when Yonas is looking for the lost sheep
or when Hakim comes with the lost sheep, for example, are not supported by pictures to help students link the contents to their corresponding pictures and understand the stories. These also indicate that some of the pictures encompassed in the student books contain pictures that are not related to the texts and few also contain pictures that lack the important details to understand the texts.

The analysis thus indicate that most of the pictures in the reviewed textbooks seem to be clear and simple to directly convey the concepts in the listening and reading texts in line with students’ levels of cognitive capacity, while some appear to be difficult and confusing for target students to understand the texts as they involve pictures unrelated to the texts or as they lack details in the texts. Pictures at this level are not expected to go against the text and confuse children English language learning and thus illustrations should be clear and neat and should convey most of contents in the text, or magnify the text and an integral part to an understanding of the text (Chang, n.d.; Kolsawolloy, 1999; Pinter, 1999; Nodelman, 2003; Mendez and Lopez, 2005).

The pictures can also contribute to clarifying the contents or the activities and make true contribution for children to understand the contents by giving learners a context and/or its representation. This implies that the illustrations that accompany the texts are expected to directly contribute to the understanding of the texts and convey the concepts clearly (Chang, n.d.). These imply that most of the pictures encompassed in the reviewed textbooks provide students both ornamental and educational support. That is, the pictures address students’ affection to learning the language and they also provide clues to students to remember the words they have learned and to understand the contents in the listening and reading texts as well as to assist students produce languages.

6.2.7 Teacher’s Guide

The grade 1 and 2 teacher’s guides are thick containing 273 and 263 pages, consecutively, that provide teachers general introductory guidance on the teaching of language items and skills presented in the student books. This entails that first-cycle English teachers need to be proficient in the English language to comprehend the information in the teacher’s manuals and properly handle the student books.
The guides announce on their introductory sections that the theoretical underpinnings the current textbook use to the teaching and learning of English is communicative, skills-based, and learner-centered. That is, the activities they present in English classroom has to be purposeful, meaningful and relevant to students. The guides also note that young children learn best when all their senses are involved. This indicates that the manuals do not seem to give teachers sufficient theoretical orientations on the approach and on children’s natural characteristics and potentials to second language learning. This could also have the implications of the need for qualified teachers to properly handle the student books and to teaching English communicatively to young learners.

At the start of every unit, the teacher’s manuals provide teachers the learning outcomes that students are expected to attain after doing the activities included in all the units. The guides also notify the focused skills in every lesson for teachers to tailor their lesson planning.

The manuals inform teachers to give students chances to be creative, to play (grade 1) or to learn (grade 2-4) and to have fun, and to use visuals (such as real objects, persons or animals or pictures that closely resemble them using their true colours). The manuals also advise teachers to use L1 to help children access the meanings of English words, and to praise children for things they do right rather than discouraging them by correcting every error they commit. The manuals also advise teachers to teach grammars in a meaningful ways integrating them with the four skills and not to give lengthy instruction on the grammar items. The manuals also present some notes on lesson planning and classroom assessment for teachers to apply while using the student book.

In addition to these general notes, the manuals inform teachers some instructional guides intermittently under the Methodology section prior to the instructional inputs such as defining and exemplifying the terms ‘shared reading, predicting, and choral reading’ (Lesson Nine of Unit 10, grade 1 teacher manual). The teacher’s manuals further provide teachers transcripts for stories, rhymes, poems, songs and chants, answers to activities, classroom language, game rules, periodic tests, and teaching procedures for teachers to follow to teaching all activities in each lesson. The teacher’s manuals provide review and summary notes for teachers to use in a classroom before beginning new lessons and before ending the lessons covered. The guide attaches recommended list of vocabularies that children use in doing lessons in each grade.
student book for teachers to refer to when planning and teaching the language. These show that the teacher manuals provide teachers clear and correct detailed instructional inputs that could enhance their ability of handling the student books.

The guide attaches recommended list of vocabularies that children use in doing lessons in each grade student book for teachers to refer to when planning and teaching the language. There is no resource pack such as photocopiable sheets for extra activities (arts, crafts, games, etc.) attached with the manuals that could reduce teachers work and enrich students English learning; teachers are rather suggested to prepare different pictures/posters or flash cards to enrich their classroom English teaching. These indicate that no extra activities are appended for teachers to provide students as consolidation and practice activities.

The analyses thus indicate that the contents and the activities embodied in the grades 1-4 English student books features aspects that are mostly recommended by the Communicative Approach to language teaching and the constructive approach to teaching EFL to young learners indicating the adequacy and appropriacy of the reviewed English textbooks to promote the targeted basic English communication skills. However, the reviewed student books also found out featuring some characteristics against the two models that could negatively affect primary students English language learning. Among these, the frequent use of Amharic or L1 in English classrooms for various purposes while handling the student books, the lack of supplementary resources such as work books, audio/video materials, technology related teaching aids, and the early use of printed instructions can reduce the potential of the reviewed English textbooks.

6.3 Embodiment of the Syllabus

The topics, contents and activities drawn from the syllabus and the findings of the analysis of the student books above consistently demonstrate that they are related to students real’ experience, about themselves, their immediate surroundings and interests. The findings of the analysis of the student books reveal that students are encouraged to understand and use language forms focusing on their meaningful use with less emphasis on direct learning of their usage as suggested in the syllabus. The analysis of the textbooks also show that most of the lessons encompassed in the textbooks fosters the use of the English language through encouraging learners to actively get involved in trying out the new language using control and free practice activities. Young
learners’ language learning can be enjoyable if the contents and activities are suitable to students’ background and experience in line with principles of communicative language teaching (Mohanraj, 2006).

The findings of the analysis of the reviewed student books indicate that oral skills are more emphasized in the first two grades when compared to the last two grades student books that emphasize reading and listening (grade 3 student book) and reading and writing (grade 4 student book). Unlike what are suggested in the syllabus (see section 2.3) and teacher’s guides, the grades 3 and 4 student books demand students to dedicate most of their time to doing reading and listening when compared to speaking and writing, and to reading and writing when weighed against listening and speaking activities, respectively. Besides, the grade 2 student books bear printed instructions for students to read and do the activities in the student book inconsistent with the syllabus and the grade 1 students’ reading experience. The syllabus notes that activities that encourage students to read and write words and short sentences of their own begins in grade 3 and grow further to paragraph levels in grade 4. The syllabus thus suggest textbook writers to defer activities that may demand students to read and write phrases and short sentences on their own until grade 3 where students are expected to begin developing some literacy skills (the ability in reading and writing) in their native language to assisting their reading and writing skills in English language.

The findings also indicate that activities employed in each unit are short and varied to address students’ short attention span and maintain students’ interest in the topic which are also demonstrated in the syllabus—keep lessons short and simple and vary activities in same topic. These can somewhat address students psychological characteristics suggested in the syllabus.

The findings of the analyses of the grades 1-4 English student books reveal that students are encouraged to multi-sensory methods of learning through applying concrete objects, pictures, instructions, actions, songs, movement, drawing arts in accordance with the suggestions in the syllabus (such as help young learners understand by using the various senses: seeing, hearing, feeling etc). The results of the analyses of the student books also indicate that the contents and the activities employed addressed students different ways of learning through employing various modes of learning like songs, games, visuals, arts, movements, pair/group works in line with the recommendations in the syllabus (such as cater for different modes of learning: verbal, visual,
musical, logical, physical, interpersonal etc). Young children learn best when all their senses are involved (Johnston 1994; Cameron, 2001).

The results also show that teachers' role in English classrooms are to give direct instruction and to facilitating students' classroom learning. Students are also given opportunities to try out the studied languages through carrying out both controlled and free practice activities interacting with their teachers and among themselves in line with the principles of CLT and the data drawn from the syllabus. The syllabus and the student books are found to be consistent in terms of suggested teachers’ classroom roles and students’ use of the languages.

The findings of the student book analysis also indicate that few of the activities are not contextualized and presented in isolation reflecting the data obtained from the syllabus that suggests some of the activities in the student books to bear a resemblance to the national test types such as multiple choice types of activities. This indicates that the negative washback effect of the national examinations as young learners could find it hard to understand languages that are not contextualized and meaningful (Brumfit, 1995; Holdernes, 1995; Ali, 2003).

The teaching approach specified in the syllabus is the communicative approach to language teaching and it also clearly aims to develop students' overall ability in language use. Detailed performance objectives listed in the syllabus for each level and the learning outcomes specified for all lessons before each unit in the teacher’s guides are described in terms of what the students should be able to do with the language while doing the tasks and activities rather than what the teachers should teach, putting the students at the center of learning. The objectives and the learning outcomes appear to be modest and achievable as the contents and activities in the student books considered students background and interest. The contents and activities employed in the reviewed textbooks are found demanding students to practice to talk and write in simple languages about themselves, their immediate environments and interests in line with the overall goals targeted. To help students achieve such objectives and learning outcomes, most of the tasks and activities embodied in the reviewed textbooks, in agreement with the recommendation in the syllabus, focus on integrated skills development, language use in context, problem solving, and cooperative learning.
In order to realize the suggested communicative approach and attain the targeted goals, creating anxiety free environment is crucial to speed up young learners’ language acquisition. Employing interesting contents and activities in the student books are not enough to promote students English language acquisitions, the methods of instructions teachers employ in classroom also play a significant role to enhance YLs’ English language learning. The grades 1-4 English syllabus suggested the development of students’ motivation and positive attitude in learning and using the English language but not included in the syllabus objectives and learning outcomes. Similarly, the teacher’s guides sidelined any learning outcomes related to the development of positive attitude for teachers to create anxiety free classroom environment while working to the attainment of the targeted performances. Targeting performance goals alone sidelining affection goals in young learners classroom is unlikely to bring success in children’s language acquisition as teachers can also ignore this motivation aspects (Wang, 2002). This may indicate that children’s affection which is crucial to their language development is less recognized in both the syllabus and the textbooks. Targeting the attainment of students’ motivation and positive attitude towards English language learning together with the skills could at least deter primary teachers to go to classroom with big sticks that could hurt children’s affection and then their English language learning. Besides, the only use of textbooks structure could hinder students accelerated English language acquisitions. The syllabus does not suggest the use of multimedia technology in teaching English to YLs that could interest the target groups to use the language.

The time allotted to first cycle students to complete the English student books is five periods a week and the length of each period is 40 minutes. The guide further notes that English language lessons encompassed in each student book are conducted to a minimum of 170 periods, 113.33 hours, for 34-week academic year in line with the recommendations in the syllabus. The amount of time allocated for students to use the language daily appears sufficient to develop their basic communication skills. At initial stage, a syllabus with at least three 40 minutes classes may be necessary to develop students’ basic communication skills (Johnston, 1994; Sinh, 2006). The achievement of proficiency in the EFL is primarily the function of the amount of time students spend on studying the language (Satchwell, 1999). Thousands of hours of exposure in the FL are required before threshold level where students are expected to use the language for communication (Cambell et al., 1983; Johnston, 1994; Dereboy, 2008). The implications this
may hold to primary EFL classrooms is that the effect of ‘learning time’ can be evident only in combination with other contextual factors germane to quality teaching (Blondin et al., 1998).

It seemed practically difficult to compare the suggestion the syllabus notes and what teachers are suggested in the instructional procedures with regard to the use of L1. The syllabus writes that teachers use L1 to create students awareness of L1 and English, but the procedures suggested in the teachers guide demand teachers to use L1 extensively-for example-translating some words/expressions, stories, instructions, activities in the student books. The use of L1 in primary grades is controversial, but authorities who argue for its use note that the use of L1 should enable students to continue their communication using EFL and reduce the possible anxiety the classroom interaction may create on students’ use of the English language. Teachers are thus expected to rephrase the language while explaining certain language points while allowing students to use L1 sometimes. Teachers’ use of L1 in primary grades does not seem to be facilitating young learners English language learning as it can rather create an environment that may hinder their motivations to use English and that minimizes the possible comprehensible inputs they might get when teachers clarify the new language items or patterns. The profile of competencies the MoE put forward for English teachers to possess play down the use of L1 and underscores teachers’ capability to use English in the classroom (MoE, 2010).

In general, the psychological characteristics appropriate to the target groups as well as the various recommendations put forward by the grades 1-4 English curriculum (see section 2.3 above) are mostly reflected in the contents and activities embodied in the reviewed textbooks that could indicate the adequacy and appropriacy of the curriculum and their respective textbooks to promote students’ attainment of the targeted basic communication skills. Some of the challenges both lack in terms of, for example, using modern educational resources could sap the positive impact they could have in maximizing students English language learning.
CHAPTER SEVEN
RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE TEACHERS TRAINING CURRICULUM AND TEACHERS CLASSROOM PRACTICES

7.1 Introduction

The quality of the textbooks alone can hardly contribute to the attainment of the targeted communicative goals if it is not accompanied by well established teachers training program directly related to the teaching and learning of English to young learners. This chapter presents the results and discussions of the analysis of the policy and the practices focusing on the training curriculum the Ministry put forward, data drawn from the classroom observations, teachers’ lesson plan and their responses to the questionnaire.

This chapter thus first presents the results of the analysis of the training curriculum policy the Ministry has ratified to prepare teachers to teaching English in primary first-cycle classrooms. It then presents the interpretations made on the found out results and intermittent references are made to relate to the results obtained in the previous chapter. This chapter also provides the results and discussions of the analyses of the data drawn from the classroom observations and from the survey questionnaire. The results obtained from each are further interpreted in terms of its contribution or otherwise to promoting students English learning and whether or to what extent the practices reflect the curriculum policy the Ministry espouses. The discussions made on the findings are also presented incorporating the results found in the previous sections and chapters whenever required to substantiate or otherwise the claims. The interviews data gleaned from the school principals, and officials in the Regional education Bureau and the Ministry are also integrated in the discussion stages of the findings.

7.2 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of the Teachers Training English Curriculum

In order to examine how adequately and appropriately the Ministry takes care of the teaching and learning of English language at primary first-cycle level, the Finalized Course Catalogue For Language Cluster Diploma Program (MoE, 2009) currently in use in pre-and in-service programs are referred and analyzed.
Table 1 The English Language Courses the TEIs currently Offer to Language Cluster Diploma Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code and Number</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Lec. Hours</th>
<th>Contact hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eng 203</td>
<td>Spoken English I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 105</td>
<td>Listening Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 107</td>
<td>English Grammar in Use</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 106</td>
<td>Classroom English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 200</td>
<td>Essentials of Writing Skills</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TeEng 242</td>
<td>ELT Methods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eng 101 and Eng 102</td>
<td>Communicative English Skills I and II</td>
<td>3 + 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>352</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 1632 contact hours are distributed for language cluster program trainees to complete within three academic years. From the total, 848 hours are assigned to the major courses, 192 hours for common courses, while 368 and 224 hours are dedicated to professional knowledge and practicum courses, consecutively. Language Cluster Program is organized for trainees to take 848 hours of major courses- Amharic (320), English (256) and Civics and Ethical Education (272 hours). These indicate that Language cluster trainees are required to devote most of their study time (37.74 Percent) to Amharic courses while they spend least of their time to English major courses (30.19 percent).

A total of 352 hours are allocated for eight English language proficiency and ELT method course for language cluster trainees. The language improvement courses as depicted in the above table dedicates 96 hours for English language common courses, 128 hours for speaking, listening, and writing English courses and 96 hours for grammar, and classroom English; but 32 hours of classes is devoted to developing trainees’ ELT method skills. The eight language improvement courses the Ministry has enacted for the TEIs in the regions to offer to prospective teachers comprise of Spoken English I, Listening Skills, English Grammar in Use, Classroom English, Essentials of Writing Skills, and Communicative English Skills I and II that amount to 91 percent (320 hrs.), while the rest 9 percent (32 hrs.) center on ELT methodology course- Teaching English I. This indicates that the English curriculum the ministry has ratified to the language cluster program put more emphasis on improving teachers English language proficiency than on
developing trainees English teaching skills. The analyses of the curriculum policy also show that primary first-cycle teachers training is organized to produce language cluster trainees to teaching English to the target groups and such organizations seem to have restricted the language improvement courses to 320 hours and ELT method course to 32 hours.

The time allocated for both language improvement and ELT methodology courses do not seem to be sufficient when compared to the time successful countries allocate to train primary EFL teachers. Croatia, and Slovenia, for example, have established primary EFL teachers training programs through allocating 1185 hours for 12 courses within four years (for regular program trainee teachers) and 750 hours assigned for six courses spread over two years (for qualified primary teachers to prepare them to teaching EFL to the level through in-service program), respectively. The Bulgaria MoE has stipulated a four-year training program to preparing primary EFL teachers though it has also decided to preparing the existing trained primary teachers to teaching English to YLs to meeting its urgent need by allocating 1560 hours for language improvement courses and 450 hours for ELT to YLs courses spread over two semesters.

In order to see whether or not the English language improvement and ELT skills curriculums the Ministry has enacted are adequate and appropriate to equip trainee teachers with the practical skills of teaching English awaiting trainees, the course catalogue is further analyzed in terms of time allocated to study the course, the objectives, the contents, the methods of presentations and assessments of the contents.

7.2.1 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of the Language Improvement Courses

The *Spoken Language I* (Eng 203) is offered with three credit hours with the intention of improving trainee teachers speaking skills with reasonable degree of fluency and accuracy as well as to help trainees produce intelligible pronunciation. Most of the contents the course covers are related to functional languages such as introductions, greetings and partings, invitations, while one section of the contents deals with pronunciation to introduce trainees to English sounds, phonetics, syllable, word stress, and intonation. These contents are also found in first-cycle English student books which could have positive impact on trainee teachers teaching of the target language. The pronunciation contents do not seem to be presented in certain contexts as they are presented separately from other functional language components which could endanger
its practicality of improving trainees’ pronunciations and be a model for correct pronunciation in classroom. The methods suggested to presenting the contents and practicing the language skills include explanations, individual, pair and group work activities, oral presentations, demonstrations, role plays, listening and repeating words and sentences following audio/video cassettes/CDs. This implies that trainees are exposed to different listening texts to improve their pronunciation and listening skills and they are also allowed to actively interact using the language. Trainees are assessed based on their participation in classroom discussions, in project works, in presenting assignments and in demonstrating their performances in tests and in examinations. The methods suggested to presenting and assessing the contents can reinforce the development of trainees listening and spoken skills in line with the objectives aimed as the methods can encourage trainees to use the language out of class while preparing for the tests.

The other language improvement course the cluster program offers is the Listening Skills (Eng 105). The course is directed towards equipping trainee teachers with the ability of listening to various English spoken texts, of taking notes, of learning English and other subjects given in English. The course is thus not only directed to improve teachers’ English language but also to enhance teachers’ self-directed learning of other English subjects. The course contents focus on its definitions, types and purposes of listening, problems with listening and effective listening and some activities to practice listening skills. The modes of presenting and assessing these language contents are listening tasks, group and pair discussions, and tests on listening texts for students to practice and enhance their listening and speaking skills. Trainee teachers are also made to listen to extensive listening texts and then to present what they have listened to before the class. The methods suggested to cultivating and assessing the skills are in line with the objectives set to the course which could positively influence trainees to use the language while preparing for tests.

This course Essentials of Writing Skills (Eng. 200) is offered with three credit hours for language cluster student teachers to help them improve their writing skills. The course expects trainees to be able to write English letters and words legibly, distinguish various sentence types and construct grammatically acceptable sentences. The course contents listed encompass various writing strategies that are vital to improving trainees writing skills. The course contents also includes handwriting skills, writing small and capital letters, moving hands when writing English
letters and how to copy English letters and words that are rather important to their English teaching skills. The methods suggested to present the course contents and to assess the skills targeted are brainstorming, explanations, whole-class discussions and pair/group discussions, and writing practice activities. Trainees are thus required to produce various writings individually and in groups to determine their attainment of the course objectives. This implies that language is practiced and assessed focusing on its use that could enhance trainees’ writing skills and then English teaching skills.

The course *Classroom English* (Eng. 106) is suggested for TEIs to offer to help language cluster trainees acquire different classroom English languages and use them in different situations that may arise in the English classroom. The course deals with classroom English languages that can equip teachers with various techniques of questioning, classroom handling, organizing students, commanding, suggesting, and summarizing lessons depending on what the situation demands. The course also tries to address expressions vital to classroom routines such as to talk about weather and physical conditions of the classrooms, to introduce new lessons, maintaining classroom discipline and lesson presentations. The course objectives such as expecting teachers to ask questions in different ways for different situations; perform classroom routines effectively; check attendance with alternative expressions; express classroom physical conditions correctly and the course contents such as classroom questions, classroom routines, and oral presentation skills may indicate the vitality of the course to equip trainees with essential classroom English languages. These course objectives and contents presumed to refer to words and expressions relevant to early primary classroom English though nothing notifies trainers or material writers to focus on words and expressions relevant to primary English language classrooms. The language improvement courses need to include classroom English with the words and expressions used in primary English classes, rather than those languages used in mainstream classrooms (Park, 2006).

The methods suggested to presenting the contents and practicing and to assessing the required language skills are role play, simulation, drama, discussions and crossovers including trainees individual and group presentations, classroom participation, and what they do on tests and final examinations. These could imply that methods suggested to cultivating and assessing the classroom English seem in coherence with the spoken skills targeted in the course. Learning is
often effectively achieved when trainees are involved in using the targeted language expressions rather than simply hear about it (Park, 2006).

The other language improvement course the Ministry enacted for TEIs to offer with three credit hours is *English Grammar in Use* (Eng. 107). The course objectives noted in the document reveal that after the completion of the course, trainee teachers are expected to be equipped with the essential English grammars that are crucial to their intelligibility when using the English language as well as to identify the relationships between grammar items and the functions that they convey. The course contents recommended includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and pronouns that are vital for trainees to know to effectively listen, speak, read and write in the English language. The methods suggested to present the contents and assess the studied skills are word games, role plays, demonstrations, discussions, classroom participations, assignments, reporting and tests that demand trainee teachers to work individually, in pair and groups. The assessment types suggested in the document seem to be vague as nothing is noted in the document for trainers whether to focus on use and/or usage of the learned language contents though the assessment types presumed to mirror the methods of presentation of the contents. This implies that the modes of presentation suggested to the trainer to offer the course seem to encourage trainee teachers to understand and use the grammars in context while taking part in the game and role play, for example, though the contents listed such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions in the curriculum document focused on the separate grammar items. This could give lee ways for trainers and module developers to deny the opportunities trainees deserve to use and practice the language forms through integrating them with the four skills crucial to attain the objectives of the course.

The *Communicative Language Skill* courses embodied in the course catalogue are also intended to improve trainee teachers’ English language in the four skills and in grammar and in vocabulary. The course contents recommended to the course are structured into speaking and listening, vocabulary, grammar, reading, and writing components. The contents for speaking and listening components focus on functional languages such as introductions, expressing opinions, giving and asking for advice, greetings, partings and farewell, and asking for and giving directions. The vocabulary sections also provide trainees with various vocabulary learning strategies such as synonyms/antonyms, contextual guessing, etc. and practice activities to
increase their English word power. Contents related to tenses, imperatives, asking questions are also entertained under grammar sections. The reading sections contain various reading texts and comprehension questions, while the writing sections enquire trainees to produce written instructions, letters and reports. The modes suggested to presenting the contents and to assessing the knowledge and skills include direct instructions, trainees’ participation in individual, pair and/or group work and whole-class discussions, classroom tests, assignments and final examination that are congruent with the performances stated in the courses objectives as well as in line with the features of CLT methods which are awaiting trainees to also apply in primary classrooms.

In general, the analyses of the English language improvement course curriculums show that some of the objectives set such as ‘to give speech in different situations; to feel confident to make public speech; be able to talk to native speakers intelligibly; and to develop effective study habits’ are not directly related to the knowledge and skills trainees are required to teach the language to the YLs. The analysis further evidence that some of the course contents the Ministry has ratified for the TEIs to implement such as steps for teaching handwriting, capital and small letter writing, and hand movements, and non-verbal communication in language improvement courses are not related to the main objectives of improving teachers’ language proficiency as such contents rather could enhance trainees’ English language teaching skills to young learners, if properly situated and tailored to the purpose. The contents suggested in the Classroom English course are vital to enhance teachers’ classroom English but needs to include words and expressions that could be used in earlier English classrooms to make it more useful to the purpose. Even though the analysis of the grades 1-4 curriculum and their respective textbooks show that they embody contents and activities such as naming and forming letters of alphabet, handling of writing implements, drawing pictures, singing songs, reciting poems and rhymes, giving instructions and playing games, narrating stories in an enjoyable ways for YLs, the language improvement courses anlysed above failed to incorporate these practical knowledge and skills trainee teachers need to enhance their classroom delivery. Most successful primary EFL programs have been in countries where teacher training course are directly related to the primary curriculum (not a watered-down secondary course) to assist trainee teachers meet the intrinsic challenges of the YLs classroom (Rixon, 2000; Muir, 2005). The results thus show that
some of the language improvement course objectives and contents the Ministry suggests are not well adjusted to the purposes that trainees are prepared for.

The modes of presentations suggested for presenting most of the language improvement course contents seem to allow trainees to work individually and interact in pairs and groups using the language in a meaningful ways that could give trainees chances to improve their English language proficiency. The analysis also witness that most of the methods suggested to present the contents and to assess the skills targeted can further give chances to trainees to use and practice the language which are crucial to improve their oral skills. This could assist trainees to develop confidence to using the language and to achieve a high level of EFL fluency and communicative competence with an emphasis on the oral skills (Park, 2006). The methods used can also encourage trainees to critically examine the course contents not just accepting the prescribed contents which could lay good ground for sustained professional development (Park, 2006; Mohanraj, 2006). The collaborative methods many of the courses used to present the contents might encourage trainees to adopt similar methods to teaching English in first-cycle classrooms and to talk about their ELT when they are at work and thus need to be maintained. These indicate that the methods suggested to presenting and assessing the course contents of the language improvement courses can enhance trainees’ listening and speaking skills.

In sum, the results of the analyses of the eight English language improvement courses the Ministry has enacted for language cluster training programme to offer indicate that they can equip trainee teachers with certain English language knowledge and skills they may apply to execute their English teaching duty. The results further indicate that the contents of language improvement courses encompass grammar, vocabulary and functional and notional languages items putting emphasis on improving the four language skills; the pronunciation contents are the least treated in all the English courses the Ministry suggests for TEIs to offer. These indicate that language improvement courses the Ministry has suggested can cultivate prospective teachers’ levels of English language proficiency though trainees’ skills to be a model for correct pronunciation to primary school children are sidelined.

The adequacies of the eight English language improvement courses to bring trainees’ English language to the required level depend on the level of English they acquire prior to the training. Candidates’ inability to pass the grade ten national examinations might signal their failure to
meet the minimum learning competencies (MLCs) in the English language the Ministry’s put forward for grade ten completes, though some could fail with good English result. The language improvement courses that are being offered thus may not meet trainees’ level of English to help them attain the objectives set to the courses and prepare them to the teaching duties awaiting them in primary first-cycle English classroom. If trainees’ English levels of proficiency are low before joining the training program, it appears difficult to bring trainees’ English language skills to the required level after the completion of the training (Muir, 2005). This could mean that the language improvement courses could have little contribution to most of the prospective language cluster teachers to achieve the required mastery of the English language unless the minimum level of proficiency candidates should possess is determined before allowing them study in language cluster program. Besides, the school cluster program that the Ministry run in collaboration with the Regional Education Bureau through giving training to mentors is one technique to improve the teaching and learning of English as learned from the interviews data and the ELIP unit document in ministry (Malderez, n.d.). The other attempt this unit has implemented as learned from the interview and from the unit’s document is the provision of tutorial classes to trainee teachers in the Teacher Education Institutes to improve their English proficiency. Similarly, these can bear fruit only when teachers have sufficient background and then interest to study and improve their English language.

These could also imply that the pre-and in-service training including the extra efforts carried out by the Ministry and the REBs to improve teachers’ proficiency in the English language could be more fruitful if teachers have the minimum interest to study and teach the English language and if minimum standard in English are set at the onset to recruit candidates to study language. Such recruiting strategies could help trainees to study the language improvement courses and then to reach the level of English required of them to effectively execute their first-cycle English teaching duty. Primary foreign language teachers need to have sufficient oral command of the target language to communicate on a variety of topics to deliver the lessons at various levels of instruction and to tune in the language capitalizing on the issues children could raise while the lesson is on progress (Rixon, 1999; Cameron, 2001; Driscoll, 2005; Kirkgoz, 2006). This demands the Ministry’s policy to recruit trainees with MLCs in English before and after the training to certify teachers to teaching English at primary level. It appears evident then for the
Ministry to secure that teachers’ levels of proficiency are good enough to carry out their professional duty needed in primary EFL classrooms.

7.2.2 Results and Discussions of the Analysis of the ELT Methodology Course

The course *Teaching English I* (Te Eng. 241) aims at boosting trainees’ competencies in teaching EFL at first-cycle primary school level. The policy limit the methodology curriculum to one course to be offered with 2 credit hours (thirty two hours) that could show the little emphasis the policy has given to the primary ELT methodology course when compared to emphasis given to the language improvement courses.

The curriculum objectives note that: Up on the completion of this course trainees will be able to:

- identify the strength and weakness of the traditional and current approach in language teaching.
- Perceive the role of motivation in language teaching
- Treat the various learning styles of the learners in English Language classroom
- Prepare lesson plans that will help them deliver the different skills and sub skills in an English language classroom

These could indicate that the methodology curriculum for teachers training is not tailored to the peculiar language learning characteristics children possess which are vital to prepare trainees to the knowledge and skills awaiting trainee to effectively deliver the English textbooks. For example, the constructive approach to YLs EFL learning, role of motivation to enhance YLs language learning, the various emergent literacy and literacy skills and knowledge to beginning EFL young learners are not targeted. This could imply that the material prepared is unlikely to equip trainee teachers with the practical skills of teaching English in primary classrooms. Teacher education institutes need to direct their foreign language training heeding the constructive views on children’s language and language learning and teaching, the insights of second language acquisition researches as well as the peculiar language learning characteristics children possess that are found vital to enhancing teachers practical teaching skills awaiting them in primary EFL classroom (Cakir, 2004; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2005).

The course contents consists of topics such as ELT approaches, role of motivation, multiple intelligences and learning styles, and learning strategies as well as the various methods of
teaching reading, listening, grammar and vocabularies. The suggested detailed course contents in the document such as ‘A brief view of language teaching methods and approach; Traditional approaches and current approach (communicative approach)’ seemed to signal contents which are not directly related to the real situations awaiting trainees. These contents could not inform material writers to include contents such as language and language learning theories within the domains of EFL YLs, phonic method and whole language approach to enhance YLs reading and writing skills that are directly relevant to trainees’ primary English language teaching competencies.

Knowing the language is only one element but not sufficient; teachers should also be educated about the process of first and second language acquisitions, the underpinning principles in the constructive approach to EFL teaching to young learners, learning styles and types of intelligence, children’s language learning characteristics and others to effectively teach EFL at primary level (Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Blondin et al., 1998; Driscoll, 2005; Sharpe, 2005; Edelenbos et al., 2006). Teacher’s knowledge of theory of language and language learning, for example, can influence the degree of emphasis they place on the FL learning process and the construction of meaning (Cameron, 2001; Edelenbos et al., 2006; Balbi, 2008).

The pedagogical courses such as how to use songs, games, rhymes, poems, and stories to teach EFL to YLs are sidelined. The phonic and whole language approach employed in student books to teaching reading and writing to young learners also demands teachers this knowledge and skills. Besides, the principles encompassed in the constructive approach such as scaffolding techniques, how to use playful activities to teaching the language, children’s love of talk, addressing children’s various interest and similar others including second language acquisition theories are vital to prepare trainees to properly handle the English textbooks. The use of scaffolding, zonal proximal development (i+1), repetitions, other subjects curricular contents and other contents vital to enhance trainees’ EFL teaching to the target groups and then to students learning are not included in the training English curricular contents. The curriculum leave out contents related to the teaching of speaking, writing, and pronunciations to young learners as well as to testing of English and English lesson plan preparation to the target groups showing its inadequacy to the purpose. The course contents do not seem to be tailored to the theoretical approaches, teaching methods and techniques applicable to real teaching situations. The
reference books used to prepare the curriculum contents also validates these claims as most of
the books referenced bear titles that are not appropriate to the teaching of EFL to young learners
and do not include references of known authorities to the area. The material writers could also be
wrongly dictated by the curricular objectives and contents that seem rather relevant to adult EFL
trainee teachers. This implies that the Ministry, disregarding children’s special methods of
learning the English language, seems to have ratified the only ELT method curriculum to the
cluster program by transferring contents prepared for English teachers to secondary education
(Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Gilzow and Rhodes, 2000). This could further shade a doubt to the
appropriacy of the enacted English curriculum to equip trainees to the teaching duties that are
awaiting them. Young learners learning of a new language imply new form of understanding and
communication which calls for courses that enable trainees to best handle and cultivate young
learners’ acquisition of the FL language (Loproire, 2006).

The data obtained from the course curriculum also show that the methods suggested to present
the ELT skills course contents are teacher’s classroom instructions, individual and group work
activities and whole-class discussions; but peer teaching and/or teaching in actual primary school
classrooms and/or seminars are not integrated in the methods to presenting the contents and to
assessing the teaching skills which could further jeopardize the effectiveness of the course. This
indicates that the only methodology course the Ministry has suggested for teacher training fails
to provide trainees any chances to practically experiment the course they have studied by
teaching English to YLs.

Prospective teachers need the experiences of teaching English to young learners to help them
make connection between the courses (theoretical models) they have studied to teaching EFL to
YLs and the actual demands of teaching English in young learners’ classrooms (Gilzow and
Rhodes, 2000; Park, 2006; Kirkgoz, 2006). Providing opportunities for prospective teachers to
teaching practices to demonstrate their own lessons, observe and critically analyze other
recorded or live classroom teaching experiences, and engage in exchanging feedbacks could help
trainees improve their own English language teaching to the levels (Smith, 2001; Park, 2006).
The practicum curriculums enacted for the TEIs to use are not related to the ELT method course
Teaching English I and thus might have little contribution to positively influence trainees’
primary ELT skills. Successful EFL teaching skills demand teachers’ understanding of young
learners’ special language learning characteristics, child FL/L2 acquisition and FL teaching methods for young learners such as songs, rhymes, chants, games, TPRs, and pictures. These imply that enacting ELT methodology courses with these contents and how ELT profit from this knowledge seems then a requirement for teachers training institutes (Johnston, 2001; Kirkgoz, 2006).

The numbers of hours and the types of ELT to YLs methodology courses various successful counries offer to the preparation of EFL teaching to young learners could further depict the inadequacies and inappropriacies of the training curriculum. Among the universities which demand a four years stay, few offer language improvement courses for 840/720 hours and teaching English to YLs for 180/270 hours for two consecuitive semisters for many experienced and newly graduate primary teachers to meet Bulgaria’s urgent needs during the 1998/99 and 2003/04 academic years. The latter consists of courses such as children’s literature in English, Primary ELT methodology such as approaches and methods in FL teaching, how YLs learn EFL. Slovenia’s four year university programs also offer two year in-service program for graduates of primary school teachers with the aim of this latter program is developing trainees’ linguistic (285 hours of practical English classes, 180 grammar and 60 hours of phonetics and phonology) and methodological skills (90 hours of teaching EFL to YLs, 45 hours of non-verbal means of communication) and get prepared to teaching EFL to children (Dagarin and Andraka, 2007). These show that the teaching of English to young learners has become its own field of study in countries around the world (Shin, n.d.; Driscoll, 2005). Cognizant to this, educators and policy makers have begun revisiting their primary ELT policies working towards scaling up teachers’ subject knowledge and subject application skills within the territory of EFL teaching to young learners (Lipton, 1994; Bernhardt and Hammadou, 1987; Curtain, 2000; Driscoll, 2005; Low, 2005; Nikolove et al., 2007). The results thus demonstrate that the only ELT methodology curriculum the Ministry has enacted for the pre-and in-service language cluster program in Ethiopia are found neither adequate nor relevant to equip trainees with the required knowledge and skills of teaching English to young learners. Several studies, however, caution that the method of teaching EFL to young learners is as important as the content (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 1997; Rixon, 1999)
In general, the findings show that the three year language cluster program and the time allotted and the number and types of English courses the curriculum suggest to primary first-cycle teacher training programs are found inadequate and inappropriate to equip trainees with the essential knowledge and skills of teaching English to young learners. The potential reasons for the findings could be the common beliefs that many authorities hold towards earlier primary EFL classes that their teachers do not need thorough training or the ‘critical period’ hypothesis (young learners have special skills to L2 language even when teachers are deficient in the language) (Lipton, 1994; Driscoll, 2005). The country’s low economic power to train and hire qualified primary EFL teachers fit to the purpose could also be the other cause for the results.

The analyses of the grades 1-4 English textbooks in the previous chapter indicate that the main goal of teaching English at primary first-cycle level is to promote students basic communication skills. The results of the analyses of the tasks and activities embodied in the textbooks further enquire teachers to be proficient both in the English language and in teaching English to young learners. The findings of the analyses of primary first-cycle teachers training curriculum contents, however, are deprived of course contents that could equip trainee teachers with the knowledge and skills that are awaiting trainees in grades 1-4 English classrooms. Teacher education, both pre-service and in-service, should help teachers develop teaching methods and skills that take the constructive views of how children learn the FL into account. Just as the grades 1-4 EFL curriculum and the developed textbooks are found mostly appropriate and relevant to the target groups, so should the instructional methods the English curriculum contents in the TEIs promote trainee teachers to be equipped with. This entails discrepancies between the competences required of teachers in the Grades 1-4 English curriculum and the textbooks and the skills encompassed in the training curriculum to prepare these teachers. These mismatches between the competences required and the skills the training curriculum emphasized could risk failure of the primary EFL program (Doye and Hurrel, 1997; Curtain, 2000; Rixon, 2005; Benedetti and Freppon, 2006). The limited view of teaching English as transmission of knowledge no longer fits with current understandings of how and what YLs learn to improve their communication in L2 (Cakir, 2004; Curtain and Dahlberg, 2005; Hayes, 2006). Research results on EFL teaching to young learners and experiences of successful primary FL programs show that scaling up teachers qualifications through enacting training curriculum fit for the purpose are crucial (Lipton, 1994; Curtain, 2000; Driscoll, 2005; Low, 2005).
Several countries in the globe have enacted new curriculum policies to establish primary FL teacher education programs fit to the purpose to regain momentum in the field. Slovenia, Croatia, China, Turk, Jordan, Egypt and Kuwait, for example, have reformed their training curriculum policy and set up training institutes to equip teachers with the required foreign language knowledge and skills (Vilk, n.d.; Al-Mutawa, 1997; Cakir, 2004; Wang, 2002, 2007; McCloskey et al., 2006; Dagarin and Andraka, 2007). And this, according to Al-Mutawa, Wang and McCloskey and her colleagues, has exerted a significant impact on improving their respective students’ English proficiency in the subsequent grades. Others like Switzerland that has shortage of qualified teachers delayed the starting age until students are able to read and write in their L1. These indicate the call for the Ministry to enact English curriculums that are adequate and relevant to the teaching of English language to young learners through establishing competent pre-and in-service training programs or to defer the onset form until students are able to read and write in their L1.

7.3 Results of the Analyses of the Classroom Observations and the Questionnaire

The results obtained both from the sample classroom observations and from teachers’ responses of the questionnaire are presented in this section.

7.3.1 Results of the Analyses of the Classroom Observations

The findings obtained from the analyses of the classroom observations data are presented in this section so as to reveal teachers’ levels of English language proficiency and lesson planning and implementations skills.

7.3.1.1 Reports on Teachers’ Level of English Proficiency

The incidental languages teachers are expected to use-for example-when explaining language points or illustrating the use of different sentence patterns or asking different questions-were non-existent. Most of the teachers were just found reading out the instructions of the exercises and the questions below them one by one loud for selected children to try to answer without attempting to illustrate the use of the focused languages for students to understand and subsequently practice the language. They were rather rushing to do the next activities in the textbooks without attempting to pitch the activities to children’s level of understanding-for example-through rephrasing, using simple sentence or simple vocabulary slowly which could
then indicate teachers’ failure to communicate with most of the students in the classroom. The teachers were rather successively translating the activities they were doing from the English textbooks into Amharic while attempting to explain and to give answers. They were observed for most of the classroom time using English only when they read aloud instructions and/or activities from the textbooks they held for few selected students to answer which might have little or no impact to cultivate children’s English. These could indicate teachers’ inability to elaborate the language functions to students’ levels of comprehension and to subsequently motivate them to try out the language patterns that are crucial to enhance students’ English language acquisition. The classroom English the teachers are expected to use in primary classrooms while explaining, motivating or demanding answers from children appeared to be missing. Teachers’ deficiencies in English appeared to compel them to use Amharic for much of their class time. The relatively routinized classroom commands such as ‘stand up’, ‘sit down’, ‘don’t disturb’, ‘keep silent’ or ‘raise your hands’ were frequently used.

Most of the teachers were not seen using as much classroom English as they are expected in primary EFL classrooms. Even though the observed teachers classroom English language were limited, it was not uncommon to listen to few incidental English classroom languages with grammar, and/or pronunciation errors that could further demonstrate their low level of command of the English language. Teachers limited classroom English, for example, when they retry to remember students the instructions and/or the questions in the textbooks they uphold or when they try to introduce or summarize the day’s lessons were not without errors.

The following extracts may demonstrate the claims above. The bold italicized sentences were what the teachers said in Amharic and have been translated by the researcher into English.

Teacher (T): Please keep silent. (She writes English and below it Parts of the body on the blackboard). Don’t you keep quiet? …Silent. Sit down. How do you sit?

‘Good afternoon’ song one, two, three!

Sts (Students): Good afternoon (2x). How are you? I’m fine thank you (2x) And you? (They sing it loud) (The teacher also sings in between)

T: Now listen to me. Who can write /ei/ (calling letter ‘a’) in small letter?
Sts: (raise their hands saying *me, me*) (the chosen student go and write the letter ‘a’ on the black board)

T: *Is he right children?*

Sts: *No, he is not.*

T: */ei/ in small letter. Did you see what is written? Did you see it?*

Sts: *Yes*

T: *Ok, is it right or not?*

Sts: *No, it is not.*

T: *Isn’t it right?*

Sts: *Yes, it is right.* (changing their minds)

T: *So, you did not know it. Wait ok. What is it?* (raising up letter ‘d’ card)

Sts: ‘d’

T: *What did I ask you before?*

Sts? */ei/ *

T: *Yes, I asked you to write */ei/*. So what is written on the blackboard?* (pointing to the letter ‘a’)

Sts: */ei/ *

T: *But you said it is not. Didn’t you say? What is it?* (Pointing to the letter ‘a’)

Sts: */ei/ *

T: *What?* (3x)

Sts: ‘a’ (3x)

T: *Is it small or capital letter?*

Sts: Small

T: *What about this?* (raising letter ‘a’ card)

Sts: */ei/ (chorused loud)*

T: *Who can write */bi/* in capital letter?* (then pointing to a student)
St1: B (She goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: Clap your hands to Meron. Ok. Small letter ‘b’?

St1: b (Another student goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: What is your name? (approaching to the student)

St1: (he told her his name)

T: His name is Yihenew. Ok. Small letter ‘e’

St1: (He goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: What is your name (Approaching another student)

St1: Abraham (He goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: Thank you Abraham.

T: Take out your English book to page 8. (3x) Be silent. Be quiet. Listen to me. No talk. Enough. Now listen. Page 8, where there is this picture. Where is your book?

St1: I forgot it

T: A student who forgets is a lazy. Now all look here. Put the book in front of you and look here. Listen. Now what is it in Amharic (Pointing to her eye)

Sts: Eye

T: (translating it) Eye! (Pointing to her ear)

Sts: Eye (chorused)

T: What? (2x)

Sts: Eye (2x)

T: What is it? (Holding her ear)

Sts: Ear

T: Ear! (2x)

Sts: Ear. (2x)

T: What is all this together? (Pointing to her face)

Sts: Face
T: Face (x)
Sts: Face.
(The teacher followed similar procedures for head/hair/mouth/teeth/nose)

T: Now listen, when I ask you in English, you answer in Amharic.
(you can see the appended transcription for details)

The names of body parts or English letters and the language patterns the teacher is expected to present using TPR activities in a true and meaningful way for students to understand and be ready to practice the language in their own context were not executed. This implies then that students were not encouraged to make use of the names of body part words and the language patterns that had just been introduced in a way that are meaningful to them. Teacher-talk dominated the lesson, much of it in Amharic and some of it in ungrammatical English (e.g., Last period ehh…we was …discussed….; This is my eyes; Who can show me your eyes? We will study … up to our leg’s nail). Although students were urged to answer questions, they were given no opportunity to ask a question. (See transcript A for detail). The teachers dominance (more than 95 percent of the lesson time approximately) in teaching the lessons could depict that the EFL classroom scenario were against what is espoused in the syllabus and the guides (student-centered method). For trully student-centered classroom, teacher-talk should not exceed 15 minutes in a 50-minute class (Williams, 2003).

Besides, the grade 1 textbook demands teachers to introduce students to capital letters after helping them identify the lower case letters at the end of grade 1 textbook though the extract witness against what is espoused in the teacher’s guide. This could indicate teacher’s unwillingness to follow the contents and methods suggested in the guide or the difficulties teachers face to understanding the suggestions given to carry out the activities in English. (see transcript B for detail).

Where the teacher used a word in English that the learners might not understand, it was immediately translated into Amharic. The extracts may also indicate that the observed teachers themselves rarely used the English language in the classroom for instructional or for communication purposes. This may imply that the teachers’ English language modeling effect, i.e. the pupils emulating effect of the language of the teachers, was remarkably lacking in the
primary classrooms. Pupil-teacher interaction and communication were primarily effected in Amharic, the local language, than the English language. This appeared to be due to teachers’ deficiency in the English language. One can understand the pervasive use of Amharic and the dominant role teachers assumed to teaching the contents of grade 1 English textbooks. The teacher also often cautioned students in an attempt to grasp their attention which further disrupted the flow of the lesson.

The following extracts drawn from classroom observation further demonstrate the weak level of English that teachers displayed and the dominant roles that they took in English classrooms, giving students few chances to independently use the focused language patterns.

T: Show me your ears. This is /iːz/* my ears*.

Sts: This is /iːz/* my ears*.

T: Show me your sweater /siweter/*.

Sts: This is my sweater /siweter/*.

T: (Pointing to other student while showing to the closer one) That is your* sweater/siweter/*

(Another extract)

T: *This is enough here. We shall read what’s written in bald at the end of the page. (Pointing to the page of the book) I will ask you saying ‘what is this?’ and you will answer using the phrase ‘This is’.*

T: What is this? What you call this*? (pointing to a picture in a student book)

(Pointing to one of the students to answer)

St1: That is a pen.

T: What is this?

St1: That is a pen.
(The teacher followed similar procedures for other three words-glass/cup/hen, reading out loud from the textbooks and students were pointed to answer.)

T: *Copy what I’m now writing on the blackboard taking care of the spellings.* (Some students were fighting at the back and talking loud in Amharic). *Don’t disturb students, please. (3x)*

Teaching English just to practice certain language patterns for long time by giving students little or no chances to try out the language patterns seem to have little or no impact on young learners English language learning. The observed teachers still put more emphasis on the delivery of knowledge about vocabulary and structure of the language while ignoring the development of students’ ability of using the language for communication. Classroom teaching, unlike what are espoused in the syllabus and teacher’s guides, is largely teacher-centered which may not foster children’s interest and motivation for learning the language or developing their autonomy.

Another classroom extract that could further depict observed teachers’ weak level of English and teaching English to young learners are hereunder. One of the grade three English teachers ordered, using Amharic, students to turn the textbook to page 45, exercise 3. Even though this teacher was found teaching this lesson, it was not included in the lesson plan. This may signal the gap between what the teacher planned to teach and what she was actually teaching in English classrooms.

The teacher then wrote the following words on the blackboard and enquired students to tell her the meaning in Amharic.

/ck/-- black  sack
    sock  cock
    tick  sick

Teacher: tell me in Amharic (pointing to one of the words written on the blackboard)

Student1: *black*

T: wonderful

The teacher followed similar techniques for the other words. The teacher was found repeatedly reading aloud the words-sock and cock- as having identical sounds /sok/* and at same time
translated them into Amharic as kalsi and awradoro, respectively. She was also found translating the word ‘tick’ as wefram*, mixing it with the word ‘thick’—which signals the teacher’s weak English. Words with similar letter groups and sounds such as the words in the above activities are usually designed to enhance students’ reading and writing skills in addition to promoting students’ phonological knowledge and skills. To equip children with phonemic knowledge and skills, crucial to enhance their reading and writing skills, teachers are expected to help students to understand the correct sounds the individual letter and/or letter groups represent, for example, through segmenting words into onset (/bl/ and /s/, /s/ and /k/) and rime (/ak/ and /ak/, /ok/ and /ok/). Such practical experience could help children easily remember the spellings with their sounds and to make analogy to sound out other words with similar letter patterns. Skilled reading at threshold levels relies mainly on children’s phonemic and quick word recognition skills, and thus teachers teaching skills of working towards helping students develop these knowledge and skills are crucial for students’ reading fluency (Westwood, 2001). This implies that the teacher is expected to encourage students to identify the similarities and differences these words carry in terms of their spellings and sounds by allowing students segment the words into onset and rimes and blend the onset and rimes into words orally and in writing rather than just focusing on their Amharic translations. This classroom scenario thus may evidence that teacher’s capability to teaching similar activities included in the English textbooks to assist children to identify and decode words and sentences using phonics method seemed questionable. This shows that teachers’ actual classroom performance can have little or no impact on improving students’ phonological knowledge and skills and then on their reading and writing skills.

The classroom data also evidence that most of the observed teachers used sentences that do not agree in number such as ‘There are one cup in the picture’, ‘There is three flowers on the tables’, ‘write five sentence about the animal’. Some of the observed teachers were also heard saying ‘Yesterday we learn about number and words’, ‘we learning about animals’, ‘We will learning about body parts’, ‘Last week we are learning about describing people’, ‘Right/wrong?’ and similar others. It was also common grade 1 and two teachers made errors in teaching and using the pronouns such as his/her/your. (See also the transcriptions attached for details).

The level of proficiency observed teachers possess did not seem to allow them to use the English language for instructional purpose and for different classroom functions. The grammatical and
pronunciation errors teachers made in English classroom even when they used limited classroom English also demonstrate teachers’ weakness in the English language. The English languages most of the teachers use while planning their English lesson also corroborate this fact (see some extracts below and Appendix I). These all indicate that majority of the observed English teachers seemed to have a weak command of the English language to use it in primary classroom as much as the level requires them.

7.3.1.2 Reports on Teachers’ Lesson Planning and Implementation Skills

The analyses of the daily/weekly lesson plans collected from the observed teachers confirm that all the schools visited use varied daily/weekly lesson plan formats for every teachers to follow. Few of the schools visited, for example, use Amharic lesson plan formats while many use English formats, and some of the formats also do not have students’ activity column for teachers to plan what students do in particular English lesson which can harm teachers’ English lesson planning and then their English teaching. The data extracted from teachers’ lesson plans also depict that English is given two times a week in self contained classrooms and each period contains 120 minutes or two hours. In some schools where teachers have the liberation to teaching in their convenience use six times a week, each contains 40 minutes. The self-contained classroom demand teachers to plan various English lessons and to successively present within one period and children to learn English language for continuous two hours. Despite the good amount of time allocated to teaching English (240 minutes per week), its distribution (two times a week, each for two hours) does not seem to be appropriate to the target groups as it demands them to sit for long hours studying one subject (Brumfit, 1995; Driscoll, 2005). The variation in the lesson plan formats and the different problems the formats bear that could affect teachers’ English lesson preparation and then teaching the lessons could also show the little regard given to the teaching of English to the target groups.

The following sample extracts taken from teacher’s English lesson plans to the observed classrooms can also demonstrate teachers’ deficiency in the English language and in English lesson planning.

Specific objectives:

- The student* can count alphabet word captal* letter. *
- The student* can copy read and captal* word.*
Activity 1: Listening and speaking the class I am. *

Teaching process:
- Revise* the last lesson* and continue* the new lesson*
- Write the capital* word near under.*

Activity 2: Read and do

Teaching process:
- Ask them to count the capital* word.
- Correct and tell how small letter word and capital* letter.*

After these lesson* student* will be able to say parts of your* body parts.* Identifying* parts of the body.

Teachers activity: Revising the last lesson; Introducing* the new lesson; summarizing* the main points*; asking some questions*.

Students activity: singing a song; greeting* each other identifying* parts of the body.

Objectives: At the end of this topic* students will be able to practice how to identify colours*; Teacher’s activities- to bring this into effect ‘give them highlights about the given topic’* and write the topic on the blackboard, tell the* to listen/…/read* and students were expected to ‘listening, reading and writing’*

Objectives: After the end of the lesson* students would be able to:- describe about parts of the body; write the letter* o e i.

Teacher activity: Motivate* by good morning; Recall the previse* lesson and show the picture* of girl & boy to assume* female* and male* what do we say boy and girl and pronounce*;* pronounce* parts of the body e.g eye, finger toes….; write the letter of c o in the line.* I ask different questions by check the students ex book.*

Student activity: Listen* attentively; Answer about greeting* good morning; touch parts of the body and pronounce* the body name; write the letters by them* exercise book.

The extract from the teachers lesson plans did not seem to be clear in terms of the specific objectives they wanted their pupils to acquire and the specific procedures they mapped to present and pupils to carry out and practice the specific language skills as well as the steps teachers set to stabilize the skills practiced and to assess its success or otherwise. In addition, the lesson
objectives and the teacher and students’ activities teachers set to help students to attain the objectives do not go together-for example, to help students identify the English names of their body parts, the teacher’s activity set are ‘introducing the lesson, summarizing the main points and asking some questions’; the planned students’ activities also expect students ‘to sing a song, greet each other, and identify their body parts’. It further depicts that student participation is limited to listening and copying from the blackboard. In addition to these errors, two of the lesson plans do not bear lesson objectives and still four others fail to include time allocated for lesson presentations which are crucial to maintain quality teaching in the classroom. This may signal the gap between the objectives teachers set and the teaching activities they plan to follow to help students to attain the objectives. The above extracts thus indicate the observed teachers’ weak lesson planning skills. (See Appendix I for details). Teacher’s inability to prepare clear English lesson plan could also negatively affect their implementation as the objectives, teacher and students’ activities are not clearly thought out in the lessons planned.

The grammar and spelling errors found in the observed teachers’ lesson plans further evidence teachers weak levels of proficiency in the English language. Teachers’ weak levels of English seemed to have compelled them to write lesson objectives and lesson activities that are not clear. These data may signal teachers’ deficiency in the English language and in setting up clear objectives and appropriate teaching and learning strategies to the levels.

The lesson plans observed teachers prepared state nothing about the key reading and writing components such as letter naming and their corresponding sounds, the phonemic knowledge and skills, sight vocabularies, reading aloud, tracing words, shared reading/writing that are crucial to improve beginning students reading and writing. For example the classroom extracts witness that teachers mainly followed oral question and answer methods without allowing students to see the words, understand the concepts and remember their sounds that crucial to enhance students reading fluency. This could imply that teachers usually neglect enhancing students’ sight vocabularies power while working towards cultivating students oral and aural skills.

The data drawn from the classroom observations also depict that most of the observed teachers did not reveal the objectives of the day’s lessons for students to understand the purpose and be prepared for lessons to come. Most of the teachers rather begin their lesson by asking students
whether or not they have done their home works or by cautioning students to keep silent that can further witness observed teachers ELT methodological weakness. The data obtained from the analysis of the lesson plans also evidence that most of the teachers did not plan to disclose the objectives.

The following classroom extract from the observed lessons is also indicative of teachers English lesson planning and teaching skills to YLs. Words in **bald italics** were said in Amharic and have been translated into English by the researcher.

……
T: Show me your eyes
Sts: Show me your eyes
T: …You have to know what you have learned. Show me your ears
Sts: Show me your ears.
T: You should say This* is my eyes.
……

The teacher begins to introduce students to the names of body parts and the given language patterns without attempting to genuinely communicate to students for students to understand how to order and answer using the focused language patterns (S1: Show me your eye S2: This is my eye). Students were not given the chance to practice modeling the language patterns to meaningfully use the languages in their own contexts. Teacher’s inability to properly introduce the language patterns and model their meaningful uses did not seem to encourage students to understand and practice using the names of their body parts and the language patterns. The extract further depict that, when children failed to answer teacher’s questions, the teacher was trying to encourage few students to memorize the language patterns through having them drill the focused speech acts rather than giving all students chances to interact using the language patterns meaningfully. The children frequently failed to answer the teacher’s questions or responded in a way that appeared to indicate that they had not understood the question. The overall classroom scenario was noisy and the students often appeared to be following their own agenda rather than that of the teacher.
The focus of the lesson then went to ‘English letters identification’ when the teacher subsequently called out two students one by one to show to the class the English letters she named, and then the focus moved back to the previous lesson ‘identifying names of body parts’ (See the excerpt above and Appendix I for details). The teacher did not attempt to make appropriate link when she moved from the first to the second and then back to the first lessons. Such disorganized activities could indicate teacher’s failure to plan their lesson objectives and structure teachers and students’ activities that could help children to achieve these objectives. It was not possible to determine the objective of these lessons or the reasons why the teacher swung from the first to the second and back to the first. There was no appropriate organization or grading of the language. Even though the lesson includes all the four skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing, there was no clear learning focus. There was no meaningful communications that are true to students’ context; no student-to-student interaction related to the lesson. At the end of the lesson, it was impossible to tell whether the children had learned anything.

It was not possible to determine the objective of this lesson or the reason why the teacher swung from the first to the second and back to the first. There was no appropriate organization or grading of the language. Even though the lesson includes all the four skills emphasizing the oral skills, there was no clear learning focus. There was no meaningful communications that are true to students’ context; no student-to-student interaction related to the lesson. At the end of the lesson, it was impossible to tell whether the children had learned anything.

The other extracts which could further witness teacher’s English teaching skills are shown here under:

T: There is homework, isn’t it?

Sts: Yes

T: Take out your exercise book. Open your books. Raise your hand if you did the homework. You need to do it well completing all the home works. Put it down. Those who did not work. Ok, put down your hands.

Sts: (Raised and lowered their hands accordingly)

T: Take out your exercise books
Sts: We take out

T: Look at it until I finish marking. (The teacher goes on marking students’ exercise books. The teacher talks to students in L1 while marking their exercise books)

T: Ok. When you were absent, you need to ask your friends what were given and come to class doing your homework.

Sts: Ok.

T: Correct it without saying ‘I was absent’. Ask your friends what they were learned, and try to do the home works. Ok? Now Let’s see it. Page 10. (He writes on the blackboard). Exercise 1, Fantu. Write the number of each boy and girl. Fantu, which number is Fantu?

(the teacher is reading out loud the text from the textbook he holds)-Fantu is sitting in front of her brother. She has short hair. She is wearing glass*. It says. Fantu, you! (pointing to a student).

St1: Right.

T: Number. Number. Don’t say me, me, “gashie‘ simply raise your hand. Ok? You (pointing to another student)

St1: 5.

T: Fantus is 5?

Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: Ok. It is 5. (He goes on reading the next description from the textbook he holds) Fatuma. Fatuma is tall and thin. Which number is Fatuma?

St1: 3

T: Number 3, right?

Sts: right (in chorus). …

The texts used in the class were read by the teacher (not always accurately) but the learners appeared to pay little attention and, on the basis of their responses to questions, appeared to understand little, if anything, of what was being read to them. Although children’s literature was used in the lessons to cultivate children’s reading and writing skills, children were not allowed to practice decoding texts assisted by their sight vocabularies, phonic knowledge and skills, and the pictures that accompany the texts. Students were not allowed to apply the principles-the phonic approach and the whole language approach-that underpin the activities in the textbook to
cultivate students reading and writing skills. The teachers were rather found busy reading aloud the labels for few students to match them with their respective pictures orally saying the numbers of the pictures that could match with the texts which could have little or relevance to enhance their reading and writing skills. This also implies that teachers were unable to use the right methods to cultivate children’s reading and writing skills.

(The teacher now goes to the next lesson)

Exercise 4. Complete the sentence using ‘is this/are these’ (He reads aloud and write them on the blackboard). When we bring ‘is’ from ‘this is’, it becomes a question or when ‘is’ and ‘are’ at the beginning of the sentences they become questions.

T. Number 1(reads aloud the questions for students to answer orally) It reads Giraffes or Zebras?

Sts: (Kept silent)

T: Is it not clear? You! (Pointing to a student). Exercise 4. All of you get ready. I will ask you randomly, not only those who raised their hands. Giraffes or zebras. Page 12. Don’t you have a book? (Approaching a student)

St1: Are these? (replies)

T: Right or wrong.

Sts: Right (in chorus)

T: ‘Are these’ because giraffes are more than one-plural. And zebras are more than one. Therefore, are these giraffes or zebras? Ok. Number 2. Blank a flower or a leaf. You! (pointing to a student)

St1: Are these

T: Right wrong?

Sts: Right

T: A flower or a leaf? You! (Pointing to another student)

St1: Is this?

T: Is this. We said last time a flower/a leaf is one. Don’t you remember? Therefore, ‘is this’. 3. A boy or a girl. Number 3. (Pointing to a student)

St1: Are these
T: Right wrong?
Sts: Right/wrong
T: wrong (Pointing to another student)
St1: Is this
T: ‘This is’*. Ostriches
St1: Is this? (Two students say ‘is this’, ‘is this’ trying to correct the teacher’s answer (but they went on unheard)
T: Ok. Number 6. An eagle
St1: Is this.
T: ‘Is this’ right wrong?
Sts: right
T: Anything not clear? From what you listened, anything not clear to ask?

The classroom data further demonstrate that teachers did not seem to have the required levels of English language to illustrate the grammar by contextualizing the sentences to the theme of the unit or to the pupils’ actual life to ensure students’ comprehension and meaningful uses of the language forms. The language was simply presented in chunks, with no real indication that these chunks were made up of meaningful elements. The only English the teacher used were when reading the questions from the textbook and when asking whether individual student’s answers were correct or incorrect ‘right/wrong’*. This implies that the teacher himself was unable to practically use ‘is this right/wrong’ (for example, is s/he right or is s/he wrong?) to model its use to children. The teacher rather switched to use Amharic to explain the forms ‘is this’ and ‘are these’ without giving students any chances to meaningfully understand and use and practice the focused language forms independently. The learners were just required to fill in the gaps in the questions answering ‘is this’ and/or ‘are these’ without any reference to any specific contexts in which such phrases would actually be used. These also seem to be indicative of that new languages were introduced and practiced in largely de-contextualized chunks. What is more, some of the teacher’s disappointment on students’ failure to remember what they have been taught earlier could also indicate teacher’s failure to revise the previous lessons and link it to the
present one as well as the little value the teacher gives to the importance recycling language contents and forms while teaching the target language to young learners.

The classroom lesson extracts indicate that the teachers seemed to fail to create context for pupils to get meaning which is crucial for the young learners to develop interest and take part in doing the classroom activities and practice the required language-asking and telling about the animals/flowers or about English names of their body parts. The vital language elements students are supposed to role play and practice-show me your eye/nose and This/these is/are my/his/her eyes/nose or Are these boys/zebras/ostriches/Is it a/an boy/girl/flower/eagle. And this is a flower/boy or these are zebras/boys/ostriches-appear to be left out.

The objectives the teacher set for this extract read ‘After the lesson students will be able to 1. Ask using the word ‘is’, ‘does’, ‘who’ and correct answer*. 2. Read the passage 3. Able to do the exercises.’ The instructional procedures the teacher set to help students to attain the objectives are ‘revise the last topic-introduce the new topic made group students. Motivate students to read and to discuss in a good way. Motivate students to explain what they understand. Motivate students to ask question which is not clear for them.’ The format this teacher’s school uses does not demand this teacher to plan for students’ activities and thus what students are expected to perform during this lesson were not included. It appears difficult to draw what kind of language skills he wants his students to develop and how they are going to practice to achieve these skills.

The objectives the other observed teacher set for the first extract displayed above read: ‘The students will be able to

- say the name of the body part*
- students to work in pairs and say*’

This teacher plans her presentation (Instructional procedures as is in the format) to be ‘ask and answer* Review names of body parts, eg eye, ear, face,…; say the teacher show me your eye, tooth, mouth etc.* After each instraction* students will point to the correct body part and say. eg this is my eye, ear etc*. The teacher also plans students to do the following activities ‘pair students stand up informt* of the classroom to practice to show parts of the body eg:- this is my face show me your ear etc. and check that the correct English word is being used to name the body.’ The teacher begins her class by allowing students to sing Good Afternoon Song in her
classroom without being included in her lesson plan as indicated in the lesson plan above; Pair or group work for students to ask and show their body parts to practice the required language were planned but not implemented in the actual classroom. The grammatical and the spelling errors involved in the lesson plan further show teacher’s low level of English language.

These may signal the gap between what teachers plan to teach and what they actually teach in their English classrooms. The data extracted from the classroom lessons and their respective lesson plans also indicate that most of the observed teachers were unable to spell out clear objectives and worked against the appropriate teaching strategy and the required language pupils are supposed to practice. This may indicate that majority of the teachers were not able to work towards clear objectives and well harmonized steps to promote the attainment of the objectives. Most of the observed teachers ELT were unsystematic as they seemed to be unclear of what specific skills to promote and/or to consolidate in children or to assess the success of their lesson implementations. They were frequently found doing the activities in the textbook mixing it with the consolidation activities, and the assessment was less visible and entwined into the teaching process as teachers mostly focus to get finished the exercises and not to build up the desired language skills. These all may signal that observed teachers English lesson preparation to be nominal to obey the school’s policy rather than to assisting their lesson implementation. These demonstrate that the teachers were weak both in planning their English lesson and in implementing suitable methodology.

The following extract further demonstrates the claims above:

The teacher in grade 2 frequently cautions students to be silent and to pay attention to what she is going to read (first in English and subsequently translating it in Amharic). The teacher goes on to reading aloud activities from the English textbook she upholds,

Teacher (T): She reads aloud ‘I can read’

Then using Amharic-Do you understand what I am saying? Try to understand the meaning’. What does ‘I can read’ mean in Amharic?’

Students (SS): (all remain silent)

T: It means I can read. The teacher then called a student to read ‘I can read’ aloud.
S:: ‘I can read’ (she reads aloud)

T: *How do you read questions and statements?* She corrects the student reading with this oral illustration.

‘Can you walk?’ *(raising her intonation at the end)*

‘Thank you’ *(falling her intonation at the end)*

The teacher here tries to explain something unrelated with the day’s lesson spending 10 minutes explaining and illustrating. It does not seem difficult, however, to predict that the pupils seem to have learned such rising/falling English intonation lessons sometimes in the past.

The teacher, coming back to the lesson, goes on reading the sentence ‘They can draw’ aloud and then asks students its meaning in Amharic.

SS: all remain silent

T: *They can draw.* (translates it in Amharic)

‘She can draw’, she reads aloud. Subsequently translates it in Amharic *She can draw*. The teacher again asks the pupils tell me the meaning *in Amharic* read ‘Can you walk?’ aloud

S: *can you work?*

T: *can you walk?* *(correcting students’ answers)*.

The teacher, following same steps, keeps on reading out loud referring to the various sentences for students to translate though the teacher ends up doing the translations by herself as students failed to do so. The lesson was designed to give students chances to practice aspects such as developing their sight vocabularies, reading fluency, phonemic skills vital to improve their reading skills.

*T: She can run Can they run? He can read Can you draw?*

T: *We learned now* Listening and Reading (the ‘Listening and Reading’ section of the textbook).
This extract shows that the teacher was required to allow students to listen and read and subsequently to make the activities meaningful to students; but unlike what is suggested in the teachers guide, she was busy translating the sentences into Amharic which has little or no relevance to cultivate students reading comprehension skills. This could show that teachers’ knowledge of the various principles such as reading aloud for students to listen to tracing the words in the texts, shared reading that underpin such activities designed to promote students oral and print skills are questionable. One can possibly draw information from this extract that the learning outcomes targeted behind such lessons and the classroom scenario are not well harmonized indicating the gap between what are espoused in the teacher’s guides and what are actually practiced in the classrooms. Besides, it would have been suggestible if the teacher drew specific objectives out of this lesson and announced at the beginning of the class for pupils to profit from lesson implementation which indicates teachers poor lesson planning and teaching skills.

The reading texts that are accompanied with pictures in the textbook were read aloud and then translated into Amharic by the teachers. Students were not given chances to practice the reading texts supported by the pictures, the teachers reading as well as their decoding skills. The teachers were rather found reading the comprehension questions aloud and subsequently translated them into Amharic for students to answer. The teaching styles the observed teachers followed were largely teacher fronted, using transmission model. The focus was on rote learning and memorization. The language was not introduced or practiced in any meaningful context. The only skills taught were those of memorization and verbal repetition. There were no tasks that involve students to meaningfully communicate using the language.

The data further evidence that the English language environment in the observed classrooms apparently was lacking. The pupils were not exposed to an English language environment where they were given ample opportunities to listen to and use the language in the classroom. This may imply that the teachers’ English language modeling effect, i.e. the pupils emulating effect of the language of the teachers, was remarkably lacking in the observed classrooms. Pupil-teacher interaction and communication were primarily effected in Amharic, the local language, than the English language. This appeared to be due to teachers’ deficiency in the English language.
The classroom observation data also indicate that learners were generally noisy and unruly, talking loudly to each other in Amharic for much of the time and demonstrating little interest in using English to carry out the task. Due to the transmission model teachers dominantly used, classroom children often became restive and inattentive to what the teachers said and did. Most of the observed teachers frequently attempted to regain control over the class by giving orders and advice in English and in Amharic (e.g., keep silent! Sit down! Get back to your seats. Didn’t I say ‘keep silent’?). Few of the observed teachers and some classroom monitors (big students) often threatened students with big sticks and sometimes stroke and knocked them to remain seated and keep silent crossing their hands on their chest. This served little purpose other than to encourage the learners to associate English instructions with punishment. In addition to the weak level of English teachers displayed in planning and in delivering the English lessons, teachers were unable to manage their classroom despite their frequent warning to stop children talking loud and fighting in classroom.

The classroom observations also confirm that most of the teachers observed used no teaching aids to supplement the textbooks while few of the teachers were found using flash cards with printed English letters and cut outs of different objects dresses, sweaters, posters of human body to teach body parts etc. One of the teachers who was using radio English lesson to teaching students ‘to count objects using numbers in English’ was finally found unable to tell the lyrics of radio song and to sing together with students. Even though this teacher found teaching this radio lesson, it was not included in the lesson plan prepared for the day and the week. This implies that the radio English that are suggested to supplement classroom English was found hindering students English language learning as students are likely to frustrate as they fail to follow the lessons in the radio. This could mean either that the teachers were not provided with radio English guides or they were unprepared to teaching the radio English.

Most of the teachers were not found using the songs and games to teaching the English language. This may indicate that teachers’ deficiency to classroom English language seemed to incapacitate them to use songs and games to teaching English to the target groups. From those found using songs to teaching English, their focus was on enabling students to orally recite the songs disregarding the print words and sentences embodied in the song texts for students to trace and the accompanied physical movements (pointing, gesturing or touching to communicate using the
language) to enhance students phonemic skills and to make the activity meaningful to students which is vital to cultivate students oral and print skills. This can also witness teachers’ weakness in using age-appropriate teaching methods as they were unable to help students profit from singing the songs.

In sum, the results of the analyses of the classroom observation data and the data obtained from teachers English lesson plan indicate that most of the teachers are deficient in the English language and in lesson planning and implementing the appropriate teaching strategies to the levels.

Note: Note that asterisk (*) in the extracts indicate erroneous words/phrases and sentences.

7.3.2 Results of the Analyses of the Teacher’s Questionnaire

From the 24 distributed teachers’ questionnaire, the fourteen female and eight male respondent grades 1-4 teachers filled in questionnaire were returned. Two of the teachers did not bring back the filled in questionnaire despite the effort I made to remind them. Among the twenty two teachers, 14 (63.64 percent) were certificate graduates with 12 + 1, while the rest 5 (10 + 3) and 3 (12+2) (36.36 percent) were diploma holders. From the eight diploma trained teachers, two were trained majoring English and one in language cluster and one in Amharic, while the rest four teacher respondents were trained majoring chemistry, natural science cluster, and social science cluster (2). These indicate that majority 18 (81.82 percent) of the teacher respondents were teaching English without receiving any training related to the teaching of English to the young learners. Half of the teacher respondents also responded that they have received in-service training in ELT from one month to one week at different places including Beyemdir College, Bahir Dar town, Debark, and Woreta, while the rest half replied that they have never taken any training related to ELT. These also show that the Ministry’s and the Bureau’s attempt to enhance teachers’ on the job performances through in-service training seem to be insufficient to address most of the teachers.

Majority of the teachers 20 (90.90 percent) responded that they have been assigned to teaching all subjects in a self contained classroom, while the rest two (9.1 percent) said they have been assigned to teaching English. With regard to teaching English, 3 (13.64 percent) and 8 (36.36
percent) respondents have two to five and six to nineteen years of ELT experience, respectively, while the rest eleven (50 percent) have more than twenty years of ELT experience. These may indicate that most of these teacher respondents were assigned to teaching English for several years without being trained to teaching English to the young learners.

Figure A  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Levels of Proficiency

The observed teachers were further required to respond to their level of proficiency in English language and in lesson planning and in implementing appropriate teaching strategies to the levels. The SPSS analyses of the teachers responses to the closed-type of questions (see Figure A) show that majority (68 percent) of them felt that they have good level of English, while few of the respondents believe that they lack the required proficiency levels of English.
Figure B  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Planning Competences

With regard to their English lesson planning (see Figure B), half of the teacher respondents believe that they are good at it, while the rest (50 percent) do not feel that they have the skills of planning their English lessons.

Figure C  Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Implementation Competences
Regarding teachers’ skills of implementing their planned English lesson, majority (63.6 percent) of the teacher respondents note that they have the skills while the rest believe that they lack these skills (see Figure C).

**Figure D** Teachers’ Perceptions of their English Lesson Planning and Implementation skills
The SPSS result (see Figure D) summarise respondents overall responses and show that fifty percent of the teacher respondents claimed that they possess the competences to teaching English to young learners.

Despite the effort made to clarify the questions on the questionnaire, eight of the questionnaires from the 22 returned do not bear answers to many of the open-ended questions though the rest of the respondents replied. Most of these teachers note that the pre-service training they received was not sufficient to enable them teach English to young learners as it is not designed to prepare English teachers. They further stress that teaching English particularly to children is not easy and requires special training, support and special teaching aids. In relation to this, one of the respondent teachers writes ‘Because it is a foreign language, teachers need rigorous preparation to improving their levels of proficiency and ELT methodology to be effective in their English teaching to children.’ Few of the respondents also write just as ‘it (their pre-service training) is not good’ without clarifying it. These show that most of the observed teachers are unsatisfied in the training they received to teaching English though they at the same time claim to the close-ended questions that they are proficient in the English language, and in English teaching to young learners.

With regard to the questions that give teachers chances to evaluate the success and failure of the English lessons they have taught, most of the teachers answered as they have achieved more than the average of the day’s lesson. The aspects the respondents claim to be successful and the evidence they put forward for their success include:

‘Teaching the oral section were most successful due to high students participation in classroom discussions’; ‘I brought my students from grade 1 to grade 2’; I use Amharic so as to help students follow up my discussions; ‘because some students were nice while many students were not doing well’; ‘the presentation part is most successful because I made it clear to all students’.

The aspects the teacher respondents claim to be less successful and the evidence they attach include ‘Students cannot speak and listen in English to understand and practice the language’. ‘Students are poor in writing as they lack parental support’, ‘Many of my students do not understand instructions in English and needs me to use Amharic’, ‘I dominate the lesson due to high class size’.
These qualitative extracts depict that most of the respondent teachers were unable to evaluate their instructional practices as their replies failed to evaluate their English lesson in terms of the objectives they target for the day’s lesson and whether or not the instructional procedures they employed helped students attain the desired language skills. These further indicate most of the observed teachers’ weaknesses in the overall teaching of English to young learners contrary to their claim to the close-ended questions.

7.4 Implications of the Results of the Classroom Observations and the Questionnaire

The purpose of classroom observations and teachers questionnaire in this research was to reveal language teachers’ competences both in the English language and English teaching appropriate to the young learners and then to find out the practices of the teaching and learning of English.

The results of the analyses of the teachers’ questionnaire show that most of the teachers believe that they have the competences in the English language and in teaching English to young learners in contrast to their weak classroom performances. The lack of consistencies in the teachers’ responses to the close- and open-ended items of the questionnaire can also shade distrust to their claims to be proficient in their English command and English teaching. The results variation may put teachers’ exaggerated self-evaluation report to be dubious. Teachers’ self-evaluation reports frequently kindle suspicions among educationists. Even though self-evaluation is suggestible pedagogy to enhance teachers’ professional duty, several authorities put their doubts over teachers’ objectivity while evaluating their own teaching competencies (Al-Mutawa, 1997; Kiely and Rea-Dickens, 2005; Drew and Hasselgreen, 2008).

The multi-source data findings also corroborate teachers’ weak performances both in their English command and in ELT to young learners. The results of the analyses of the classroom observation data show that majority of the observed teachers were found deficient both in their English proficiency level and in English teaching skills and were incapable of translating the policy/practice claims into their instructional practices. That is, the observed teachers’ levels of English language and lesson planning and implementation skills were weak; and the classroom practices of the teaching and learning of English were not up to the principles propounded in the textbooks and in the curriculum that can further witness teachers’ weakness in the English language and in language and language learning theories to understand the contents and
implement suitable ELT strategies to the target group. The findings of the analyses of the Ministry’s grades 1-4 teacher training curriculum policy also confirm that the training the TEIs offer to these teachers are neither adequate nor appropriate to equip trainee teachers with the skills that are awaiting them in the primary first-cycle English classrooms. The interview data collected from school principals also confirm that most of the teachers were unwilling to teach English to the target groups due to their weakness in the language. The data further reveal that English teacher trainers from Bahir Dar University have given training for one week during semester break to improve this perceived teachers’ deficiency in the English language though the problems still remained in large degree. The interview data obtained from the ministry’s official also support this claim though he notes that the Ministry has provided three-day training program to all grades 1-4 English teachers to enhance teachers’ use of the new English textbooks. (See Appendix F).

The insufficient uses of songs, and games in most of the observed classrooms could indicate teachers’ lack of confidence in their ability to sing songs and understand and tell the rules of games; teachers’ inappropriate and insufficient training to teach EFL to YLs and unawareness of the true value of songs, and games or unsure of how to use them could also contribute for missing these playful tasks and activities (Ur, 1996; Lugossy, 2007). Teachers lack of previous learning experience coupled with the inadequate training they receive for teaching EFL to YLs may assist them to ignore or underestimate the potential such methods may have and opt for methods that are better suited for older learners. Although teaching EFL to primary school children demands special instructional strategies (Komorowska, 1997; Cakir, 2004; Edelenbos et al., 2006), these teachers were found having a tendency to impose their previous learning experience as older learners, transmission model.

If teachers are not adequately trained in line with the classroom challenges awaiting them, they are likely to use their primary English language learning experiences (Cameron, 2003; Mohanraj, 2006). Several authorities also contend that such teachers are unlikely to follow methods that underpin the principles of the constructive approach and children’s potential for language learning; they often rely on frontal work, reading aloud or filling in textbook exercises which have little or no relevance to children’s English language learning (Komorowska, 2000; Rosa, 2004).
Besides, teachers’ deficiency in the English language may incapacitate teachers to comprehend the principles underpinned the tasks and activities and the suggested instructional procedures given in the teacher’s guides to follow while using the English textbook. This appears against what the textbooks are assumed to render—for example—a guide to teachers who are novice and/or less qualified (Ansary and Balbaii, 2002; Hassan and Raddatz, 2008). This then imply that the Ministry’s effort in preparing and ensuring adequate and appropriate English syllabus and student’s book cannot guarantee the attainment of the goals targeted in them unless qualified teachers who are fit to the purpose are trained and assigned.

These can then possibly show the discrepancies within the Ministry’s curriculum policies. The results of the analyses of the teachers training curriculum the Ministry has enacted were found inadequate and inappropriate to equip trainee teachers to effectively carry out the tasks and activities suggested in the grades 1-4 English syllabus. Besides, the actual lack of the required expertise of teachers to teaching English to the target groups can seldom promote students basic communication in the English language. Theses policy/practice gaps further entails the inappropriacy of the decision of the onset age to teaching English beginning from grade one. The interview data, however, claimed that the Ministry’s decisions to lower the starting age to grade I is due to its belief in the adage that notes ‘the earlier students start learning a foreign language the better’. (See Appendix F).

These imply that the goal the Ministry sets in its grades 1-4 syllabus, improving students’ communication skills in the English language, are highly exaggerated as the language cluster programs could hardly equip graduates with the required levels of proficiency to implement the textbooks and the syllabus. Assigning teachers to teaching English in primary classrooms for which they are least competent is likely to prepare both the teachers and their students for failure (Bernard, n.d.; Doye and Hurrel, 1997). Jordan and China ascribe the major problems they face related to primary English language teaching and learning to the system that assigned teachers without qualifications to teach English before stipulating new training curriculum that could address the classroom challenges awaiting trainee teachers to teaching English in their respective contexts (Mukatash, 1984; Wang, 2002).
The analyses of the grades 1-4 curriculum and the teachers guides prove that teachers are suggested no audio-or video-materials to supplement the English textbooks; however, the classroom observation data witness that some of the teachers were found using radio English broadcast in an attempt to supplement their classroom lessons. The radio lessons that few of the teachers were found employing to supplement their English teaching was not well planned; it was rather found disorganized as the time of broadcast mismatches to most of the schools English periods. The contents teachers and students were doing and the radio lessons broadcast that followed were also not in harmony. The interview data also confirm the existence of the Interactive Radio English (IRE) broadcast in the region. In relation to this, however, the interview data captured from the Ministry’s official note that

The IRE (Interactive radio English) broadcast that was designed to supplement teachers' classroom English instruction (15 minutes radio and 25 minutes teachers instruction) has a lot of problems. The radio lessons are not updated together with the new textbooks and there is also a mismatch between the daily broadcast time and the scheduled school’s English period. It is hardly possible to say that there is IRE broadcast currently due to this and other problems; but various efforts such as recording radio lessons and distributing to all primary schools are underway to bring it back.

This could also witness that the problems the teaching of English at primary-first cycle level faces. It was found creating an environment that could frustrate students’ English language learning as it is not related to the contents in the textbooks and as teachers could not fully cope with radio lesson contents.
CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 SUMMARY

The objective of this research was to explore the gaps the teaching of English at primary school level faces through studying the curriculum policy texts and the actual practices. To specifically find out problems related to policy and practice, the grades 1-4 English curriculum and the teachers training curriculum as well as the English textbooks and teachers’ live English classrooms and any activities the schools or the REB or the Ministry performs to promote the teaching and learning primary English were examined.

In order to evaluate the policies enacted and the practices, a conceptual framework was designed to gather and analyze the contents and tasks and activities suggested in the policies and embodied in the textbooks as well as the teachers performances in English classrooms and the organizations and course contents suggested in the curriculum policy to prepare teachers to teaching English. The frameworks suggested by Balbi (1997, 2008) as well as the criteria derived from the reviewed literature were referenced to evaluate the grades 1-4 English curriculum and their respective English textbooks. The teachers’ competences in the English language and in lesson planning and teaching the language were assessed using outlines developed by Al-Mutawa (1997) and Kiely and Rea-Dickens (2005) as well as the reviewed literature on EFL teaching to young learners.

The study employed mixed method approach to collect and analyze the data from these sources. Qualitative data were obtained from reviewing the grades 1-4 English curriculum and their respective English textbooks, and the teachers training curriculum as well as from observing 24 grades 1-4 teachers while conducting 30 live English classrooms and reviewing their lesson plans prepared for observed lessons in six different primary schools. These also include the interview data gathered from pertinent personnel. The survey questionnaire enabled the researcher to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data as it encompasses close-and open-ended questionnaire.

The results of the analyses of the grades 1-4 English textbooks and the English curriculum reveal that they are mostly adequate and appropriate to promote young students’ acquisition of basic
communication skills in the English language as they are found mostly reflecting the theories and principles underpinning the constructive and the natural approach to EFL teaching to young learners. The criteria used in the analyses of the textbooks are the supplementary materials accompanied the textbook, the goal targeted, the approach to language and language learning which include how language is viewed, the language input suggested, how new languages are introduced, use and practice of the new languages, organization and presentations of language contents, the treatment of the four skills, as well as the topics and texts selected, lay out of the textbooks, and teacher’s books.

The grade 2 English student book, however, unlike what is espoused in the curriculum, bears printed instructions that enquire students to read and understand to do the tasks and activities embodied in it without giving students appropriate exposure to the reading skills in grade 1 English textbooks and against the oral and aural emphasis the syllabus and the teacher’s guides claim to give. Besides, the lack of resources such as workbooks, supplementary readings, audio- and video-recordings, technology related materials or maps or board games that are crucial to kindle students’ interest to use the language and stay motivated in doing the activities appear to sap the quality of the syllabus and the textbooks and then students speedy English language acquisitions.

Majority of the observed teachers’ level of English proficiency and ELT skills were found to be weak to properly handle the English textbooks. The methodological skills the observed teachers displayed to teaching the English language in primary first-cycle classrooms were found to be inappropriate, against the principles propounded in the policy (the English syllabus) and against the instructional procedures suggested in the teacher’s guides. Teachers’ classroom language were dominated by L1; they were unable to use English to illustrate language points by relating to students life, to make genuine communications with students, and to prepare clear lesson plan using the English language. Teachers were unable to write clear lesson objectives and clear instructional procedures in line with what are suggested in the teacher’s guides that can promote the attainment of the objectives. This has resulted in the English classroom scenario to be largely teacher-centered which did not foster students’ interest and motivation for learning the target language or developing their individuality.
The curriculum the Ministry has enacted to the organizations and provisions of primary first-cycle teachers training are found to be neither adequate nor appropriate to equip teachers with the required knowledge and skills that are awaiting them in the grades 1-4 English classrooms. The only methodology course provided are not relevant to the teaching skills trainee teachers are required to properly handle the English textbooks-for example- to teaching English to YLs using songs, games, poems, rhymes or phonic method and whole language approach to teaching reading and writing or capitalizing on children’s language learning potential and developmental characteristics to English language teaching. The Language Cluster program organizations seem to limit the number and quality of English courses appropriate to young learners.

The results of the analyses of the contents and activities encompassed in the student books and the overall communication goals targeted in the curriculum are found not in line with the results of the analyses of both the classroom observations and the curriculum the Ministry has enacted for teachers preparation. Teachers lack of the required competences and the inadequate and inappropriate teachers training to the purpose further entail the inappropriacy of the Ministry’s curriculum policy to have commenced the teaching of English from the earliest grade level.

8.2 CONCLUSION

Even though a theoretical possibility exists for primary school students to acquire a foreign language in a classroom context, the conditions for its realization in the Ethiopian primary schools pose special challenges. Among the most pertinent challenges are teachers’ quality and lack of resources. Based on these findings the following conclusions are drawn.

1. Teachers lack of the required expertise to effectively handle the English textbooks and the inadequate and inappropriate curriculum the Ministry has stipulated to prepare English teachers to the teaching duties that are awaiting them seem then to be the major factors responsible for most of primary students’ failure to acquire the language and to lose interest in learning the English language. This painful English language learning experience students pick up in this formative age could have further an uninspiring effect in their post primary English classes; students may start averting learning the language rather than attempting to improve their level of proficiency which is crucial to study other subjects and continue their education. It is the universal experience of language teachers
that young children (say 6-13) tend to have, at the beginning of their language learning, strong enthusiasm and feeling of success; they are incredibly dejected by failure and buoyed up by success (McCay, 2006; Brown, 2006; Balbi, 2008). Whoever has taught children knows that it is intrinsic motivation resulting from enjoyable lessons and being successful, that has the power of sustaining them in their learning efforts (Nikolove, 2002).

2. The findings of the analysis of the Grades 1-4 English curriculum and student books reveal that they are mostly appropriate to promoting children’s mastery of the English language; but the unavailability of work books, audio-visual and other resources which appear to be practical supports to children’s English language acquisitions can reduce the positive impact the student books might exert. Successful primary EFL teaching show that children’s EFL teaching and learning demands more than the sole use of textbooks particularly in Ethiopia where the goal is to develop children’s communication in the English language and where students exposure to the language is mainly limited to the classroom (Ur, 1996; Rixon, 2000; Cameron, 2001, 2003; Edelenbos et al., 2006). Therefore, stipulating quality curriculum and then ensuring age-appropriate textbooks for the target groups without accompanying them with supportive materials are unlikely to secure students speedy language acquisitions. The policy has to ensure YLs EFL classroom learning as rich as possible in terms of providing new things to think or talk about so as to accelerate children’s EFL learning (Renshaw, 2004).

3. The Ministry’s decision to increasing students’ English learning time by enacting a policy that has lowered the onset age from grade 3 to grade 1 has not been accompanied by policy that fosters quality teaching. This may then indicate the Ministry’s belief that ‘the younger the better’ or YLs possess special language learning skills to acquire the language even when teachers are deficient both in the language and in teaching it (Lipton, 1994; Driscoll and Frost, 1999). Age, however, is not the only factors leading to success in this field. Several authorities reiterate that teaching EFL to YLs is not as easily done as said and underscore that such a view negates the reality of language learning for most children, where affective factors and quality and quantity of inputs play hugely vital roles (Brumfit, 1995; Nikolove, 2002; Renshaw, 2004; Balbi, 2008). The outcome of teaching EFL to YLs depends on the way it is executed and not on the age factor alone (Nikolove,
Commencing primary EFL program from earlier grades can have detrimental effect on young learners if the teachers are untrained or there is insufficient resource (Brumfit, 1995; Komorowska, 1997; McKay, 2006).

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are suggested in line with the policy and practice factors affecting primary students English language acquisitions:

1. The newly designed English curriculum and developed textbooks will play a vital role in enhancing the quality of English language teaching in Ethiopia. However, there is still a long way to go in order to make the aspirations a classroom reality particularly in stipulating policy that ensures the use of modern educational resources and that prepares teachers to the purpose. The Ministry has to ensure that children at their formative period receive quality EFL learning through enacting a curriculum policy which ensures their teachers receive adequate and relevant training to competently handle their English teaching to the level. The Ministry has to recognize that children’s special language learning characteristics demand their teachers to receive special kind of training (Broughton et al., 1980; Felberbauer, 1997; Cameron, 2001, 2003; Dereboy, 2008). The Ministry should not de-emphasize teachers’ role as they are the major resource for children’s English language development as they mainly depend on what is here and now.

2. The Ministry has to stipulate grades 1-4 English curriculum policies that could secure a range of vital resources such as work books, supplementary reading materials, audio-materials to support pupils’ English language learning endeavours in addition to the developed student books.

3. In light of the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the researcher further recommends that the Ministry of Education invests more in primary EFL teacher education as a key component of improving quality of education in the country or should defer the onset age of teaching EFL from grade one to grade three/four where students begin to read and write in their L1. Most successful primary EFL programs have been in countries where curriculum policies have been enacted towards scaling up teachers’
proficiency on the target language and teaching skills through launching training institutes fit for the purpose (Bernhardt and Hammadou, 1987; Lipton, 1994; Curtain, 2000; Rixon, 2000; Driscoll, 2005; Low, 2005; Kirkgoz, 2006; Sinh, 2006; Nikolove et al., 2007). In Ethiopia where children have no chances to using English outside the classroom and where English plays crucial role in the education system to decide children’s future career, teachers need to have a good command of the language and a minimum of degree level training in the teaching of EFL to YLs to adequately execute their English teaching duty at first-cycle primary level. Children that are able to read and write in their L1 have developed an experience that can sustain the development of L2 literacy and thus deferring the onset age until overcoming the dearth of teacher’s qualification and students develop the ability of reading and writing in their L1 could be profitable (Cameron, 2003; Nagy, 2008).

4. In addition, researchers are encouraged to conduct further studies in investigating the effects of primary EFL teacher education on the competencies and performance of both primary EFL teachers and their respective students.
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Appendix-A: Questionnaire for Primary First-Cycle English Teachers in Bahir Dar Town, Amhara National Regional State

Dear teachers, the overall aim of the study is to identify possible problems regarding the teaching of English language at primary school levels and take measures to redress any identified problems. The purpose of this particular questionnaire is to look into teachers’ beliefs of their English language teaching performances in primary classrooms and cross validate data retrieved from classroom observation so that any problems identified in their English language teaching can be addressed. Thus, your responses will only be useful if you provide your honest answers.

Please put a tick mark (√) in the appropriate column and write short answers as required

Part I—Background Information

1. Sex  Male ...... Female ....

2. Educational Background
   2.1 Pre-service education
      2.1.1 Certificate from Teacher Training Institute (10+1) (12+1) ........
      2.1.2 Diploma from College of Teacher Education (10 +3) (12+2) ........
         Major........................ Minor..................

2.2 In-service education
   2.2.1 Have you ever participated in any in-service training on English language teaching?
      Yes.......No.....
      If yes, where .................and for how long..........................

3. What subject(s) do you currently teach?
   English language only ........
   English and Amharic.......
   All subjects (Self-contained)...... Or If others, please specify......

4. Teaching Experience
   4.1 in teaching English: Up to one year .......
      2-5 years........
      6-19 years.....
      20 and above years......
### Part II--Language band scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language level</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>V. good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Weak</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Your overall command of the English language</td>
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<td>2. Your ability to correctly pronounce English words</td>
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<td>3. Your capacity to write accurately spelled English words</td>
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<td>4. Your ability to speak/write grammatically correct sentences</td>
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<td>5. Your capability to effectively use English in the classroom (e.g. to teach the lesson, encourage learners participation and convey concepts)</td>
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### Part III--Planning and implementation band scales

#### A. Lesson planning

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>V. good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Basic</th>
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<td>6. Ability to write clear lesson objectives</td>
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<td>7. Capacity to plan instruction based on curricular goal</td>
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<td>8. Capacity to decide on steps necessary to teach the lesson</td>
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<td>9. Ability to revise the previous lesson</td>
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<td>10. Ability to present the new lesson</td>
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<td>11. Ability to plan suitable audio-visual materials (AVMs) to support learning</td>
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<td>12. Ability to plan suitable assessment procedures for learning procedures</td>
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#### B. Lesson implementation

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>V. good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Basic</th>
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<tr>
<td>13. Clarifying objectives</td>
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<td>14. Following lesson procedures</td>
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<td>15. Extent of using AVMs to support learning</td>
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<td>16. Capability of using AVMs</td>
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<td>17. Variation in teaching techniques</td>
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<td>18. Use of songs</td>
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<td>19. Use of teaching games</td>
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20. Use of body language (e.g. miming, gesture)
21. Use of pronunciation drills
22. Use of dialogue
23. Use of interactive methods
24. Use of story to present and practice new language
25. Relationship with pupils
26. Motivating students to like the lesson and get involved
27. Your knowledge on the subject you teach
28. Delivering knowledge at appropriate levels
29. Pupils’ participation in class
30. Classroom management

C. What is your overall impression on the training of primary teachers and on the teaching of English in primary schools?

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Part IV—Analysis of the day’s lesson (you can use Amharic to express your thoughts)

1. To what extent were your aims achieved?

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2. Which aspects of the day’s lesson were most successful?

                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   
2.1 Why?                                                                                                           

                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   

3. Which aspects were less successful?

                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   
                                                                                                                   
3.1 Why?
Appendix B  Checklist for Classroom Observation

In order to determine teachers’ competences in teaching primary English, the following observation guide is prepared.

Date…………………………..                Time:……………………

Class-size……….

1. Teachers’ levels of proficiency in the English language
   - classroom English language use,
   - pronunciation and intonation, grammar, spelling

2. Lesson planning
   - Procedures used to present the English lesson—revising the previous and linking to the day’s lesson, announcing the lesson objectives, stages of presentations, strategies used, follow up activities, criteria used to gauge learners’ participation

3. Implementation—the relationship between the lesson plan and teachers’ lesson presentation, opportunities provided for pupils to listen to and practice the language

4. General comments on English language proficiency level, and implementation
Appendix-C: Interview guide for officials in the Ministry and in the ANRS Education Bureau

The interview guide is only a template; the interviewer is expected to adjust the language depending on the situation. To ask the respondents to extend or elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their response, various probes are employed. The primary purpose is to glean information about the state of play with regard to primary EFL teaching in ANRS.

Interviewee’s position...........................................

Qualification Diploma/degree/ MA in .........................

Years of experience in the position.........................

1. What role is your organization assuming to foster primary EFL teaching in the region?

For example,

- Who prepares the textbooks and how do you ensure the textbooks’ content suitability and effectiveness to attain the set objectives.
- in preparing English 1st-cycle teachers and enhancing their performances (methods of recruitment, pre-and in-service training-who gives in-service training?)
- in supervising the proper implementations of what are espoused in the national and regional policy texts of ELT
- in solving problems related to policy and its practices

2. Major problems and successes in promoting the teaching of primary English in the region-language schools or any extra effort?

3. How effective you believe are the practices of the teaching and learning of English in primary classrooms?

4. How effective you believe is teachers training? How does your bureau/the Ministry try to marry the two? Any extra training to upgrade teachers’ delivery?

5. What are your organization’s assumptions to current problems of primary students English?

6. What are the main reasons for lowering the teaching of English from Grade 3 to grade 1 in 1991 at national level? Is there any difference in the aims stated-before and after 1991?
What about the grade English begin to be a medium of instruction? Is it parallel to what the Ministry suggests? If not, why not?

7. How do you adjust potential problems that could be created in government primary schools due to students various background—some after learning English in kindergartens and some direct to primary classes?

8. Do you have any plans to improve the outcome of learning primary English in the foreseeable future?
Appendix-D Interview guide for primary school principals

The interview guide is only a template; the interviewer is expected to adjust the language depending on the situation. To ask the respondents to extend or elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their response, various probes are employed. The overall purpose of this semi-structured interview is to obtain data germane to the teaching and learning of English in the sample schools.

School’s Name………………………………………………

Qualification Diploma/degree/ MA in ………………….

Years of experience in the position………………

1. What strategies your school employs to cultivate children’s EFL learning?
   For example,
   - Employing part time qualified English teachers? Enhancing the available teachers’ qualifications?
   - Participating children in English clubs, preparing variety of teaching aids to supplement classroom English

2. Do you believe that the teaching of English in your school is sufficient to improve English? How do you view teachers’ qualification-e.g. do teachers say ‘no’ to teach English, does your school receive any form of support from the bureau or otherwise.

3. How effective you believe are the practices of the teaching and learning of English in your primary classrooms? Does your school have any supervisory techniques to the proper implementations of the prepared textbooks?

4. What does your school assume to current problems of primary students English?

5. Do you believe that there are gaps between private and government primary schools with regard to English language teaching?
Appendix-E Templates for analysis and evaluation of textbooks

Features considered for analyzing and evaluating the primary EFL Textbooks:

   - Is there a pupils’ book and a workbook? (how many volumes and how do volumes relates to ages?)
   - Is there a teacher’s book accompanied by supplementary materials?
   - Are there any audio-cassettes? Video-tapes? CDs?

2. Goals. (Ur, 1996; Balbi, 1997; Cameron, 2001;Nagy and Willis, 2008)
   - What are learners expected to know/to be able to do through working with the course (consider ability to communicate, language awareness, culture?)
   - Are the aims coherent with the aims of the course?
   - Are the expected outcomes realistic in the context?

3. Approach to language
   3.1 Theory of language (Williams, 1995;Balbi, 1997;Terrel and Krashen, 1983; Harmer, 2001)
      ➢ Structural/situational/notional/functional/communicative approach/integrated approach?
   3.2 Language input(Khan, 1995; Balbi, 1997;)
      ➢ Through examples/dialogues/activities? other?
      ➢ Through different modalities?
   3.3 New language is understood (Krashen and Terrel, 1983;Balbi, 1997; Chang, n.d.; Cameron, 2001;Lobo, 2003; Johnston, 2005; Nagy, 2008)
      ➢ Through pictures/translation/concept questions/building on known language? other?
      ➢ Are the new languages introduced in context?
   3.4 Language use (Chang, n.d; Khan, 1995; Cunningsworth, 1995;Balbi, 1997; Lobo, 2003;Balbi, 2008
      ➢ New language is practiced through mechanical/open/controlled /guided activities? Communicative activities? Cross curricular activities? through a variety of modalities?
Activities are sufficient in amount and balanced in their format
- Is the language practice coherent with the stated goals?
- Are there any activities leading to autonomy?
- How varied are the practice activities to address YLs learning styles and intelligences?

3.5 Language contents Gersten & Baker, 2003;
- Are organized according to linear/cyclical sequences? The degree of revision of languages already known?
- Are the language contents organized topically or functionally?
- Focus on lexis/structure/notions/functions? Or balance between focus on lexis and the rest?
- Is there any explicit teaching of grammar?
- *Do the structures gradually grow in complexities? Do they consider YLs cognitive and affective characteristics?*
- Are there any songs? (Easy and pleasant rhythm? “Authentic” or written for language learning?
- Are there any games? (Competitive or cooperatives? Suitable for small groups or whole class? Do they require production in L2? Are they authentic games or exercises disguised as games? Suitable for indoor space or outdoor space?)

- Focus on listening comprehension? On speaking? (self expression or interaction?) On reading comprehension? On writing? (Exercises? Communicative writing such as a card to send to a real person? Creative writing?)? Focus on the integration of the four skills?
- Number and types of activities involved in each lesson- what skills are involved (so as to see the amount of practice devoted to each skill in the textbook).
- The order in which the activities appear and which skill they practice first

4 Texts and Topics
• Are topics suitable and motivating to the age range? Are the topics interesting, (familiar and significant to YLs)?

• Is the topic suitable to the curriculum? Arranged in a logical way? Is the content related to other areas of the curriculum?

• Do they respect the values and culture of the context? Will pupils enjoy reading the content selection? Will the content meet pupils felt needs for learning English or can it be adapted for this purpose?

• Do they have any educational values? Does the content include real life issues that challenge YLs to think critically about his world view?

5 Lay-out. (Balbi, 1997; Kuhiwczak, 1999; Cameron, 2001; Mendez and Lopez, 2005; Moon, 2005; Balbi, 2008)

• Is the cover attractive and meaningful? e.g. Illustration and colour

• Consistent lay-out for each chapter?

• Attractive lay-out? Is the size and font suitable to YLs, quality of paper and formatting of page which have wider space?

• Pictures? Photos? (To support comprehension? Just ornamental? To elicit production? Are the pictures simple and clear-suitable for the cognitive complexity of YLs? Do they depict the exercise as stated in the Teacher’s Book?)

6 Audio-aids

• Do they provide varied and natural models?

• Are the speakers too fast? Too slow?

• Is the sound quality adequate? Are there songs/games/stories/dialogues?

7 Teacher’s book

• Does it include any resource pack like CD and syllabus?

• Is the teacher proficient enough in English to use the teachers’ book or Is it bilingual?

• Are there transcriptions to the audios?

• Does it present the guiding principles underlying the materials? Giving theoretical orientation on the methodology?

• Are the objectives clearly expressed?
• Is there key to the activities? Are the solutions to the activities correct and clear?
• Does the manual suggest a clear, concise method for teaching each lesson? Does it provide sufficient teaching tips for teaching all individual units? Does the manual help teachers understand the objectives and methodology of each lesson?
• Are there optional activities for various types of learners?
• Does it provide further ideas for follow up activities? Are there enough consolidation and practice activities?
• Are there fair-cultural explanations?
• Are there photocopiable sheets for extra activities (arts, crafts, games, etc.)
Appendix F- Interview Transcriptions

Interview conducted with The English Curriculum Expert in the REB.

He has degree in the English language and served for eight years in this position.

Our bureau check the suitability of the newly prepared English textbooks by conducting some classroom observations and having discussions with the teacher who are going to use it in some selected schools to ensure their suitability.

It’s the TDP under the REB who take the responsibility to recruit candidates for pre-service and in-service programs. The TDP set and administer written and oral examinations to screen out trainees for the programs and those who scored higher shall be chosen and sent to the training colleges for training. It is the College of Teacher Educations (CTEs) in the region that run the training.

I don’t believe that there is any problem with regard to the policy; the problems are with teacher’s ability and unwillingness to apply the active teaching methods. Any problems found in policy implementations are usually rectified at the spot and also reported to the Ministry to rectify it.

The major problems are usually related to teacher’s low qualification to teaching English and their low initiations to make some improvements in the classroom and in schools. It’s also sometimes linked to the large class size and the textbook-student ratio.

The REB sees the upgrading of the subject teachers and the establishment of extracurricular activities such as English clubs and determining English Day to maximize students English language learning in all schools.

In spite of the problems I stated above, the teaching of English is getting better recently. To enhance teachers’ classroom practices, a lot of training is undergoing at the pre-and in-service programs.

The REB is intending to prepare some guidelines for teachers how to teach English to children and supplementary reading and writing materials for students to practice and improve their English in collaboration with some donors.
Interview conducted with The English Curriculum Expert in the Ministry of Education.

He has M.A. In Teaching English as a Foreign language (TEFL) and served for eight years in this position.

The Ministry of Education is playing an active and central role in developing the English language textbooks from Grades 1-12. The Curriculum Development Directorate coordinates the preparation of the EFL books. The books are prepared based on the syllabus. The current first cycle primary English textbooks are prepared co-jointly by the MoE and Alabama A&M University of the USA. The books are written by professional textbook writers and curriculum developers drawn from the two parties. Aside from the syllabus, the books are written based on research. Over 8 schools in Addis Ababa, Oromiya and Amhara regions were involved in the piloting as part of the research. A lot of English language teachers and students took part in the study so as to check the language level, the suitability of the contents and their effectiveness.

The in-service training is run by the ELQIP, Case Team of the teachers and educational leaders directorate of the MoE. Three-day training was delivered to all Grade 1-4 English teachers by the MoE and AIR-TELL project of USAID. There is no well established and cemented system to make follow ups on the implementation of the textbooks on a regular basis. Some efforts were made to observe classes during the launching of the new English language textbooks.

One of the serious problems in the teaching of English in 1st cycle primary school is to find well trained and qualified English language teachers. A big achievement is that teachers can have the opportunity to receive in-service training as part of the former ELIP and the current ELQIP programme.

The teacher training aspect is not effective in producing competent teachers. To address these problems the MoE has devised various strategies. One of them is the preparation of a Standard For all Primary School English Language Teachers. The MoE took the initiative to develop the standard and later validated and endorsed by all the Teacher Education Colleges. So today Ethiopia has one National Competency Standard required from primary school teachers of English. To bridge the gap the Ministry of Education has finalized its preparation to launch a brand new programme called ELTIP (English Language Teacher Improvement Programme).
which is exclusively for diploma (be it in the linear or cluster modality) qualified teachers. The preparation of 5 training modules (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, TKT) is underway.

The IRE (Interactive radio English) broadcast that was designed to supplement teachers’ classroom English instruction (15 minutes radio and 25 minutes teachers instruction) has a lot of problems. The radio lessons are not updated together with the new textbooks and there is also a mismatch between the daily broadcast time and the scheduled school’s English period. It is hardly possible to say that there is IRE broadcast currently due to this and other problems; but various efforts such as recording radio lessons and distributing to all primary schools are underway to bring it back.

There is ample evidence that the earlier students start learning a foreign language the better. The assumption on the part of the Government of Ethiopia is that students can develop the oral-aural skills of a foreign language at an early grade. This is why a lot of emphasis is given to listening and speaking in grades 1 and 2. There is a big difference in the aims stated before and after 1991. The aim of teaching English in the previous regime was to inculcate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the students’ mind. The 1994 Education and Training Policy clearly stipulate why English is taught.

We do not expect a proper teaching of English in the kindergarten level. The bottom line is the English curriculum is developed with the assumption that all Ethiopian children start learning at Grade 1. Only a small number of children have KG background.

The MoE and other development partners have been vigorously working to improve the quality of English language teaching in Ethiopian schools. The ELIP programme which was introduced in 2002 and other initiatives such as the new ELQIP, ELTIP, SBEM programmes are the obvious manifestations of the Governments’ commitment in enhancing the quality of English language teaching. Being as it is, the MoE has recently introduced high standard and high quality textbooks as part of its interventions in improving the outcome of learning English.
Interview conducted with the School Principals

All the principals have B.A. degree in various fields such as Educational Planning and Management (2), Physical Education (2), Biology, and Mathematics.

All schools have established an English club and interested students are registered and participate by preparing year plan activities. They have also set one of the week days to be an English day. Member students of the English club are expected to make drama or prepare articles in English to present during flag ceremony. Some times on the English day, member students meet each other and make discussions taking notes from the English textbooks and from other children’s English books. Even though many students are registered to be member of the clubs, it is only finger counted clever students who are actively participating in using the target language.

Most of the teachers are assigned in self-contained classrooms and thus they are also obliged to teaching English even though they are not qualified. Most of the teachers speak little English and then they usually hesitate to teach English. Most of the teachers take part in in-service program but they never came back with something new that can improve their English language teaching. Even though there are school luster programs to improve teachers use of active method (group work), it is not only related to teaching English.

The schools and the department heads carry out supervisions and discussions are subsequently conducted but every semester it is the same. You will find a teacher always making group work during supervision as it is currently viewed as a vital method and never attempts to mix it with others though different attempts have been made. Besides, teachers are required to make annual lesson plan and then daily/weekly lesson plan to be approved by the department head to ensure proper delivery of the textbooks; but this is nominal as the head simple signs without even checking for its appropriacy.

Private teachers are more qualified and motivated to use different teaching aids to improve their students English unlike teachers in our schools who usually feel secured and do little to improve students English.
Appendix G - Activity Types

Grade 1

Listening

Listen and repeat in chorus

Listen and point to the object/ picture

Listen and draw patterned pictures (small/small/big/ big circles)

Listen and guess the spied object/word/picture

Listen and point to the picture card school

Listen, point and answer orally using the language pattern

Listen and tell the beginning/end letters of the words using the language pattern

Listen to the letter read out loud and mime how it is written in the air/on the desk

Listen and act

Speaking

Look at the colour flash card and name the colour

Look at the picture/object and name them aloud

Look at the classroom object and name the colour and the name

Watch the mime and tell the word/phrase/sentence

Describe the clothing items/ the persons/animals using the language patterns

Categorize objects/pictures/letters of various sizes or lengths or colours as similar or different

Categorize the pictures and name the categories

Name animals that begin and/or end with these letters

Talk about the people in the picture

Look at the pictures and guess what the storey is about

Draw a picture of your family and talk about your family
Look at the picture of food types and tell the beginning letters of the words and their corresponding sound

Look at the pictures/mimes and tell the names of the games

**Speaking and Listening**

Look at the pictures of animals, listen to their description and talk about your likes/dislikes

Listen and repeat looking at the picture/letter

Listen to, act and repeat the words

Role play the dialogue

Give and receive order

Make a survey of your group members’ likes and dislikes and report this to a different group

Listen and repeat the pronunciation of the final –s sound as –z in some words

Listen and repeat the word stress in words with one/two or three syllable (s)

Listen and repeat the words stressing a particular sound in the words

Listen to the description and guess the word

Listen to a set of words and repeat aloud when you listen to a word with different beginning letter

Listen to the sentences read out loud and complete them with has/have

Make up a storey about people whose name begin with the letters read out and share the storey

Listen to a storey and compare and contrast the characters with yourself

Listen to the storey and point to words that describe a particular situation

Draw your family picture and talk about their names and their beginning letters

Mime the activities you do in school and others guess the word/phrase

Listen to and retell the storey

Listen and play yes/no game using the language patterns

**Pre-reading and pre-writing**

Listen and follow the demonstration and copy the letters/words
Listen to the direction words, follow how to write the letters between two lines and copy the letters

Guess the letters when one draws letters on your back

Write the letter you mimed five times in your exercise book

Read aloud the letter on the flash card and write the correct small letter that corresponds to it and whisper the sound

Match the capital letter card with its corresponding small letter card quickly

Draw your picture and match with the letter card that begins your name

Categorize the letters in the Alphabet Chart as ‘capital and small’ and as ‘similar and different’

Pick up the letter cards from the box matching the capital with its corresponding small letter

Write the small letter matching it with the corresponding capital letter

Prepare alphabet book which contains letters a to z and pictures that begin with each letter

Match the shaded letters (orally) with its corresponding letters in the chart using the given language patterns

Tell the beginning letters of the words

Name the English letters and say their corresponding sounds

Read out loud your sentences in group

Listen to and draw the letters with your finger in air/on your desk

Mime letters in the air/on pupil’s back and others guess the name of the letters and their corresponding sounds

Reading and writing

Fill in the missing letters in the gap words referring to family words studied

Match the colour cards with the correct word cards

Read the word card school and match with the corresponding picture card school

Look at the number flash card and snap the number of times

Count the letters and write the number in figures and in words

Match the numbers with number words
Arrange the words in their alphabetical order

Write three things you like/dislike and draw their picture

Match the pictures of tourist places in Ethiopia with their names flash card.

Write your name beginning with capital letter five times

Grade 2

Listening

Listen

Listen and pick up the word card L/R

Listen and draw pictures to illustrate the storey

Listen to the description and match with the weather picture L

Listen and mark the word from the paired words with similar sounds L/R

Speaking

Bring objects in the classroom and describe them using their name, colour, size, and shape words

Describe the steps in making Gabi following the pictures

Tell your partner what you see and don’t see in the picture

Look at the pictures and tell what the animals can and cannot do using action words

Look and speak

Listen and guess the animal that makes that sound L

Point to and name the objects/pictures/colour aloud S

Count aloud the numbers with actions

Talk about the objects and the activities in the picture L/S

Listening and speaking skills

Listen to description, draw the picture and describe it again

Talk to a partner about places you go and how you go and about places you wish to go and how you want to go.
Listen and recite the chant
Listen and repeat the different word
Listen, point and repeat it aloud
Listen to, repeat the words in the dialogue and role play them with a partner
Role play the dialogue with your partner reading out loud the characters part
Talk to your group about things you do in weekends/holidays L/S
Listen to the riddle and answer
Make up similar riddles and share it with the class
Retell the story using the clues given L/S/R
Listen and answer touching your body part or pointing to the object L/S
Listen to and repeat the words with similar sound aloud

**Pre-reading and pre-writing**

Listen to, point to the words and repeat aloud
Copy the letter chart and match the capital and the small letters(R/W)
Listen to the story along with reading silently
Listen to the story tracing the words with your finger
Trace the letters and read the words aloud
Call out words that begin with letter.
Name the English letters and their corresponding sounds
Match English letters with their corresponding Amharic sound
Listen and sing the song together reading the text aloud
Listen and sing together pointing to the letters and words
Read the letters pointing to them
Listen along with reading the questions and answer them
Think of a word that begins with the called out letter and tell to the class
**Reading and Writing integrated with other skills**

Listen to the conversations and mark the words you heard from the list you copied L/R

Copy the words and read them aloud to your partner L/S/R/W

Match the animal pictures with their corresponding word and tell the beginning sounds of the words L/S/R/W

Describe objects in the classroom using words on the blackboard S/L/R

Study the picture and read their labels aloud and say true/false. Write the three true sentences R/L/S/W

Make the story real by changing the phrases in the story R/W

Unscramble the letters of scrambled words of the days of the week and write them in your exercise book R/W

Write the days of the week three times and check each other’s for spelling and punctuation L/S/R/W

Write the day and the word for activity you do on that day and others read it W/R

Draw a picture of the activity you like to do in your favorite day of the week and write a caption to it R/W

Write the correct words to the objects in the picture choosing from the Word Bank W/R

Draw a person and write sentences describing your picture. Share your answers with a partner W/R/S/L

Write the days of the week and label them with ordinal numbers following their correct order W/R

Fill in the letter gaps choosing letters from the Letter Bank and write the complete words R/W

Write the words in their alphabetical order and read them aloud to your partner W/R/S/L

Create a weather chart for each day of the week and fill in them weather words choosing from the word bank R/W

Use the weather chart to ask and answer questions about today/yesterday/tomorrow’s weather S/R/W

Name the objects in the picture and write them in their alphabetical order S/R/W
Categorize the food item words as animals or plants R/W

Write your name and check it with a partner for correct punctuation and spelling W/R/S/L

Copy the letter chart and fill in the missing letters R/W

Copy colour words and match them with the right colours R/W

Read and act out

Fill in the letters missed referring to words from the word bank R/W

Fill in the gap sentences using words from word bank R/W

Look and write W

Discuss and write L/S/W

Call out a number/word and make up a sentence using it L/S/W

Make up sentences describing school objects using colour, size and shape words written on the blackboard. Share them in group W/R/S/L

Read the labels of the pictures and write true or false for each sentence R/W

Choose the picture and the word card for the animal you like/dislike and tell your likes and dislikes R/S

Make a survey of your group likes and dislikes and report to class using complete sentences L/S/R/W

Copy the word that does not belong to the group of words and give reasons R/W/S

Fill in the missing first letters of the words with their correct letter and write them S/R/W

Read and complete the gap sentences (R/W)

Read the action word card and act out the actions (R)

Listen to contractions and point to words that make the contractions L/R

Draw pictures of different times of the day and write the matching captions of greeting. Role play with your partner using them W/R/S/L

Grade 3

- Stand up and act out the greeting song as you sing it L/S
- Ask and answer questions about objects in the classroom with your partner
• Repeat each direction after your teacher (given in the box) and mime the actions L/S/R
• Listen to your teacher describing objects and then write each object’s name from the word bank L/R/W
• Study the pictures and answer the questions out loud together R/S/L
• Copy the position words and show the positions to each other in groups R/W/L/S
• Ask and answer the questions below about the picture using position words above R/S/L
• Read the conversations Where is My Pencil? together/with your partner aloud R/S/L
• Copy the gap sentences and complete them using position words as per the conversations Where is My Pencil? above R/W
• Read the sentences and/or listen and draw the objects in their correct positions R/L
• Use your pictures above and ask and answers the positions of the objects with your partners S/L
• Write sentences from the substitution table R/W
• Point to Ethiopia in the African map R
• Tell to your partner two countries next to Ethiopia in the map R/L/S
• Describe the Ethiopian flag to your partner S/L
• Listen to the story Hanna Goes to a New School L
• Read the dialogue out loud with your partner R/S/L
• Copy the sentences and match them with the pictures W/R
• Read and mime each of the sentences given R
• Retell the story Hanna Goes to a New School you listened above to your partner using the names given to say who they are, where they come from, and nationality R/L/S
• Listen and point to the places your teacher names in the school plan repeating them aloud L/R/S
• Tell the names of places in the school map R/S/L
• Use the position words given in the Word Bank to ask and answer the places in the school map S/R/L
• Copy the gap sentences and complete them with position words given in the Word Bank W/R
• Match the given questions with their correct answers; and write them in your exercise book R/W
• Play the miming game. Mime the written commands while group members guess R/S/L
• Listen the song Silly Cat and sing after your teacher L/S/R
• Read the story Hanna’s First Day at Her New School in your small group R/S/L
• Read the sentences given together out loud and write the only true sentence secretly; then discuss your answers in your group R/S/L/W
• Read the dialogue aloud with your partner filling in the gaps as you read R/S/L
• Sing the song Meet My Friend Greeting Song together out loud R/S/L
• Play the game True or False with your teacher L/S
• Write each of the gap sentences given and fill them with the words in the Word Bank R/W
• Listen as your teacher explains each picture in the book. L
• Describe the families in the pictures and discuss about the different types of families S/L
• Study the pictures as your teachers reads the passage My Family—Your Family out loud. L
• Take turns to ask and answer the questions below R/L/S
• Write your answers for the questions below R/W
• Write a question for each of the pair of answers given below R/W
• Read the passage below and write two questions for your partners to answer R/W
• Read and act R/L/S
• Copy the sentences that describe your family R/W
• Help your teacher fill in a family tree L/S/R
• Write two sentences about your family tree R/W
• Read the story silently and then retell the story in groups R/S/L
• Decide whether the sentences below are true or False about the story, and make the false sentences true and write them in your exercise book R/W
• Study the bar graph and tell your group one fact about it R/S/L
• Get information from your group about their siblings and transfer the information by drawing a bar graph S/L/W/R
• Read the poem and write three sentences about how your family members help one another R/W
• Write three more funny sentences about family members making each word in a sentence begins with the same letter using the options in a Word Bank R/W
• Write the answers for the puzzle using the clues given R/W
• Find the words inside the puzzle and circle them using the given words R/W
• Use the pictures and the words given to complete the questions R/W
• Write four sentences that ask for permissions to do something following the given sentence pattern-Please can I….. R/W/S
• Match the sentences below to their corresponding pictures and write them in your exercise book R/W
• Write the sentences below changing the bolded words into their contraction form and then read them aloud to your partners R/W/S/L
• Mime the actions for the above sentences and make your friend guess your actions R/S/L
• Study the pictures and tell a partner what people in the pictures are doing using the word bank (use the –ing form of the verb) R/S/L
• Study the drawings and write True or False beside each sentence R/W
• Write a list of verbs (action words) you remember that end in –ing W/S
• Read the story together out loud with your teacher R/S/L
- Read the story with a partner R/S/L
- Reread the story silently and find seven action words and write them in your exercise book and then read them aloud to a partner R/W/S/L
- Use the model sentence to write about what you and your friends are doing using the Word Bank R/W
- Use the model sentence to write five Yes/No questions about the passage with a partner R/W/S/L
- Use the word bank to complete the gap sentences R/W
- Use the words on the blackboard to tell a partner what you do when you are busy and when you are relaxing R/S/L
- Read the poem together out loud with your teacher R/S/L
- Reread the poem in small group miming the actions in the poem R/S/L
- Write the sentences below ordering them as they happen in the poem and then retell the story to your partner R/W/S/L
- Read the sentences below each picture writing the false sentences correcting them R/W
- Use the picture to tell a partner the order of the story in the picture R/S/L
- Sing the song together with your teacher filling the gaps with words from the word Bank R/S/L
- Study the pictures and match them with the words in the Word Bank R
- Read the rhyme with your teacher and write it in your exercise book R/S/L/W
- Write the names of the missing months in the gaps R/W
- Study the picture and name the crops you can see using the word bank R/S/L
- Match the sentence starters in Column A with their correct ending in Column B R
- Write the name of your favourite holiday and two sentences about it; and then tell your partner W/R/S/L
- Write the sentences below ordering them to retell the fable R/W/S/L
- Select the best answer for each question below based on the story and write the letter of your choice R/W
- Act out the fable in groups of three using your own words R/S/L
- Describe the people in the picture using the practiced language pattern S/L
- Listen and point to the cloths in the picture and then talk about the cloths in the picture with your partners L/S
- Ask and answer questions about what you are wearing in the picture pretending to be the people in the picture L/S
- Write describing a boy and a girl in your classroom following the given sentence patterns and then share your descriptions with your group members to guess who they are R/W
- Match the pictures to the words in the Word Bank R
- Talk about the picture and predict what the story My Green Socks is about S/L
• Read the singular and plural form of the animal words that ends with –z and –s sound with the correct pronunciations R/S/L
• Listen and write z if the ending sounds z and s if the ending sounds s L
• Write the names of animals that give us food and animals that help us in the T-chart R/W
• Write the gap words filling in them the missing letters and then use them to complete the instructions below R/W
• Rewrite the story putting the activities in their correct order according to the times of the day R/W
• Conduct an interview about your groups likes and dislikes R/S/L/W
• Write matching the list of people in Column A with their jobs in Column B R/W
• Write the words in the Word Bank in their alphabetical order R/W
• Select four of the people from the Word Bank and write two sentences about what they do and what they wear R/W
• Decide the sentences below if they are True or False and then write the false sentences correcting them R/W
• Order the pictures based on the story in the poem R/W
• Use the questions below to ask and answer about the jobs your family do R/W/S/L
• Read each puzzle and answer the gap questions that follow R/W
• Draw a picture of a job you want to do when you grow up and write its name and three sentences why you want do the job; and share them in group R/W/S/L
• Write the sentences below filling in the missing letter/s in each word R/W
• Do a class survey to find out the jobs that family members do S/L/W/R
• Write a letter to a character in the story R/W

✓ Name and count the objects and th animals in the picture L/S
✓ Write the names of the animals and their numbers in the chart W/S/R
✓ Match the number with number words R/W
✓ Study the pictures and write the names of shapes and their numbers using number words choosing the correct names from the given word options S/R/W
✓ Read and draw (e.g. write your name) R/W
✓ Listen and draw L/W
✓ Use the substitute table to write ten sentences about the different shapes together with the shapes they depict R/W
✓ Count the numbers in the Counting Chart R/S/L
✓ Count the circles together out loud S/L
✓ Count the shapes and write their numbers and the shapes they represent S/R/W
✓ Count the numbers in the counting chart together out loud S/L/R
✓ Sing the song together out loud S/L/R
✓ Read the story silently paying attention to the number of stones each child picks up R
✓ Complete the chart taking information from the story above R/W
Answer the questions about the passage and discuss them with your partners R/W/L/S
Write a shopping list of six items and the amount you want to buy using words from the Word Bank W/R
Read the dialogue in group L/S/R
Use the substitution table to write 5 shopping list items by adding –s/-es R/W
Read the shopping list to your partner and then write down your partner’s list R/L/S/W
Use the items in the picture to ask for and respond to practice how much/how many of the items you want using the given language patterns R/S/L/
Use the answers above to read and answer the questions in the chart using yes/no R
Copy the gap sentences filling in them with some or any R/W
Copy the chart and write the items under each container in the heading W/R
Copy the gap sentences and complete them with names and quantity of a food item R/W
Listen the poem L
Listen and order the actions as happened in the poem after writing the sentences in the chart L/W/R
Read the conversation silently as you Listen L/R
Reread the conversation above and fill in the chart with the correct amount of the items R/W
Read aloud the conversations with your partner by taking turns L/S/R
Retell the story in the poem following the order to a partner S/L/R
Copy the gap sentences filling in them with the number words R/W
Draw the shape and write their total number counting them R/W
Copy the letter chart and write words that begins in each letter and that you can buy in the market R/W
Use the above words to play game ‘I’m going to market and I will buy…’ R/S/L
Play a game with your teacher about making stone soup R/L/S
Read the story as you listen L/R
Write answers to the comprehension questions and discuss them in group R/W/S/L
Write things that you must/mustn’t do in school in group. S/L/R/W
Write things that you must/mustn’t do at home with your partner L/S/R/W
Write the sentences and match them with their corresponding pictures W/R
Read silently as you listen to the story R/L
Write three things that the characters in the story do that they mustn’t do in group R/W/L/S
Write three sentences about what they should do R/W
Write three things that you mustn’t do in life and share them with your partners L/S/R/W
Copy the chart and fill it in with what you do on each day of the week R/W
Read as you listen to the story L/R
Write the gap sentences completing them with words from the Word Bank R/W
✓ Answer the comprehension questions R/W
✓ Listen and write the numbers in the clock L/W
✓ Listen and answer about the time table L/W/R
✓ Write the time table for a day’s class and share with your friends W/R/S/L
✓ Write rules you follow at home and at school and discuss them in groups W/R/S/L
✓ Draw rooms and label them with words from the Word Bank R/W
✓ Read the fable as you listen to your teacher reading it aloud L/R
✓ Act out the fable L/S/R
✓ Use the words in the Word Bank to construct your own sentences R/W
✓ Write three complete sentences that a family does to take care of their babies W
✓ Fill n the missing letters in the days of the week R/W
✓ Read aloud together with your teacher S/R/L
✓ Match the beginning parts of words with their ending part choosing from the Word Bank R/W
✓ Write sentences about things you taste, hear, see, smell and touch and discuss them in groups R/W/S/L
✓ Read and draw their body parts R
✓ Draw a body picture and label them with words from the Word Bank W/R
✓ Read as you listen the story touching the body parts when called L/R
✓ Tell what happened in the story to your partner L/S/R
✓ Sing the song together with the class aloud L/S/R
✓ Play the game miming the verbs in the Word Bank for others to guess L/S/R
✓ Make a poster in group on how to clean and tidy L/S/W/R
✓ Discuss with your partner about things you take to your grandmother L/S
✓ Find eight action verbs in the story and share them with your partners R/W/L/S
✓ Tell your partners what happens next in the story L/S
✓ Study the picture and guess what happen in the next part of the story L/S
✓ Tell three events you remember in the story L/S
✓ Read the conversation with your teacher changing your voice like the wolf R/L
✓ Use the questions on the blackboard to discuss about the story R/S/L/W
✓ Report your discussions to the class R/L/S
✓ Write sentences with the body part words in the bank about what you can do with them R/W

Grade 4

➢ Read the words of the *Greeting Song with your partners and sing* R/S/L
➢ Make introduction with your partners following the sample pattern (ask and answer)- S/L/R
➢ Make a list of classroom objects and compare the lists with your partners W/R/S/L
➢ Read the story silently as your teacher read it aloud R/S/L
- Read silently with your partner and find names of the classroom objects and write them in your exercise book R/W
- Study the picture and tick the names of the classroom objects in the picture that are in your list. Write objects not in the story. R/W
- Reread the story and discuss the questions below R/S/L
- Study the picture and write the gap sentences filling them with names of objects in the picture W/R
- Listen the story looking at the words used to describe schools L/R
- Look into the story and identify the descriptive words and use them to fill in the Venn diagram on the blackboard R/S/L
- Discuss the picture and decide the picture which shows Ambo Primary school and which words explains and why? S/L
- Say if each statements are true or false looking at the picture R/W
- Answer each riddle sentence from the word bank and write your answer using the language pattern R/W
- Play what is it? Game with your partner giving three clues S?L
- Study the plan of the school and write five sentences about what you see and share with your friends W/R/S/L
- Write three questions about the school W
- Listen to the story and draw a label on the plan of the school and show each others answers L/W/S/R
- Read the following description and draw and label the plan R/W
- Show your plan and ask each other R/S/L
- Listen and fill in the gaps in the letter choosing words from the Word Bank L/R/W
- Compare your answers R/S/L/W
- Use numbers to sequence the pictures based on the letter R/W
- Write a sentence to describe each picture and use sequencing word from the Word Bank to connect your sentences W/R
- Write a letter to your friend using the format and words from the letter above W/R
- Study the pamphlet and answer the questions your teacher asks R/L/S
- Reread the pamphlet with your partner and ask and answer questions R/S/L
- Write from your memory five sentences about Akilo primary school and check the facts with your partners W/R/S/L
- Follow the model given and make a pamphlet about your school in group. Discuss your answers with other groups. W/R/S/L
- Unscramble the letters and write them R/W
- (Spelling test) Listen to your teacher and write L/R/W
- Read the story to your partner taking turns R/L/S
- Read the questions and mime the actions R/L/s
Choose the expressions from the Word Bank and say to your group members. Write them in your exercise book R/S/L/W

Write the expressions in the speech bubble in group and read aloud to the class W/R/S/L

Guess your weight. Copy the sentences and fill in them. W/R

Follow the model and create a graph R/W

Guess and ask your partners’ weight. Write the sentences and fill in the gaps S/L/R/W

Copy the sentences and fill in the gaps R/W

Follow the model and create a graph R/W

Copy and fill in the gaps in the sentences R/W

Copy the form and complete the information about yourself W/R

Play the game Guess Who describing your friend using the form and give our exercise book for others to guess W/R/S/L

Use the form to fill in the gap about people in the picture R/W

Look at the pictures and write the sentences filling with the correct words from the options W/R

Compare yourself with a partner and write to sentences using the following language pattern: I am ….er than …. W

Read as you listen L/R

Listen to students reading aloud L/R

Reread the dialogue and find the comparative words and write them down R/w

Compare the heights, weights, ages of the people in the dialogue R/S/L

Read as you listen L/R

Listen to two students reading aloud L/R

Reread the dialogue and complete the chart R/W

Use the chart to write your answers for the questions and compare your answers with each other R/w/s/L

Write the gap sentences and complete them with the given pronouns W/R

Tell to your partner your height, weight and age and they should respond using the language pattern I am …. than you. Choosing words from the word bank R/S/L

Read as you listen to the story L/R

Study AND ORDER THE PICTURES and tell the story W/S/L

Write answers to the questions about the story and discuss your answers R/W/s/L

Complete the chart with one or two sentences with your partners about what happened in the story R/W/S/L

Copy the words below and cross out the consonants and the silent letters W/R

Read as you listen the letter R/L

Write the sentences saying true/false R/W

Write the answers to the questions and discuss them with your partners R/W/S/L

Draw a self-portrait. Write a sentence to describe yourself using the substitute table and write them in a paragraph form beside your picture R/w
Unscramble the words and write them correctly R/W
Listen and write the words L/R/W
Read the days of the week and fill in the gaps below R/w
Copy the gap sentences and fill in them with the correct days of the week R/W
Draw a picture of a student with speech bubbles above his head containing questions using classroom expressions and share it with your partners W/R/S/L
Write the days of the week and the picture that depicts the weather of that day W/R
Listen and answer about the following calendar picture L/R
Read the questions silently and answer them using the information in the above calendar and the word bank. Compare your answers with your partners R/W/S/L
Write the days of the week and the picture that depicts the weather of that day W/R
Listen and complete the chart L/W/R
Use the substitute table to write sentences about the weather report above and share your answers with your partners R/W/L/S
Read the passage *Weather Report* as you listen it L/R
Draw weather Chart for one week and complete it with the weather symbol to match the passage. Compare each other answers. W/R/L/S
Write the gap sentences filling them with the weather words choosing them from the Word Bank. Compare your answers with your partners. R/W/L/S
Write a sentence about yesterday’s weather using the given language pattern—Yesterday was…. Discuss your answers. R/W/L/S
Write sentences about the weather for each of the past four days. Use *was*. W
Write a sentence about the weather in each picture. W
Copy the months in their correct order from the word bank. R/W
Fill in the chart with the name of the month next to the numbers R/W
Write the list of activities for each season in the T-chart W/R
Write sentences about each season using the information above R/W
Categorize the activities in the picture rainy/dry seasons by writing their numbers W
Read as you listen to the passage *The rain Maker* L/R
Sequence the pictures as they occur in the passage R/W
Arrange the sentences as they happen in the passage R/W
Summarize the story in group with complete sentences R/W
Listen and write the words dictated L/W/R
Complete the gap sentences using words from the given options and write them R/W/S/L
Listen and complete the activities L/W
Write the names of the body parts in the picture choosing from the given options R/W
Write the contractions and the words that make up the contractions. Check your answers in group R/W/S/L
Write the names of the body parts given in their order from top to bottom R/W
Choose five body part words and construct sentences for each. Follow the example. R/W
- Write the above body part words in their alphabetical order R/W
- Draw body diagram and show the words you are given to your partners L/S/R
- Unscramble the body part words and movement words and write them R/W
- Sing the song with your teachers L/S/R
- Sing the song performing the action and by changing the words L/S/R
- Listen to the passage and answer the teachers questions L/S
- Fill in the gap sentences using the correct words from the given options and write them R/W
- Sequence the pictures using the information in the passage and then retell the passage with complete sentences to your partners R/W/S/L
- Match the sentences with their corresponding pictures and write them in their order in the picture R/W
- Write six pieces of advice for keeping fit and healthy using ‘you should/you should not’ and share them with your partners R/W/S/L
- Write five sentences to give advice for school students about keeping fit and healthy and share them with your partners L/S/R/W
- Read the dialogue quietly with a partner and then switch the character L/S/R
- Create a dialogue with your partner using the picture and then write it down and practice it reading aloud S/L/R/W
- Share your dialogue with the class or another group L/S/R
- Read the title and predict the information in the passage and write 5 words you may find in the brochure R/S/L/W
- Read the brochure Ways to Keep Fit and Healthy R
- Read the statements below and copy the only true sentence and by correcting the false information R/W
- Discuss in class and fill in the T-chart together with your teacher R/L/S
- Write sentences that could correspond to the pictures R/W
- Listen the words/phrases said and write them L/S
- Prepare a ‘Keep fit and healthy’ poster in group W/R/S/L
- Share the posters with your class
- Write a paragraph of five sentences about how you keep fit and healthy (Copy the main idea)W/R
- Listen and write following the instruction L/W/R
- Read the passage aloud with your teacher and then with your partner R/S/L
- Listen and complete the activities L/W
- Read the phrases (There is “Thers”; There are “Therah” ; what do you-Whadju”; Where do you-“Whedju”; Did you-“Ddju”) out loud slowly and separately and then quickly as one word . R/S/L
• Match the names of each object in Column A with their corresponding room in Column B R
• Write a short paragraph of 5-6 complete sentences using the questions and/or sentence outlines below R/W
• Listen/read the story and put a cross mark beside the names of the household objects mentioned in the story L/R
• Make a list of new words in the story and try to guess their meanings with a partner R/W/S/L
• Study the advertisements for houses for rent and help your teacher to completing a Venn diagram R/L/S
• Write a paragraph comparing the first two houses advertised using the following topic sentence: The advertised houses have many similarities and differences. R/W
• Read each of the dialogue and decide if the student is asking permission or making request on the space provided R/W
• Match each speech bubble below with their corresponding picture with a partner R/S/L
• Copy the dialogue below and punctuate it properly R/S/L/W
• Read the conversations out loud with a partner and then write similar dialogue with different classroom objects R/S/L/W

• R/S/L/W
• Match the pictures with the words in the Word Bank R
• Ask your partner pointing to the building in the picture S/L
• Make up a dialogue about what and where things are in your town or village following the model dialogue with your partner R/W
• Listen and identify the building or place where a person is speaking and write its name L/W
• Use position words to ask questions to your partners about where buildings are L/S
• Write the sentences below in their correct order as in the picture R/L
• Read Jemal’s letter and find his house in the map R
• Listen to the dialogue and follow the directions in the plan and repeat the dialogue L/S
• Ask and give directions about places near your school S/L
• Read the dialogue with your partner and tell the punctuation marks used-if it is a comma, full stop or a question mark R/S/L
• Copy the dialogue below putting the punctuation marks; begin each sentence with capital letter R/W
• Listen to the dialogue and fill in the gap sentences from the given options L/R/W
• Copy the paragraph below filling in the gaps with suitable words from the Word bank R/W
• Tell your partner about your family L/S
• Listen to your teacher reading the final –s in the action words and raise up one finger for the sound /s/ and two fingers for sound /z/ and three fingers for the sound /iz/ L
• Unjumble the letters of the job words below and write them in your exercise book R/W
• Find the listed words in the word grid R/W
• Use the substitution table to write a short paragraph about each of the two/three family members you talked about earlier R/W
• Write a short paragraph about what you want to be when you grow up and why you want to be using the above dialogues for ideas W/R
• Write a paragraph about the job of your family member following the directions given R/W
• Brain storm household chores hat are done either indoors or outdoors in small group L/S/W
• Mime the household chores for other students to guess S/L
• Write the frequency words from the most often to the least often using the word bank R/W
• Use the frequency words to tell your partner about the house chores you do regularly S/L
• Read the story silently and math the clock to the pictures R
Appendix H-Sample Classroom Lessons Transcripts

Transcript A (Grade 1)

Teacher (T): Don’t talk. Keep silent…Ok take out your English book and exercise book. Ok group 4 keep silent. (she writes ‘English’ on the black board)

Ok. Did you take out your exercise book?

Sts : Yes. (in chorus)


Sts: Ok. (in chorus)

T: It’s time consuming to enforce you to keep quiet. Therefore, keep silent to learn. Ok?

Sts: Ok. Please keep silent. Ok?

T: Ok. Good afternoon student*

Sts: Good afternoon teacher. (in chorus sitting up)

T: Sit down

Sts: Thank you teacher.

T: Ok. Last period ehh…we was …discussed about parts of the body. (She writes ‘Identifing* parts of the body’ on the black board).

This one is the picture ‘parts of the body’ (pointing to a poster picture with names of the body parts plastered on the wall).

We will discuss about parts of the body. Which one ehh…tell me about your parts of the body.

(The principal entered interrupting the class and went back after short talk with the class teacher)

T (resumes): Who can show me your eyes? Show me your eyes. (3x)

Sts: eyes, eyes (one and two students)

T: This* is my eyes.

Sts: This is my eyes (in chorus)

T: Wasn’t it like this that we have learned?
Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: Show me your eyes.

Sts: Show me your eyes.

T: You should say This is my eyes.

Sts: This is my eyes.

T: Ok Show me your nose. (2x)

Sts: This is my nose. (2x) (in chorus)

T: Show me your ear.

Sts: Show me your ear.

T: show me at the same time. You should say and show the word at same time. You have to know what you have learned. Show me your ear.

Sts: Show me your ear.

T: Ok. Good, you have identified. Now... there are letters that we have learned last time, yes?

Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: So I shall put them here and only when I ask you, you should pick and show the class. Ok. You should only raise your hand. There should not be me, me.

T: (Teacher pointed to a student) tell me what I am asking you. Letter a. Show me letter a. Show to the student*

St1: (a student selected cards from the table and show the class the card with letter a).

Sts: She is right. (in chorus)

T: Is she right?

Sts: Yes! (in chorus).


St1: Kept silent

T: Show me letter o. Letter o.

St1: (Student now managed to pick up one card and showed to the teacher)

T: Show to the student*.
Sts: Yes. Yes. (Some in L1) (in chorus)

T: Is he right?

Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: Very good. Ok. Sit down. Thank you. It’s good. You have understood the last time. That means you understood well. Today to stabilize more, we will discuss this lesson again. Same topic. We will study our body parts thoroughly starting from our hair up to our leg’s nail. Listen well. Ok?

Sts: Ok. (in chorus)

T: Ok. Attention all of you here. There are names of body parts that we did not study last time, yes?

Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: most of the words we studied were above the neck. Today, we shall see body parts below the neck. Specially below this (pointing below her neck). Ok. Arm (she read aloud) (pointing to a picture on the wall)

Sts: Arm (repeat in chorus)

T: Finger (she read aloud pointing to the picture)

Sts: Finger (repeat aloud)

T: Can you see?

Sts: Yes (in chorus)

T: Toe /tu/*

Sts: Toe /tu/*

(The teacher follows similar procedures-teacher reads pointing to the picture on the wall and students repeat following her- for other words such as leg, foot, hand, knee)

T: As you can see from the picture (pointing to a picture), it shows our body parts. You need to identify your body parts by touching your own body parts. Ok?

Sts: Ok.

T: Yes. Ok. (The teacher shows her finger)

Sts: finger (in chorus)
T: What did we say this?
Sts: finger (chorus)

T: (pointing to her knee)
Sts: Leg/knee (seemed confused)

T: What did we say this?
Sts: Leg/knee (seemed still confused)

T: Knee
Sts: knee (in chorus)

T: This is my knee. (3x)
Sts: This is my knee. (3x) (in chorus)

T: This is my leg (pointing to her leg) (2x)
Sts: This is my leg (pointing to their leg). (2x) (in chorus)

T: This is my foot.
Sts: This is my foot.

T: Touch it. Are you touching it. What do you call your body that you stand on?
Sts: Foot (in chorus)

T: Show me your foot? Touch it
Sts: Show me your foot?

T: This is my foot (pointing to her foot). Show me your foot. (2x)
Sts: This is my foot (pointing to their foot) (2x) (in chorus)

T: Ok. Show me your leg.
Sts: Show me your leg. (in chorus)

T: Touch your leg, please. Touch your leg here. This is what we call leg. (pointing to her leg). Point to it and tell me. This is my leg (pointing to her leg)
Sts: This is my leg. (in chorus)
T: Answer only when I ask you. Show me your leg. (3x)

Sts: This is my leg. (3x) (in chorus)

T: Now you hold your toe. Did you all hold it? What did we call it?

Sts: Finger

T: Not of our hands ‘toe’. Yes. We said finger, yes? Now is our legs toe. We learn the names of our legs ‘fingers’. Toe /tu/ (said it aloud repeatedly)

Sts: (Repeat) toe /tu/

T: Ok, show me your toe. (2x)

Sts: This is my toe. (2x) (in chorus)

T: Ok, group six only. Show me your toe.

Sts (group six): This is…. (unable to answer)

T: This is my toe.

(The teacher follows same procedures for ‘foot’ and proceed to group four)

T: show me your leg

Sts (group 4): This is my leg.

T: Leg. Show me your leg.

Sts (Group 4): This is my leg (3x)

(The teacher follows similar procedures for other groups)

T: (the teacher get angry at a late comer student) students, being late is a sign of laziness, yes?) are you listening?

Sts: Yes.

T: All students cannot be perfect without practicing, yes children?

Sts: Yes

T: So, keep quiet and others practice, ok?

(the teacher now turns to whole-class practice of the words with similar procedures)

T: Show me your leg (2)x
St1: This is my leg (2x)

T: (calling a student) show me your leg Say this is my leg alone

St1: This is my leg

T: (calling another student). Show me your toe.

(The teacher now follows similar procedures for individual students)

(The teacher then gives students chances for students to ask and answer about body parts and the time finished).
Transcript B (Grade 1)

(T): *Please keep silent.* (She writes *English* and below it *Parts of the body* on the blackboard). *Don’t you keep quiet? …Silent. Sit down. How do you sit?*

‘Good afternoon’ song! one, two, three!

Sts: Good afternoon (2x). How are you? I’m fine thank you (2x) And you? (They sing it loud) (The teacher also sings in between)

T: *Now listen to me. Who can write /ei/ (calling letter ‘a’) in small letter?*

Sts: (raise their hands saying *me, me*) (the chosen student go and write the letter ‘a’ on the black board)

T: *Is he right children?*

Sts: *No, he is not.*

T: /ei/ in small letter. *Did you see what is written? Did you see it?*

Sts: *Yes*

T: *Ok, is it right or not?*

Sts: *No, it is not.*

T: *Isn’t it right?*

Sts: *Yes, it is right.*

T: *So, you did not know it. Wait ok. What is it?* (raising up letter ‘d’ card)

Sts: ‘d’

T: *What did I ask you before?*

Sts? ‘a’

T: *Yes, I asked you to write ‘a’. So what is written on the blackboard?* (pointing the letter ‘a’)

Sts: ‘a’

T: *But you said it is not. Didn’t you say? What is it?* (Pointing to the letter ‘a’)

Sts: ‘a’
T: *What?* (3x)

Sts: ‘a’ (3x)

T: *Is it* small or capital letter?

Sts: Small

T: *What about this?* (raising letter ‘a’ card)

Sts: ‘a’ (chorused loud)

T: *Who can write* /b/, /i/ in capital letter? (then pointing to a student)

St1: (She goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: Clap your hands to Meron. *Ok.* Small letter ‘b’?

St1: (Another student goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: What is your name? (approaching the student)

St1: Yihenew

T: His name is Yihenew. *Ok.* Small letter ‘e’

St1: (He goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: What is your name? (Approaching another student)

St1: Abraham (He goes out and writes it on the blackboard)

T: Thank you Abraham.

T: *Take out your English book to page 8.* (3x) Be silent. Be quiet. Listen to me. No talk. *Enough.* Now listen. Page 8, where there is this picture. Where is your book?

St1: *I forgot it*

T: A student who forgets is a lazy. Now all look here. Put the book in front of you and look here. Listen. *Now what is it in Amharic* (Pointing to her eye)

Sts: *Eye*

T: (translating it) Eye! (Pointing to her ear)

Sts: Eye (chorused)

T: *What?* (2x)
Sts: Eye (2x)

T: *What is it?* (Holding her ear)

Sts: *Ear*

T: Ear! (2x)

Sts: Ear. (2x)

T: *What is all this together?* (Pointing to her face)

Sts: *Face*

T: Face (x)

Sts: Face.

(The teacher followed similar procedures for head/hair/mouth/teeth/nose)

T: *Now listen, when I ask you in English, you answer in Amharic.*

*What is* eye?

Sts: *Eye*

T: Ear (Pointing to her ear) (2x)

Sts: *Ear* (2x)

T: Face

Sts: *Face* (2x)

(The teacher followed similar procedures for head/hair/mouth/teeth/nose)

T: *Now I will say in Amharic and you will tell me in English. Ok? Eye?*

Sts: Eye (2x)

T: *Ear* (3x)

Sts: Ear

T: *Mouth* (3x)

Sts: Mouth (3x)

(The teacher followed similar procedures for head/hair/mouth/teeth/nose)
T: Are you now ready to listen?

Sts: Yes.

T: Now in your respective groups. Who allowed you to write? (Approaching and knocking on the head of a student). Put down your pen. You don’t have to write anything on the textbook. You will show me what I ask you to show. When I say show me your eye, you will say this is my eye pointing to your eye; When I say show me your nose, you will say this is my nose touching your nose.
Transcript C (Grade 2)

Teacher (T): To the black board, that is (Pointing to the blackboard)

Sts: That (In chorus)

T: Again

Sts: That (In chorus)

T: That is, again. (3x)

Sts: That is (In chorus) (3x)

T: Only this group, other students keep quiet. Ok, say that is.

Sts: that is (in chorus)

T: point by your fingers. Show, that is (3x)

Sts: that is, again. 3x (in chorus)

T: Clamp* your hands for this* students.

(Clap their hands)

T: this group, do it again. Point by your fingers to the blackboard. Point, Point!

Sts: Point

T: No, no, point. (Showing them to point). Put your exercise book. Say that is

Sts: Say* that is. Say that is. (In chorus)

T: That

Sts: that

T: That is 3x

Sts: That is 3x

T: Very good. You say that is

Sts: That is (In chorus)

T: Point by your fingers to the blackboard. Ok. That is.
Sts: That is. (In chorus)

T: Very good. Clamp* your hands. Point by your fingers. Sit down. Not stand*.

(She goes repeating the procedures again and again for individual students to repeat)

T: Ok. Can you, you boy come. Girl, one girl who can do. You, stand up. What is this number class? (raising numbers printed card).

Sts: One (In chorus)

T: again, one

Sts: one (3x) (In chorus)

T: What is this number?

Sts: two (In chorus)

T: again, two (3x)

Sts: Two (3x) (In chorus)

T: This is boy number one and this is girl number one. Understand? * Look, you girl touch your sweater

St1: This is my swe.. (stammering)

T: sweater. /sweeter/*. Wait a minute. Ok. Say sweater /sweeter/*

Sts: Say sweater ?in chorus?

T: Sweater/sweeter/*

Sts: Sweater

T: Do the sentence. Ok. Show me your sweater (Looking at the girl)

St1: This is my sweater

Sts: That is my sweater

T: That is ….sweater.

Sts: that is her sweater (in chorus) (3x)

T: : point by your fingers. Show me. I cannot see unless you point me with your fingers. Which one you pointed me? You said that is her sweater, yes? But, how could I know?
Sts: That is her sweater (pointing to the girl’s sweater)

T: That is her sweater (3x)

Sts: That is her sweater (in chorus) (3x)

T: Ok, show me your ears.

Sts: Show me your ears.

T: No, no. This is my ,..

St1: This is my ears

T: again

Sts: That is…. 

T: Show me your ears

Sts: This is my ears (3x)

T: Ok, children that is his ears

Sts: that is my ears.

T: his his

Sts: That is his ears

T: Touch your dress

St1: This is my dress

T: Touch, touch. very good

St1: This is my dress

T: by your mother tongue what is the meanings of touch?

Sts: Touch

T: I said touch your dress. Now this is my dress

St1: This is my dress (repeat).

T: very good, again

St1: This is my dress
T: clamp your hands for her.

(Student clapped their hands)

T: Ok touch your dress. Children,

Sts: That is ….

T: …your dress

Sts: That is your dress.

T: Again

Sts: That is your dress

St1: This is my dress

Sts: that is my dress

T: That is your dress. *No, if you say my it means yours but if it is hers, you should say your*

That is your dress.

Sts: That is your dress

St1: This is my dress/sweater

Sts: That is your dress/sweater

T: Touch your sweater

St1: this is my sweater

Sts: That is my sweater

T: Not right. Not right. *Is this sweater that you are wearing? That is your sweater, yes?*

Sts: *No*

T: That is her sweater. That is your sweater. Clamp* your hands for the children.

T: What is this class? (raising a paper made dress)

Sts: a dress (In chorus) 3xher goes around

(The teacher goes around the class showing the paper dress and asking groups of students to answer)
T: What is this in your mother tongue? You have seen the name. Is this a cupport or a coat or a dress? Who can tell me? I don’t know.

St1: Dress

T: Very good. Clamp* your hands.

T: Ok. What is this? (raising paper made sweater)

Sts: Sweater

T: Sweater /sweeter/* (made this repeat a number of times)

T: another team, keep quiet.

T: by our mother language what is the meaning of sweater /sweeter/*? Who can tell me from the boys?

St1: Sweater

T: Clamp* your hands. What did he say class? I did not listen to him.

St1: Sweater

T: Is that what he said? Very good

T: Say class s s s s (she made students drill the letter) (The teacher writes letters a, s, o, i, and t on the blackboard)

Sts: ssss (repeatedly)

T: ‘a’, ‘s’, ‘o’, ‘t’, and ‘i’

Sts: (repeat each letter after teachers)

T: Who can tell me this letter. Raise your hand and answer. Please keep quiet. Don’t tell your partner. Don’t tell your partners. It is when a team work that you discuss with each other. What is this letter? Who can tell me? Create a team and tell your partners the name of this letter. Discuss these letters in your groups. What are their names? Five (pointing to s), plus (pointing to t), zero (pointing to o). Tell the names of the letters in English

St1: s (in groups)

T: Team leaders, listen. Identify the English names of the letters that looks like number ‘5’, ‘plus sign’, or ‘zero’. Then discuss to identify their letter names.

T: Copy the letters into your exercise book
(The teacher then goes round the classroom marking their exercise book)

(students cannot follow if I do not speak L1).

**Transcript D** (Grade 3)

Teacher (T): *On page 18 there was a homework, yes?*

Sts: Yes. *(in chorus)*

T: *You have done that, yes?*

Sts: Yes! *(in chorus)*

T: *Ok. On page nineteen, lesson 17* (He writes Lesson 17 on the black board)

*It reads* What are these cloths? *(And writes the instruction on the black board. )*

*What did you learn a cloth to mean in L1? Cloth? Aren’t they that the clothes we wear?*

Sts: Yes. *(in chorus)*

T: *What are these clothes? Number 1. Look* *(pointing to the pictures in the book)*

Sts: Dress *(in chorus)*

T: Dress *(three times repeated)*

Sts: Dress *(three times)*

T: Number two?

Sts: Skirt

T: Skirt

Sts: Skirt *(three times)*

T: *(follow similar procedures for words shoes/sweater/shirt/trousers*/socks*/sandal*)*

The teacher pronounce trousers as singular and socks as /sΛks/ and then /sΛk/ and the word sandal as /sΛndΛl/ putting stress in the last unstressed syllable.

The teacher goes on presenting same lesson using different techniques:

T: *Now when I call out the number, you point and tell me quick the English names*

Number six
Sts: Socks (in chorus)
T: Socks /sək/ (3x)
Sts: Socks (3x) (in chorus)
T: Number eight?
Sts: Sandal (in chorus)
T: Sandal /sændəl/.* (3x)
Sts: Sandal (3x).

(the teacher follow similar procedures for remaining words)

T: Exercise 2. Let’s go to exercise 2. Now it reads Can you read these words? Can you read these words?

Sts: Yes (in chorus)

T: Can you read?

Sts: Yes.

T: Yes, we can read.

Sts: Yes, we can read. (repeat) (in chorus)

T: Can you read it*? (the words=them)

Sts: Yes, we can read. (in chorus together with the teacher)

T: Enanu. Ok you read number one.

St. (Enanu): kept silent

T: Yes, what is your name. You who raised your hand. Ok read it* number one and two.

St: Trouser*

T: ok number two?

St1: shirt

T: shirts* Ok, you, number three and number four.

St1: sandal
T: Sandal
St1: shoes

T: Shoes. Excellent. Yes, you guy.

St1: Dress

T: Dress (repeats).

St1: hat

T: Hat. Excellent. Yes, you. (pointing to a student)

St: sweater/ skirt

T: Ok, another boy. You guy. You who is in front. Yes (pointing to a student). Number one and number two.

St: kept silent (others raise their hands saying me me)

T: Wait wait, no. You guy. Yes, number one and number two. ...You do not follow.

Yes you (Pointing to another student). Stand up.

St1: Trouser

T: number one, trouser. Number two,

St1: shirts. Excellent. Ok you. (it goes on until end of the period).
Transcript E (Grade 4)

T: *There is homework, isn’t it?*

Sts: Yes

T: *Take out your exercise book. Open your books. Raise your hand if you did the homework. You need to do it well completing all the homeworks. Put it down. Those who did not work. Ok, put down your hands.*

Sts: (Raise and lower their hands accordingly)

T: *Take out your exercise books*

Sts: *We take out*

T: *Look at it until I finish marking.* (the teacher goes on marking students exercise books. The teacher talks to students in L1 while marking their exercise books)

T: *Ok. When you were absent, you need to ask your friends what were given and come to class doing your homework.*

Sts: Ok.

T: *Correct it without saying I was absent. Ask your friends what they were learned, and try to do the homework. Ok? Now let’s see it. Exercise 3 (writes on the blackboard). Page 10. Exercise 1, Fantu. Write the number of each boy and girl. Fantu, which number is Fantu?*

(the teacher is reading out loud the textbook holding it)-Fantu is sitting in front of her brother. She has short hair. She is wearing glass*. It says. Fantu, you (pointing to a student).

St1: Right.

T: Number. Number. Don’t say me, me, “gashie’ simply raise your hand. Ok? You (pointing to a student)

St1: 5.

T: Fantus is 5?

Sts: Yes. (in chorus)

T: Ok. It is 5. (He goes on reading the next description from the textbook he holds) Fatuma. Fatuma is tall and thin. Which number is Fatuma?

St1: 3
T: Number 3, right?
Sts: right (in chorus)
T: Ok. (Reading from the textbook) Abdu is standing. He has short black hair. Heeis* hands are in his pockets.
St: Number 1
T: Number 1?
Sts: Yes.
T: Ok. (Reading from the textbook) Zewdie. Zewdie is fatter than his friends.
St1: number 6
T: Right? Ok
Sts: Yes.
(Reading from the textbook) Chaltu. Chaltu is wearing trousers and T-shirt. She has long hair. Her book is in front of her.
St1: Number 4
T: Number 4. Right/wrong?
Sts: Right
T: Ok. Lemma. Lemma. You.(pointing to a student)
St1: 2
T: Number 2. Right/wrong?
Sts: Right. (in chorus)
T: Exercise 2/ turn your book to exercise 3. Are these sentences right or wrong? If it is right, say right. if it is not right, say wrong. Ok. (Reading aloud from the textbook).
There are three boys and three girls. (Reading aloud from the textbook). (Calling a student)
St1: wrong/right
T: Be silent, please. Number 2. Question number 2. Two boys and a girl are sitting, *I mean*, standing. (Reading aloud from the textbook). Don’t say ‘gashie’. Don’t create any sound. *Don’t create any sound. Simply raise your hand. Which one comes first our mouth or our hands? Our hand precedes. Yes?*

Sts: *Our hands*

T: *Therefore let’s just raise our hands. Ok? Two boys and a girl are standing. Right-wrong? You? (Pointing to a student).*

Sts: Right/wrong.

T: *Don’t repeat the word more than one. *Don’t repeat the word more than once. Is it possible to say more than once?*

Sts. *No, impossible.*

T: *If you say one right it is enough. If you say once right/wrong, it is enough. Don’t repeat. Ok? Two boys and a girl are standing. It is right. Yes?*

Sts: Yes.

T: Number 3. Abdu is standing behind his brother. (reading aloud)

Sts: Wrong

T: *Right/wrong?*

Sts: Wrong (in chorus)

T: wrong. Two girls are wearing a sweater? /switer/*. (Reading aloud from the textbook). Don’t create any sound. *Don’t create any sound. Snapping your fingers is also sound. Simply raise your hand.*

St1: Right/wrong

T: *How many times did I tell you to say? Did I say two or three times?*

Sts: *One time.*

T: Two girls are wearing a sweater? /switer/ (Reading aloud from the textbook). Wrong/right?

Sts: Wrong

T: Wrong. Yes? They are wearing a t-shirt. Ok. Two children are holding something. Right or wrong? Two children, right/wrong?
Sts: Right/wrong

T: *Don’t you have a ground rule for those students who repeat like for those who come late?*

Sts: We will enact from now on.

T: Ok. Two childrens are holding something. Number 6 and number 3 is right/wrong. Right,

Sts: right

T: Ok. Exercise 4. *Exercise 4.* (The teacher read out aloud the instructions and the questions loud). Compare this sentence with name of the person.

Dash has some books. (reading aloud from the book for students to answer orally). *We are filling the blank spaces by telling names of the people. Yes?* Dash or blank has some books.(he repeats reading aloud the question). Number what? Some books. Number…

St1: Chaltu

T: Chaltu. It’s number 4, yes?

Sts: Yes (few students chorused)

T: Ok. Number 2? Blank and two girls are sitting. (2x)

St1: Zewdie

T: Zewdie, number 6. Yes?

Sts: Yes. (Two students chorused)

T: Zewdie and two girls are sitting. Blank. Number 3. Dash is taller than the boys.

St1: Fatuma

T: Right wrong? Dash is taller than the boys. She says Fatuma. Right wrong?

Sts: Wrong

T: Don’t say! Fatuma is taller and thin, says the passage. *What does the passage reads?* Fatuma is tall and thin. Then she is right. Yes. Fatuma.

Sts: wrong. Abdu. It says Abdu is taller than the boys. It is Abdu

T: Number 3. Abdu is standing. He has short black*. He is hands are in his pocket. He has short black hair. He is hands are in his pockets. He is wearing a cap/kap/*. *Where is ‘he is taller than the boys’? No, then Fatuma is taller than the boys.* (unable to clarify)
T: Blank cannot see very well. (2x) You (pointing to a student). Fantu? Yes?
Sts: Yes (few chorused yes)

T: Yes, because she wears glass*. Blank is standing next to Fatuma. Number five.
St1: Zewdie.
Sts: No, it is not teacher. Lemma.

T: Who is then?
Sts: Lemma.

T: Lemma and Fatuma are two in the passages. Yes? Ok Exercise 5. Exercise 5 complete the table and write the names in each box. Yes, that is what it reads? (reading the instructions and the questions aloud-following similar procedures)

The teacher then copies the table in the textbook on the black board.

The boys, girls, and objects, is that? (He put these in a row).

You need then to list here the boys, the girls here and then the objects here from the pictures you see. Here it says lemma, boys-let’s finish boys

Sts: Abdu.

T: Raise your hand, please. Don’t say Abdu, Don’t say Lemma. Raise your hand, you. (pointing to a student)
St1: Ahmed/Assefa/Abdu

T: It must be from the picture.
Sts: There is Assefa, teacher.

T: He sees the next table. Ok. Girls. You can add here. Girls: Chaltu; Objects: books, caps, glass
Any ways in this row boys, in this row girls and in this row objects. This is enough. If there is anything unclear?

Any question which is not clear for you. Ok, next. Follow. You are going to work next.

It says write two sentences about each person in the picture*. It says write two sentences about each person in the picture on page 11 according to the example (The teacher reads aloud and writes on the blackboard)
Example (reads from the textbook): Her name is Chaltu. She is rich. (he writes on the blackboard). Based on this, number 2, it reads Assefa and then below it reads ‘angry’. Yes?

Sts: Yes

T: His name is Assefa. He is angry. Yes?:

Number 3- Her name is Aster. She is old. If it is a boy-His name is blank. Yes? So we need to make one sentence using Aster and then another sentence using old. Yes?

Sts: Yes?

T: Number 4 Hamid/strong. Can you see? His name is Hamid. He is strong. Yes?

Sts: Yes

T: 5. Fatuma/six- Her name is Fatuma. She is six.

Number 6. His name is Dawit. He is hungry. Just like this write two sentences-one using their name and the other using the word next to their name. two sentences just like these. Her name is chaltu. She is rich. There is Chaltu on the top and below it there is rich.

Exercise 2. Make five sentence* about the animal. It means constructing 5 sentences. About what?

Sts: about animals

T: We can only convey messages when we can understand it. Therefore, we need to understand the instruction. Make five sentences about the animals. Make 5 sentences about the animals. Take one animal and make 5 sentences about it. Is it clear?

Example: Elephants are strong. (He writes on the blackboard) It takes as an example elephant.

You can take another animal as an example from the book. You can say it weak, The opposite word of strong or you can continue with strong.

And ants are not heavy. (copies on the blackboard) who can tell us the meaning of heavy?

St1: Weighty or big

T: Weighty or big. What is ant?

Sts: Translate it correctly.

T: Both are animals. Ants and elephants are animals. We can say elephants are strong, big and heavy and so on. Isn’t it?
T: Ants are not strong, big, heavy (when we compare ants with elephants). Like this, look at these sentences in the table. Take out your books. Can you see? We shall read this one first. This table. (pointing to a picture in the book). There is are/are not. Here are others. Read this one. Can you see cows.

Sts: Yes

T: Say, cows/ants/giraffes/rat/horses/elephants. Can you see it?(read them aloud from the book)

Sts: Yes? cows/ants/giraffes/rats/horses/elephants (in chorus)

T: Can you the words at the center? (pointing at the table in the book). What does this say?

Sts: Are

T: Again

Sts: Are

T: What about this?

Sts: are not

T: again

Sts: are not

T: Ok. Can you see ‘tall’ in the next one?

Sts: Yes

T: say tall/heavy/strong/noisy/big/small (2x)

Sts: Tall/heavy/strong/noisy/big/small (2x)

T: Ok. if we say cows here, we can say-cows are strong or big. Again, here, if we say cows are not strong, it means they are not strong. It is just telling what they are and they are not. If we say cows are strong or big, it means they are strong or big.

If we say cows are big, it means they are not small.

T: Ants. We can say, for example, ants are small. Ants are not big. It means if they are small, they are not big.

Weak: ants are weak. If we say this, it means they are not strong. Opposite words, don’t you remember? Strong/weak, big and small are opposite words. Yes?
Cows are not small, *it means* cows are big. Small and big are opposites. Again, ants are not strong. This means ants are weak. *So ‘are’ and ‘are not’ are used as opposites.* Ok This is.

Sts: Yes.

T: Exercise 3. Write sentence about three things. This is../these are… (he writes on the blackboard). *Which one is plural and which one is singular.* We learned this, yes?

Sts?

T: Which is plural? *Which is plural? Which one indicates plural?*

St1: These are.

T: Yes. *This is singular.* We use this one for *only* one thing; but the other one for more than one thing. Therefore, there are here *flag, axe.* They are one, Yes?

Sts: Yes

T: *This is a flag.* Can’t we say this?

Sts: we can

T: *can’t we say ‘This is an axe’?*

Sts: We can

T: *These are combs; These are coins. These are bottles. Right?*

Sts: Yes.

T: Write sentences about three things. You write this *one.*

Exercise 4. Complete the sentence using *is this/are these* (reads aloud and write them on the blackboard). *When we bring *is from this is, it becomes a question or when *is’ and *are’ at the beginning of the sentences they become questions.*

T, Number 1 (reads aloud the questions for students to answer orally) *It reads* Giraffes or Zebras

Sts: (Kept silent)

T: *is it not clear?* You (Pointing to a student). Exercise 4. *All of you get ready. I will ask you randomly, not only those who raised their hands.* Giraffes or zebras. Page 12. Don’t you have a book?

St1: Are these?

T: Right or wrong.
Sts: right

T: ‘Are these’ because giraffes are more than one-plural. And zebras are more than one. Therefore, are these giraffes or zebras? Ok. Number 2. Blank a flower or a leaf. You. (pointing to a student)

St1: Are these

T: right wrong?

Sts: Right

T: A flower or a leaf? You (Pointing to another student)

St1: Is this?

T: Is this. We said last time a flower/a leaf is one. Therefore, is this. 3. A boy or a girl. Number 3

St1: Are these

T: right wrong?

Sts: right/wrong

T: wrong

St1: Is this

T: ‘This is’*. Ostriches

St1: Are these

T: Number 5; sucrose* or planates*. sugars or plates. Plates. ( Unable to correctly read sugar and ‘plates’)

Sts: Are these

T: right wrong

Sts: right

T: Ok. Number 6. An eagle

St1: Is this.

T: Is this right wrong?

Sts: right
T: any thing not clear? From what you listened, any thing not clear to ask?

St1: why ‘are these’ for giraffes or zebras?

T: Who can tell us?

St1: Because they are many.

T: We use ‘is this’ when it is one and ‘are these’ for more than one. Zebras and giraffes have got –s and they are plural and therefore the answer is ‘are these’

Exercise 5 Write these sentence correctly. It says. Bananas are red. Bananas are red coloured.

Elephants are small animals. Elephants are small animals.

Men have nine fingers. Men have nine fingers.

Bicycles have four wheels. Bicycles have four wheels. Bicycles legs are called wheels.

Chairs have five legs. Chairs have five legs.

Write these correcting them. ok? Do also what have discussed so far. Ok? In your respective group. (The teacher goes round the class explaining the instructions.)

(a lot of noises-some says teachers/teachers while others do different things)

T: Please keep silent. Discuss you will get similar questions in your exams. Ok.
Appendix I

Asseserts Dangel primer school periodic Lesson plan

Teacher's Name: Ye'zhalen Alene
Grade: 1
Section: A
Unit: 2
Topic: Parts of the body
Subject: English
Date: 3/2/04

Specific Objectives:
The students will be able to:
- Show and name parts of the body
- Say the students to repeat the body part

Activity One: Show and name parts of the body

Instructional Procedure:
Ask and answer the previous lesson.
Introduce the new topic objective and activity.
Show and name body parts e.g., eye, ear, face, head, hair, mouth, tooth, nose. Teach their name. After we name body part, ask the students to repeat together out loud.

Activity Two: Say the students to repeat the body part

Instructional Procedure:
Tell the students to repeat the name of each body part again together and loud after the teacher says e.g., This is my ear. Repeat the word several times more quickly until students are repeating the students fluently and variation in voice.

Activity Three:

Instructional Procedure:

Teacher's Sig: ____________________________
Department Head's Sig: ____________________________
ADirector's Sig: ____________________________
Date: 3/2/04
Atsersets Dangel primer school periodic Lesion plan

Teacher’s Name: Ye’falem Plene

Grade: 1
Unit: 2
Topic: Parts of the body

Date: 10/2/04
Section: A
Subject: 

Specific Objectives: The students will be able to
- Say the name of the body part
- Students to work in pairs and say

Activity One: Say the name of the body part

Instructional Procedure: Ask and answer review。Name of body parts: eye, ear, face, head, hair, mouth, tooth, nose
- Say the teacher show me your eye, tooth, mouth. After each instruction students will point to the correct body part and say “This is my eye, tooth, etc.”

Activity Two: Students to work in pairs and say

Instructional Procedure: The students do this activity. Pair students stand up, insert in the classroom to practice to show parts of the body. E.g. This is my face, show me your ear, etc. and check that the correct English word is being used to name the body

Activity Three:

Instructional Procedure:

________________________

Teacher’s Sig:          Department Head’s sig:          Director’s sig:
3/2/04
**Daily lesson plan**

- **Teacher student Name:** Belaynesh
- **Grade:** 1
- **Subjective:** English
- **Date:** 6-7/02/04
- **Topic:** Writing letters
- **Page:** 11, 13

- **Objectives:** After the end of the lesson students would be able to:
  - describe about parts of the body
  - know boy and girl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivate by good morning</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>Answer the about greating good morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the picture of girl and boy and make what do we say boy and girl and pronounce parts of the body e.g. eye, finger, toes</td>
<td>40'</td>
<td>Touch parts of the body and pronounce the body name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pronounce parts of the body in the line</td>
<td>40'</td>
<td>Write the letters by them exercise book</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Objective:** After the end of the lesson students would be able to:
  - know boy and girl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Student Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To motivate say greetings e.g. Good morning and pronounce good morning</td>
<td>20'</td>
<td>Students say Good morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show the picture of boy and girl and ask the sex: pronounce boy, girl, the boy, the girl</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pronounce the word boy &amp; girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- write the letters by their exercise &amp; show the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Write the letters by their exercise</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recourses:** Pictures, What is this?

**Assessment:** Marked by Belaynesh

**Teacher sig:** Belaynesh

**Dept sig:** 3/2/2004
366


Atseneits Dangel primer school periodic Lesion plan

Teacher's Name  Abiyu Tesera  Unit  4
Grade  4th  Section  B  Topic  Asking About and describing objects
Date  18/04-10/04  Subject  English
Specific Objectives  Students will be able to
- Match descriptions of objects with picture
- Write the objects they have
- Complete Sentences with opposite words

Activity One
Listen and Speak. exercise 40!

Instructional Procedure:
- Tell Students to take turns to be Ama or Ama et, to Al, and Ama, in pairs to practise the dialogue.
- Go around the Class and see if students are practicing.
- Invite 3-4 pairs to act out the dialogue to the Class.

Activity Two
Read and do exercise 40!

Instructional Procedure:
- Get the students to make as many sentences as they can about their own pencil and the pencil in the picture.
- A game can be played by dividing the class into two teams and giving a point for every correct sentence.

Activity Three:
Writing exercise 40!

Instructional Procedure:
- Tell the students to write five complete sentences in their exercise books.
- Check students' answers.
- Give home work from the text book exercises.
Atseserts Dangel primer school periodic Lesson plan

Teacher's Name: Abiyis Tesera
Grade: 4
Unit: 4
Specific Objectives
- Ask about and describe objects by using adjectives: dusty, clean, sharp.
- Read paragraphs silently and get the information needed to answer questions.

Activity One: Listen And Speak 40

Instructional Procedure:
- Read the sentences in the dialogue aloud.
- Teach the meanings of pocket, tight, and coin.
- Model the dialogue with a student.
- Write the words: expensive, heavy, sharp, thin, light, round, and blub.
- Teach their reading.

Activity Two: Read And Do 40

Instructional Procedure:
- Tell the students to read the passage and see if the things are mentioned in the passage.
- Check the students can answer the meaning of lead and letters.
- Order the students to do the exercise.

Activity Three: Writing Exercise 40

Instructional Procedure:
- Copy the exercise on the blackboard.
- Invite students to come to the front and write the correct words in the blank.

Teacher's Sig: [Signature]
Department Head's Sig: [Signature]
A/Director's Sig: [Signature]
3. able to do exercises
4. able to ask questions
5. able to do exercises
6. able to ask questions
7. able to do exercises
8. able to ask questions
9. able to do exercises
10. able to ask questions

Bell: is the last topic to introduce the new topic (new group, students). Motivate the students to read and ask questions. Motivate students to explain what they understand from reading. Motivate students to ask questions which are not clear. Ask students to do exercises. Motivate students to ask questions which are not clear. Ask them general questions and ask them to explain. Fühle dich neu. 128.
Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name of candidate Dereje Negede Signature __________________________
Name of Supervisor Dr. Gessesse Tadesse Signature ________________________
Place Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa University
Date of Submission __________________________