

EFL Teachers' Practice of using Action Research as a Self-Improvement Tool in Teaching English at Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate EFL teachers' practice of using action research as Self-improvement tool in teaching English at Gambella Teacher Education College. The study was conducted using sample of 15 EFL teachers and 55 EFL students selected through comprehensive sampling technique. To collect the required data for the study questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were used as an instrument. The research design employed in the study was descriptive survey research design. As a result, the data gathered using the instruments were analyzed through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings of the study indicated that although teachers have good awareness on action research there were problems in actual practice in the EFL classroom so as to improve classroom teaching. In addition, it was found that lack of training, budget and lack of collaboration of the college with various stakeholders were among the major factors identified. Based on the findings it was recommended that teachers should keep on developing their awareness on action research using different sources. Next, it was recommended that teachers should give attention for the actual practice of action research in EFL classes. Furthermore, it is suggested that the college should work in collaboration with various stake holders in the region to enhance the practice of action research projects in the college.

Keywords: Action research, self- improvement, tool and teach EFL.

INTRODUCTION

The term Action research was defined by scholars in different ways. For instance, (Sagor, 2004) defined action research as a tool that is used to help teachers and other educators uncover strategies to improve teaching practices. The scholar added that Action research requires teachers to design a study in an area of interest that they would like to carry out in their classrooms or schools. In addition, Parsons and Brown, (2002) stated that Action research is a form of investigation designed for use by teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional practices in their own classrooms. According to these scholars Action research involves systematic observations and data collection which can be then used by the practitioner-researcher in reflection, decision-making and the development of more effective classroom strategies.

Watts, (1985) stated that Action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research. For Nunan (1990) Action research is trying out ideas in practice as a means of improvement and as a means of increasing knowledge about the curriculum, teaching and learning. From the above points it is possible to deduce that action research is an enquiry made searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction so as to increase student achievement.

With regard to action research as a Self-Improvement tool in Teaching, Richards and Lockhart (1994) stated that action research is teacher initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teachers understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring about changes in classroom practice. It involves teachers in a process of generating and testing new form of action for realizing their aspirations and theory in re-constructing their practical pedagogical theories (Elliott,1994), which can be directly related to practice in their own context (Ferrencia, 2000) to improve their teaching in some way or another . The above points can be summarized in the words of Richards and Farrell (2005) who has combined the definition of research and action as follows:

Research refers to the systematic approach to carrying out investigations and collecting information that is designed to illuminate an issue or problem and to improve classroom practice and the word ' action' on the other hand refers to taking practical action to resolve classroom problems (p. 171).

In many research studies, participating in action research has been found to be the impetus for positive change exemplified by teacher improvement, self-reflection, and overall learning that enhances classroom practices (Sax and Fisher, 2001). Therefore, these forms of change may improve teacher quality. In short, the role of action research in empowering teachers to learn appositely new ways of doing their businesses: to teach the right contents, using the right approaches, at the right time, has got common recognition among all stakeholders.

Statement of the problem

Action research offers a form of systematic inquiry that is usually appealing to teachers as it enables them to focus on areas of their own practice that they consider worth investigating. This kind of research aims to make an impact on students' learning and to deepen teachers' understanding of issues in their classrooms that may be puzzling, problematic, or intriguing (Burns, 2010). Teachers may want to address classroom topics or questions that have perplexed them for some time, or understand more comprehensively what they need to change in their thinking and practices as they develop a new curriculum or course, or adopt new forms of assessment. Alternatively, they may wish to evaluate the outcomes of introducing new materials, resources, or technology to their students, or to experiment with different kinds of tasks to discover which lead to more effective learning. Action research, with its iterative cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Burns, 2010; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988) offers an empirical process, whereby teachers not only operate in the classroom but also observe systematically the practical effects of their actions and behavior.

To this fact, there are various studies conducted on action research globally and nationally. To mention some, Erba, (2013) made an investigation on that Action research, and found that it helps teachers to identify what effects their teaching have in students learning, enables teachers to work on how to change the whole school for better support their learners and to improve their instructional practices. In educational setting, action research is important to effectively connect theory to practice, to improve educational practice, to empower teachers, and as a means for promoting professional growth (Mertler, 2009).

Furthermore, Firdissa, (2015) conducted study on Action research hand pointed that it demands enabling environment, empowerment and the commitment of the teaching staff to appear as both innovators and implementers of professional improvement programs and/or approaches. The scholar added that teachers' participations in authentic assessment of performances to reflect on their practices, and developing action plans so as to sustainably improve their teaching and students' learning quality and standard seem negligible. However, most of the studies conducted focused on the practice of action research in general and factors affecting its practice, but the current study differ from these studies in that it specifically deals with English as Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers' practice of using action research as a Self-Improvement tool in Teaching English.

To this respect to the researcher's best knowledge there seems lack of studies conducted on (EFL) teachers' practices in using action research as self-improvement tool in teaching English in Ethiopia and at Gambella region in particular. In addition, from his teaching experience in the study area the researcher realized that the teachers' culture of conducting action research is declining from time to time. Consequently, the researcher realized that the issue may have influence on the teaching and learning in the college for which conducting the current study become inevitable so as to deeply assess the issue and forward solutions based on scientific evidence to the problems on the area. As a result, the study focused on investigating the current EFL teachers' practices of using action research as self-improvement tool in teaching English for graduate language department students in Gambella Teacher Education College in the region.

Objectives of the study

The study has the following general and specific objective.

The General Objectives

The general objective of this study was to explore EFL teachers' practices of using action research as a self-improvement tool in Teaching English in Gambella Teacher Education and Health Science College.

The specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

1. To assess EFL Teachers' awareness to words the use of action research as a mean of improving teaching in their classroom.
2. To identify the extent to which EFL Teachers use action research to improve their teaching.
3. To assess factors that may hinder EFL teachers to conduct action research in the college.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The Concept of Action Research

Richards and Lockhart (1994) define action research as teacher initiated classroom investigation which seeks to increase the teachers understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring about changes in classroom practice. It involves teachers in a process of generating and testing new form of action for realizing their aspirations and theory in re-constructing their practical pedagogical theories (Elliott,1994), which can be directly related to practice in their own context (Ferrence, 2000) to improve their teaching in some way or another. The above points can be summarized in the words of Richards and Farrell, (2005) who has combined the definition of research and action as follows:

Action Research refers to the systematic approach to carrying out investigations and collecting information that is designed to illuminate an issue or problem and to improve classroom practice and the word ' action' on the other hand refers to taking practical action to resolve classroom problems (p. 171).

Carrying out action research is all about developing the act of knowing through observation, listening, analyzing, questioning and being involved in constructing one's own knowledge (Koshy, 2005). From the above definition it can be generalized that the finding of the action research can be applied immediately to solve the classroom problems. Burns (2010) relates it to the ideas of reflective practice, which is characterized by introspective thinking about what one is doing or about what has done (Schon, 1983).

Stages of Action Research

Various experts in the field of action research have designed their own model or stages for action research and some of the commonly practiced stages are stated in the following table.

Table 1. Stages of Action Research

O'leary (2004)	British Council (2015)
Observe	Notice problem
Reflect	Plan
Plan	Teach/Act
Act	Observe
Observe	Reflect

Although all of the above models use different terminology they have the same purpose i.e. to carry out the systematic study and solve the classroom problems to bring about change and improvement in teaching and learning process. Based on the above table, the researcher has elaborated the following stages of action research in cyclic order in simple language. This process continues in a cyclic order, which can be shown in the following figure.

Action Research Cycle



Types of Action Research

There are different types of action research depending upon the participants involved. According to a book by Eileen F(200. p 3) it is be categorized as individual teacher research, collaborative action research, school-wide action research and district-wide action research as can be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Individual teacher research

Individual teacher research usually focuses on a single issue in the classroom. The teacher may be seeking solutions to problems of classroom management, instructional strategies, use of materials, or student learning. Teachers may have support of their supervisor or principal, an instructor for a course they are taking, or parents. One of the drawbacks of individual research is that it may not be shared with others unless the teacher chooses to present findings at a faculty meeting, make a formal presentation at a conference, or submit written material to a listserv, journal, or newsletter. It is possible for several teachers to be working concurrently on the same problem with no knowledge of the work of others.

Collaborative action research

Collaborative action research may include as few as two teachers or a group of several teachers and others interested in addressing a classroom or department issue. This issue may involve one classroom or a common problem shared by many classrooms. These teachers may be supported by individuals outside of the school, such as a university or community partner. The LAB at Brown (2010) has just such a relationship with several teams.

School-wide research

School-wide research focuses on issues common to all. For example, a school may have a concern about the lack of parental involvement in activities, and is looking for a way to reach more parents to involve them in meaningful ways. Or, the school may be looking to address its organizational and decision-making structures.

Teams of staff from the school work together to narrow the question, gather and analyze the data, and decide on a plan of action. An example of action research for a school could be to examine their state test scores to identify areas that need improvement, and then determine a plan of action to improve student performance. Team work and individual contributions to the whole are very important, and it may be that problem points arise as the team strives to develop a process and make commitments to each other. When these obstacles are overcome, there will be a sense of ownership and accomplishment in the results that come from this school-wide effort.

District-wide research

District-wide research is far more complex and utilizes more resources, but the rewards can be great. Issues can be organizational, community-based, performance-based, or processes for decision-making. A district may choose to address a problem common to several schools or one of organizational management. Downsides are the documentation requirements (communication) to keep everyone in the loop, and the ability to keep the process in motion. Collecting data from all participants needs a commitment from staff to do their fair share and to meet agreed-upon deadlines for assignments. On the positive side, real school reform and change can take hold based on a common understanding through inquiry. The involvement of multiple constituent groups can lend energy to the process and create an environment of genuine stakeholders.

The Role of Action Research for EFL teachers

Growing evidence in the field of action research shows that teacher quality and ability to reflect on their instructional practices critically affects students learning outcomes (Darling-Hummond, 2006) and provides teachers with new knowledge and understanding about how to improve educational practices or resolve significant patterns in classroom and schools (Mills, 2011). By utilizing the action research process teachers not only learn about students and colleagues but they also learn about themselves as they seek ways to continually improve (Ferrance, 2000) 'to gain insight, develop reflective practices and create positive changes both in their professional learning and in their classroom' (Mills, 2007,p 4) and in school improvement scheme (McNiff, 1997).

In addition to aforementioned several other studies suggest that action research is the catalyst for improvements in teachers, including changes in their pedagogy, changes in their thinking and changes in their trust, leading to professional development and progress Ross, et al, (1999), and Sax et al, (2001). Teachers not only learn about students and peers by using the action analysis method, they also learn about themselves as they explore ways to continuously improve Ferrance, (2000).

EFL teachers' practice of Action Research

Activity of EFL teachers: as instructional methods and tasks of teachers inside and outside the classroom, such as lesson planning, lesson delivery, manipulation of teaching/learning resources, and preparation and correction of exams. It is added that the success of EFL teachers applies to four particular areas: learner input, learner strategies, authentic content, and alternative evaluation. In this study, the practice of EFL teachers refers to teaching practices and activities within the classroom, such as: preparing lessons, delivering lessons, using the four target language skills, dealing with teaching/learning materials, dealing with practice, dealing with discipline, and dealing with assessment. Research on action is a natural part of teaching. In order to enhance student learning and the classroom

and school environment, EFL teachers are actively monitoring pupils, gathering data and modifying practices. Action research offers a structure that directs teachers' resources towards a deeper understanding of why, where, and how better learners become students. Miller, (2007) in this context, the practice of EFL teachers consists of both activities carried out inside and outside the classroom, which may include preparation of the lesson plan, delivery of lessons, manipulation of teaching/learning materials, and preparation of tests, correction, giving an assignment.

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Action Research as Self-Improvement tool

The concept of self-improvement is very self-explanatory: self-improvement is, by one's own efforts, the improvement of one's knowledge, status, or character. In any and every area of life, it is the search to make ourselves better. Action research is used as a method to help teachers and other educators define methods to strengthen teaching practices for all educators, it Sagor, et al, (2004) is a viable and realistic effort. Action research requires teachers to design a study in their classrooms or schools in an area of interest that they would like to carry out.

EFL teachers at both the beginning level and advanced level may participate in activities that develop skills in action research. Depending on the educational objectives, an action research project may involve various abilities or just concentrate on ability entirely. There are much richer tools to offer teachers than one might think of; interviews, portfolios, Self-assessments, projects, performances, and presentations, diaries, field notes, photos, memos, questionnaires, checklists, journals, video tapes, case studies, surveys, records (meetings, classes, observations, etc.) It is advisable to provide the above activities to the students as a check-list. The learner would certainly appreciate a brief explanation of the activity. In the activity sheet, skills attached to that specific activity may be worth specifying. The selection of the project can be done through the advice of the instructor or may be left to the interest of the students. However, particularly in the first experiences of doing an action research project, a student will most likely need assistance in the implementation of the project.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

Descriptive survey design with mixed approach was used in the current study. This research design was employed in the study because it enables the researcher to gain information concerning the current status of the problem under investigation and forward possible solutions. To this fact, Creswell, (2012), stated that mixed method is intended for an in-depth understanding of the situation, individual experiences, to create the possibility of replication and generalization to a population and to provide insight into a breadth of experiences.

Sample and sampling technique

The sampling frame for this study included all teachers who were teaching English course and all the graduates' students of English Department in Gambella Teachers training College. The samples for the current study were 70 which consist of 15 teachers and 55 students from English language department in the college. Thus, the samples of the study are a total of 70 which consist of teachers and students from English department in the college.

The sampling technique used in the present study was comprehensive sampling technique. This technique was employed because the researcher used the whole 15 teachers and 55 students in the department of English language and literature in the college due to their small number. In line with Tekalign Mamo (2019) said that comprehensive sampling technique is applied when all the populations in the group were taken as a target group of the study. Therefore, the current study employed comprehensive sampling technique to select both teachers and students study participants.

Data Collection Instruments

Research Design

Research design is the way to arrange the study and collect the data based on research problems (Kothari, 2004). Descriptive survey design with mixed approach was used in the current study. This research design was employed in the study because it enables the researcher to gain information concerning the current status of the problem under investigation and forward possible solutions. A mixed method (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) is procedure for collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study so as to understand deeply a research problem under investigation (Dornyei, 2007). In addition, Creswell, (2011), stated that mixed method is intended for an in-depth understanding of the situation, individual experiences, to create the possibility of replication and generalization to a population and to provide insight into a breadth of experiences.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was selected in this study not only because it is the most common data-gathering tool, but also it helped to collect a great deal of information within the time limit and helped to reach a large group of research subjects (Kothari, 2004). As a result, a five Likert scale questionnaire ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree were used in the study to gather data. The questionnaire had three parts; the first part of the questionnaire addresses EFL teachers' awareness on the use of action research to improve EFL classroom teaching. The second, part of the questionnaire deals EFL teachers' actual practice of action research. The third one is the students' questionnaire just addressed teachers' actual practices, and also to serve for triangulation purpose.

Interview

Interview is one of the most powerful and most common ways that researchers use to understand their participants views (Hailmariam, 2014). Therefore, structured interview guide was employed to six EFL teachers to make it manageable enough and triangulate the responses obtained by questionnaire.

Thus, the researchers employed simple random sampling technique to select teachers for interview from EFL department in the college, and so as to provide equal chance for all teachers to be part of interview for the study.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was used on two randomly selected EFL teachers classroom four times each in the course of the study to gather data about EFL Teachers’ actual classroom practice of using action research as a self-improvement tool in teaching English. Therefore, the classroom observation helped the researcher to gather first hand data and triangulate the data.

Data Analysis Methods

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 24) to generate and present the results using tables, frequencies and percentages. The qualitative data from the in-depth interview and classroom observation were interpreted and explained using narrative paragraph.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2. Teachers’ Awareness about Action Research

No	Statement		Responses					
			SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	Action research can be conducted by teachers into their own teaching context.	F	2	3	-	10	-	15
		%	13.3	20	-	66.6	-	100
2	Action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions.	F	3	3	2	5	2	15
		%	20	20	13.3	33.3	13.3	100
3	Action research is a tool for developing teachers' professional competencies and creating change in their everyday practice	F	-	6	2	3	4	15
		%	-	40	13.3	20	26.6	100
4	Action research is one of the most important tools for reflective teaching.	F	6	2	1	5	1	15
		%	40	13.3	6.6	33.3	6.6	100
5	Action research can enhance teachers' teaching and research skills	F	1	3	1	5	5	15
		%	33.3	33.3	6.6	6.6	20	100
6	Findings of action research can be applied in the classroom teaching.	F	3	3	2	4	3	15
		%	20	20	13.3	26.6	20	100
7	Action research is not related to students' needs and classroom problems	F	2	5	4	3	1	15
		%	13.3	33.3	26.6	20	6.6	100
8	I try to solve the problems related to ELT in my classroom through the action research	F	2	10	1	1	1	15
		%	13.3	66.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	100
9	Conducting action research is good for my professional development.	F	1	3	4	5	2	15
		%	6.6	20	26.6	33.3	13.3	100

From the table above it was indicated that 2 of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement action research can be conducted by teachers in their own teaching context. 3 of the participants disagreed that action research can be conducted by teachers in their own teaching context. The vast majority 10 agreed that action research can be conducted by teachers in their own teaching context. This

shows as the participants have good awareness as action research can be conducted by teachers in their own teaching context.

For statement which says action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions, 3 of the respondents strongly disagreed that action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions, and the same number of respondents showed their disagreement with the item. However, 5 of the participants replied their agreement as action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions. 2 were neutral and the rest 2 were strongly agreed as action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions. From this concept one can deduce that majority of the respondents have awareness as action research usually related with the study of classroom activities and actions. For the next item, the minority 2 of the respondents were neutral. 3 and 4 (26.6%) responded they agree and strongly agree respectively that as action research is used as a tool for developing teachers' professional competences and creating change in their everyday practice.

Regarding action research is one of the most important tools for reflective teaching, 6 of the participants strongly disagree; 5 showed their agreement on the item whereas 1 of the respondents were neutral and strongly agreed respectively. And 2 of participants were disagreed as action research is one of the most important tools for reflective teaching. This indicates as the respondents have awareness gap as action research can be used as one of the most important tools for reflective teaching.

For item which says action research can enhance teachers' teaching and research skills, 1 and 3 of the respondents answered they strongly disagree and disagree respectively. However, 1 reported neutrality and 5 showed agreement respectively. The other 5 of them reported their strong agreement on the statement. Regarding the next item, 3 of the participants were strongly disagree whereas 3 of them disagree. 2 of the participants were neutral. 4 and 3 of the respondents reported that they agree and strongly agree respectively.

As far as the seventh statement is concerned, 2 of the total respondents reported their strong disagreement. 5 of participants indicated their disagreement, and 4 were neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. However, 3 of the respondents were agree and 1 was strongly disagree on the statement action research is not related to students' needs and classroom problems. Regarding the eighth statement, 2 of the respondents strongly disagree with the statement whereas majority, 10 of participants disagree with the statement. 1 of the respondents replied they were neutral, agree and strongly agree. This was supplemented with the interview result that most of them had no habit of conducting action research as a result they did not try to solve the problems related to ELT in their classroom through action research.

For the last conducting action research is good for my professional development 1 and 3 of the participants were strongly disagree and disagree. 4 of the respondents were neutral; but 5 and 2 reported they were agree and strongly agree respectively. Therefore, this shows us majority of the respondents showed their agreement that conducting action research is good for their professional development which indicates as they have good awareness on the importance of action research for professional development.

Table 3. Teachers’ use of action research to improve Actual classroom teaching

No	Statement		Responses					
			SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
1	Connect classroom teaching practice to research.	F	4	8	-	2	1	15
		%	26.6	53.3	-	13.3	6.6	100
2	Research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning.	F	3	4	4	2	3	2
		%	20	26.6	26.6	13.3	20	13.3
3	Identify learners’ needs and deliver lessons accordingly.	F	2	-	2	7	4	15
		%	13.3	-	13.3	46.6	26.6	100
4	Strive to bring improvement to classroom practices .	F	6	3	1	5	-	15
		%	40	20	6.6		-	100
5	Become more efficient in helping learners to make effective use of English language for academic purposes	F	1	2	5	5	2	15
		%	6.6	13.3	33.3	33.3	13.3	100
6	Take actions that lead to a resolution of practical problems in the classrooms.	F	5	5	3	2	-	15
		%	33.3	33.3	20	13.3	-	100
7	Improve the quality of EFL classroom practices.	F	3	1	6	4	1	15
		%	20	6.6	40	26.6	6.6	100

As can be seen from the above table, 4 of the respondents strongly disagree. The vast majority 8 of the participants reported they do not connect classroom teaching to research. However, a few minority 2 and 1 of the participants replied agree and strongly agree. From this result, it is possible to conclude that the teachers in the study area do not connect classroom teaching to research. For second statement, 4 and 4 of the study participants responded that the strongly disagree and disagree respectively. 2 of them reported as they were neutral with regard to the item. 3 replied they agree that they research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning. The rest 2 of the participants said they strongly agreed. Thus, it entails that teachers in the study area do not research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning which goes together with the findings of interview section of the study.

Regarding identifying learners’ needs and delivering lessons accordingly, 2 of the study participants strongly disagree whereas 2 of them were reported neutral. 7 of the respondents reported agree and 4 of them replied strongly agree with the item. So, one can deduce from the result that huge amount 11 of the participants showed their agreement that they identify learners’ needs and deliver lessons accordingly. For the next statement, 6 and 3 of the respondents said they strongly disagree and disagree respectively. Whereas 1 and 5 of them answered neutral and agree respectively. Therefore, this shows as though the teachers in the study identify learners need and delivering lessons accordingly, they had gaps in striving to bring improvement to classroom practices through the use action research.

For the next statement 1 and 2 of the respondents replied they strongly disagree and disagree respectively of becoming more efficient in helping learners to make effective use of English language for academic purposes. 5 of the participants reported neutral, and the same number 5 of them said they agree. And the rest 2 were agreed that they become more efficient in helping learners to make effective use of English language for academic purposes. These results pointed that the majority that is 7 of the respondents reported their agreement on the item. For the next statement, 5 and 5 of the participants responded that

they strongly disagree and disagree respectively. 3of them were neutral and 2reported their agreement. Thus, it indicates as majority of the participants reported their disagreement taking actions that lead to a resolution of practical problems in the classrooms. For the last statement, 3and 1replied strongly disagree and disagree. The majority 6 said nothing on the item while 4and 1said reported agree and disagree respectively. From this result, the one can deduce that as far as the respondents had gap on actual implementation of action research.

Table 4: Students Response on Teachers’ use of action research to improve classroom teaching

No	Statement		Responses					Total
			S D	D	N	A	SA	
1	Connect classroom teaching practice to research.	F	13	30	11	-	1	55
		%	23.6	54.5	20	-	1.8	100
2	Research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning.	F	12	23	7	11	2	55
		%	21.8	41.8	12.7	20	3.6	100
3	Identify learners’ needs and deliver lessons accordingly.	F	12	20	11	3	9	55
		%	21.8	36.4	20	5.5	16.4	100
4	Strive to bring improvement to classroom practices	F	13	23	11	2	6	55
		%	23.6	41.8	20	3.6	11	100
5	Become more efficient in helping learners to make effective use of English language for academic purpose	F	15	15	15	6	4	55
		%	27.27	27.27	27.27	11	7.27	100
6	Take actions that lead to a resolution of practical problems in the classrooms.	F	17	19	11	7	1	55
		%	31	34.5	20	12.7	1.8	100
7	Improve the quality of EFL classroom practices.	F	13	17	19	3	3	55
		%	23.6	31	34.5	5.5	5.5	100

The results in the above table show with regard to teachers connecting classroom teaching practice to research, 13of the respondents answered that they strongly disagree. The majority 30(54.5%) of the participants replied they disagree, and 11of them were neutral. However, the minority which is only 1of the study participants said they strongly agree that teachers connect classroom teaching practice to research. This result implies that teachers in the study did not supplement the classroom teaching practice to research findings. For the second statement, 12and 23(41.8%) of the respondents answered that they strongly disagree and disagree respectively. 7of the participants were neither agreed nor disagree. But, 11and 2reported agree and strongly agree that their teachers research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning. So, it is possible to conclude from the result that teachers did not research classroom practice to bring improvement to students learning.

Regarding teachers’ practice of identifying learners’ needs and deliver lessons accordingly, 12 of the respondents strongly disagreed. However, the majority of the respondents 20(36.4%) replied that they disagree with the item, and 11of them were neutral. For the same statement 3and 9of the respondents said they agree and strongly agree that teachers practice identifying learners’ needs and deliver lessons accordingly in the study area. For the next item, 13 respondents strongly disagree, and 23(41.8%) of them reported their disagreement. Whereas 11of them were neutral, but 2and 6replied agree and strongly agree respectively.

For statement about whether teachers become more efficient in helping learners to make effective use of English language for academic purposes, the vast majority 15 and the other 15 reported that they strongly disagree and disagree. 15 chosen to be neutral, whereas, 6 and 4 answered agree and strongly agree with the statement. As can be seen from table regarding actions taken by teachers that lead to a resolution of practical problems in the classrooms, 17, 19 and 11 replied strongly disagree, disagree and neutral respectively. However, 7 and 1 of the participants said agree and strongly agree with the statement. From this one can deduce that the majority of the respondents showed their disagreement with the statement. For the last one, 13 of the respondents replied that strongly disagree 17 of the participants responded they disagree while 19 of them preferred to be neutral on the statement. However, 3 reported they agree. The rest 3 of the study respondents showed their strong agreement. Therefore, from the result it is possible to conclude that the majority of students prefer to be neutral.

Analysis of data from Teachers Interview and Observation

For the first item which asks whether they were conducted action research or not, majority of the respondents mentioned that they did not conduct action so as to improve their classroom teaching. However, only few replied as they conducted action research to improve their classroom teaching. Among the respondents who conducted action research one replied as:

“I conducted an action research specifically on learners speaking skill difficulty in EFL classroom teaching”.

Therefore, from the above interviewees' response it is possible to come to an agreement that the teachers had less habit of conducting action research in the study area. To the next item on the significance of conducting action research to enhance classroom teaching, all the interviewees replied that conducting action research is significant to enhance classroom teaching. From the justifications they gave the most ones were enhancing the classroom teaching and developing teachers' capacity of solving enquiries through scientific manner. This can be supplement with the result of the questionnaire in which they agree with most of the issues raised in line with their awareness on action research.

In line with the factors; lack of training, shortage of support from the department head and regional Education Office, and absence of HDP program in the college. In addition, the respondents also added that shortage of time due to work load and budget to conduct action research as well as less attention given by stakeholder due to lack of awareness about action research were among the major factors to conduct action research in the college.

Based on the result of classroom observation made both teachers follow students' action research practical presentation in their English class room, but the teachers grouping of student on action research method used were not found to be good for English classroom interaction. Thus, it is possible to deduce that more effort needs to be exerted by teachers providing their students sufficient assistance so as to work better in the classroom group activities. This observation result indicates that students can easily improve the English speaking if the teachers provide them with necessary assistance.

Moreover, it was seen as the EFL teachers were not reluctant to give their students constructive feedback on times on the classroom activities. This in turn may affect the students' motivation and interest to deal with various action researches related activities in the course of their study. Therefore, from the observation made it is possible to deduce that the both teachers action made in the classroom were not

satisfying the need of the learners and bring the necessary improvement for the classroom teaching and learning process.

Conclusions

The result obtained using teachers questionnaire on their awareness on action research showed that they had good awareness on the action research and its benefit for the EFL classroom teaching. To this fact, the vast majority of them reported their agreement as action research can enhance their teaching and research skills. However, the result of the study with regard to actual practice revealed that teachers in the study area have gaps as a result of various factors.

From the many factors that hinder their actual practice of action research in their EFL classroom teaching in the college; they mentioned in the interview result as lack of training, support, HDP program, and shortage of budget were the major ones in the study area. It was pointed by the teachers as solution for aforementioned factors that provision of training on action research, support by the regional education office and provision of budget for action research projects by finding funds from various governmental and non-governmental institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the findings the following recommendations are forwarded. Teachers are suggested to keep and develop their awareness on the action research and its benefits to improve EFL classroom teaching. To do so the researcher suggests the teachers to use various internet sources on action research than seeking assistance from only the stakeholders of the college and the region. Next teachers should give attention for the actual practice of action research in EFL classes by providing necessary feedback and support for the learners in the presentation phase of action research and related works by the students in the classroom. In addition, the college should work in collaboration with various stake holders in the region to gain funds so as to make the action research projects done by the teachers to have necessary budget. Moreover, the researcher recommends as further studies are needed to address extraneous factors than the aforementioned ones by deeply investigated issues related to action research in the college.

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