Primary School EFL Teachers’ Continuous Professional Development Needs

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Abstract: This study was intended to examine continuous professional development needs of primary schools English language teachers in the city administration of Addis Ababa. Mixed method design was employed to gather information in the study. The data was collected from teachers, principals and trainers. Questionnaires, interviews and field notes were used to collect data pertinent to answer the research questions. Two types of questionnaires were employed in the study. One was self-designed which was applied to survey the teachers’ continuous professional development needs. The other was adapted questionnaire and used to collect information about the teachers’ perceived English language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Randomly selected primary school English language teachers filled in the self-designed and adapted questionnaires. Interview was conducted with five volunteer English language teachers, four principals and three ELT trainers were interviewed to corroborate the data collected from the English language teachers. Based on the information collected from the instruments, explanatory method was employed to analyze the data. First quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using version SPSS 21. Then the qualitative data were analyzed thematically and combined with the survey results to answer the research questions. As a result it was found that primary English language teachers were at high need of continuous professional development in English language proficiency especially in speaking skills and teaching methodologies.

Keywords: EFL, Continuous Professional Development, Needs, Proficiency

1. Introduction

Continuous professional development (CPD) is conducted supposing that teachers’ knowledge should be adjusted to the new developments in the field of education. Teachers’ knowledge may be deteriorated because of their beliefs, goals, and motivations, socioeconomic, sociocultural and other exponents. Therefore, it is necessary to update and scale up teachers’ knowledge to get solutions to the problems they face in their teaching-learning process. Scholars explain that professional development bases on interest in lifelong learning, a sense of moral obligation, a felt need to enhance teaching skills, an institutional requirement, and for career advancement. Al Asmari [1]. As to Sachs, 2006 the main purposes of CPD are extension, growth and renewal. Extension is through introducing new knowledge or skills to a teacher’s repertoire, growth is by the development of greater levels of expertise, and renewal is achieved through transformation and change of knowledge and practice. Diaz-Maggioli [15] also discusses the increasing importance of PD to guarantee teachers to match their teaching goals succeed with their students’ learning needs. The author concludes that the ultimate purpose of professional development is to promote effective teaching that results in learning gains for all students. Moreover, Villegas-Reimers [39] explains the opportunities of teachers’ participation in the PD have a significant impact on teachers’ beliefs and practices; on students’ learning; and on the implementation of educational reforms in addition to maintaining personal satisfaction and economic benefits. The scholar also discusses the factors which need to be considered in planning and implementing professional development activities. These are culture of support from designers and schools; context of professional development; stages of teacher career development variation; time that teachers need to their work and the development; funding for school improvement and professional teacher
development; and the effective use of technology.

Thus, CPD for teachers is essential to maintain the level of professionalism which improves the quality of education. Coming to EFL teachers, Safaie, et al. [35] argued that for English language teachers to claim to be really qualified and professional for the great task of ELT, the only choice is equipping themselves with subject matter and pedagogic knowledge. To achieve this, attention needs to be given to the processes of professional development and other factors that enhance such development. Richards and Farrell [33] explained teacher development serves as a longer-term goal and growth of teachers' understanding of teaching and themselves as teachers. It is directed to attain teacher’s personal goals (subject matter knowledge, pedagogic expertise, self-awareness, understanding of learners and curriculum and materials and career advancement) and institutional goals (institutional development, career development and enhanced levels of student learning). Besides, PD is needed for second language teachers to help their students develop proficiency in the target language and an understanding of the cultures associated with that language [15]. It is unquestionable that teachers play key role in promoting quality of education and enhancing students’ achievement. This can be realized by updating and upgrading teachers’ knowledge and skills through participating on going professional development. Ethiopian EFL teachers, owing to the nature of their profession (being nonnative speakers of English) need to accept continuous professional development as an integrated part of their profession to keep up with the dynamic nature of knowledge, and fill the context gap. For instance, Richards [31] points out that “non-native English teachers must have reached a threshold proficiency level in the target language in order to be able to teach effectively” (p. 3).

Literature also shows that “teachers cannot be made to develop” [3]. They need to be willing to make that choice. Researches also show that to a great extent, teachers’ choice and readiness to engage in professional learning delimit their level of engagement and outcomes [4, 27].

Moreover, Little [27] contends that if teachers do not perceive their new learning experiences as relevant to their goals and needs, and if their evaluation of their situations does not result in seeing positive outcome expectations or a happy fit between the learning opportunities and their life, teachers are unlikely to engage actively in professional learning. Darling-Hammond, et al. [13], for instance, argue that “professional learning can have a powerful effect on teacher skills and knowledge and on student learning if it is sustained over time, focused on important content, and embedded in the work of professional learning communities that support ongoing improvements in teachers practice”(7). Moreover, scholars such as Valladares and Roux [38] argued that “top-down approaches are generally disconnected from their classrooms” realities. Once teachers finish the courses, approaches and techniques become irrelevant, and they go back to old routines. It is questionable how much the programs are effective and bring cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal changes. Researchers for instance Eba [17] reported that the CPD programs in our country are generic and lacked sustainability; and Heugh et al. [24] indicated not only ‘strong evidence’ about teachers’ ‘lack of English competence’, but also that the causes were a ‘lack of appropriate training’. However, literature shows as “professional development needs to be sustained and intensive and focused on the actual classroom –both knowledge of subject matter and teaching methodology” [29].

EFL teachers’ ongoing development is vital to meet societal expectation which targets improvement in students’ learning. Second language teachers’ professional development is needed to enable them to help their students develop target language proficiency and understand the cultures associated with that language. When planning CPD activities it is crucial to identify the teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and skills gaps Diaz-Maggoli [15]. Teachers’ belief has great impact to professional development that it will expand their knowledge and skills, contribute to their growth, and enhance their effectiveness with students [22]. Scholars therefore suggest that organizers of the PD programs should first analyze the needs of the teachers and then categorize them in terms of skills, knowledge and attitude. Aims should be set bearing in mind the participants knowledge, experience, previous training, the workload, practical and financial constraints [18].

The purpose of this study was to investigate primary EFL teachers’ continuous professional development needs in the city administration of Addis Ababa. Specifically, the inquiry seeks:

1) to identify the teachers’ specific needs (professional and personal) in implementing the CPD programs,
2) to assess EFL teachers’ current self-perceived English language proficiency skills.

Therefore the present study attempted to answer the following questions.

1. In what areas of teaching-learning do in-service EFL teachers need in-service training program?
2. What are the self-perceived language proficiency levels of elementary school EFL teachers in reading, listening, writing, and speaking?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Objectives of CPD for EFL Teachers

It is obvious that EFL teachers should target their development to be experts in their field as long as they remain in the teaching-learning of English. Professional development for EFL teachers is a vital part of professional life because of its significant positive impact on teachers’ beliefs and practices that supports students’ learning. Lange [25] believes that enabling teachers in professional development helps to continue to evolve in the use, adaptation and application of their art and craft in the classroom. Teachers need to be engaged in continuing professional development to better meet the demands of the
students and achieve effective education. This need is more evident when it comes to the English language teachers [12, 37]. As there are continuous and rapid changes in the teaching of English, institutions need to meet the challenges evolving out of the curriculum reform and student needs. Recently PD has attracted attention due to rapid change in the education that needs to attain high quality in the system, so teachers search to update and upgrade their skills through professional development [11]. Scholars, for example, Baily, Curtis and Nunan [2] stated that English language teachers’ PD is the backbone of successful language teaching, and they suggested five reasons to engage in the scheme, and take control of teachers’ own ongoing development. These are to acquire new knowledge and skills, to cope with and keep up with the pace of change, to increase one’s professionalism, status, and even, possibly, income, to empower oneself through increasing one’s knowledge base, and to combat negativity and burnout. An English language teacher needs to manage classroom activities effectively and to have a good deal of knowledge and comprehension of many factors and variables that control and govern the process of learning and teaching in the classroom situation. The need to develop professionally as English language teachers necessitates an active engagement in the learning process in which numerous development activities for English language teachers have become handy for the purpose of self-development [1].

However, as long as EFL teachers stay in the teaching profession, they have to be convinced that engaging in PD improve their teaching skills, knowledge and attitudes. These can make the teachers highly qualified and powerful, and the development also prevents them from burning out (incompetence) that may create problems in the teaching. CPD designers should aim first to make able EFL teachers use the language. Aims of professional development should be set bearing in mind the participants’ knowledge, experience, previous training, the workload, and practical and financial constraints [19, 23]. Thus, considering and valuing the importance of continuous professional development has dominant influence to alleviate the deteriorating EFL teachers’ professional quality and enhance students’ achievement.

2.2. The Design of CPD for EFL Teachers

EFL teachers should always find ways to keep pace with the rapid changes to promote students’ outcome and attain societal expectations. Managing a FL classroom requires teachers’ various special teaching skills. As to Brown EFL teachers need to have a good deal of knowledge and comprehension of many factors and variables that control and govern the teaching-learning process. They also help them to manage the classroom effectively. Predesigned CPD for English language teachers therefore should be adjusted according to the needs of teachers in terms of knowledge of subject matter, teaching strategies, methods, and skills as well as students’ language proficiency needs. Borg [5], for example, presents five factors that distinguish FL teachers from that of teachers of other subjects. These are: First, the nature of the subject matter itself. FL teaching is the only subject where effective instruction requires the teacher to use a medium the students do not yet understand. Second, the interaction patterns necessary to provide instruction. Effective FL instruction requires interaction patterns such as group work which are desirable, but not necessary for effective instruction in other subjects. Third, the challenge for teachers of increasing their knowledge of the subject. Language teachers teach communication, not facts. In other subjects, teachers can increase their subject matter knowledge through books, but it is harder for FL teachers to maintain and increase their knowledge of the FL because doing so requires regular opportunities for them to engage in FL communication. Fourth, isolation. FL teachers experience more than teachers of other subjects feelings of isolation resulting from the absence of colleagues teaching the same subject. Finally, the need of outside support for learning the subject. For effective instruction, FL teachers must seek ways of providing extracurricular activities through which naturalistic learning environments can be created. Such activities are less of a necessity in other subjects (p. 3). The scholar states the factors can be as an example of the manner in which language teachers’ distinctive characteristics have been conceptualized. This shows that in designing CPD for EFL teachers’ needs particular attention to accomplish positive outcomes.

It is indicated that ‘programs which involve participants in the planning, organization, management, delivery and evaluation of all actions in which they are expected to participate have more chances of success than those planned using a top-down approach, where administrators make decisions on behalf of teachers’ [15]. Furthermore, Tomlinson [37] recommends that ‘teachers must be given opportunities to participate in decisions about what they will learn, how they will learn, and how they will use what they learn. This can be done through surveys, interviews and group discussions involving teachers’ (p. 51). As mentioned earlier, there is no common agreement in designing effective professional development activities. Guskey [21] mentions that ‘the appropriateness of any particular model varies depending on the goals, the context, and the content for implementation’ (p. 29). Teachers’ professional needs vary according to their identity, career stages, professional background, dispositions, and context conditions. For example, the needs of language teachers working in EFL setting are different from those teaching in monolingual English contexts. Similarly, Pasternak &Bailey argued that native and non-native English speaking teachers have different needs pertaining to their linguistic proficiency and professional preparation.

Generally, the above ideas emphasize that professional development programs should be designed by identifying teachers’ needs and setting goals that are achievable. It is mentioned that the designing should be involving and consistent with in the teachers’ context. Furthermore, when implementing PD activities, creating a link between the various entities involved in the process enhances to realize
the needed outcome. The in-service activities for teachers in Ethiopia take the form of professional development as short and long term trainings in the schools and in formal programs. However, teachers seem not implementing all the professional development activities because most schools are focusing on the training provided by the government. This might be associated with the education system of the country which seems mostly driven politically instead of focusing the quality of teachers that play key role at improving education. Hence, it needs decision and commitment to teachers get motivated and involved in different PD activities to attain professionalism and meet personal and institutional goals. This also requires policy makers and implementers to exert a lot of remedial actions to change the situation.

The above activities mentioned for teacher professional development are scientific—which lead to success if they are applied in context. However, very few activities are seemed to apply in Ethiopia such as action research, workshops and teacher support groups sparingly and for reports. These activities are also done based on the MoE or the institution goal. It could be said that they are applicable in our context if teachers and schools are dedicated to make professionals. These professionals can be able to use the language efficiently for the teaching and other communicative purposes.

3. Method and Design of the Study

Mixed methods design applies quantitative and qualitative methods to answer research questions in a single study [28]. It is used to capture the best of both quantitative and qualitative approaches [9]. The approach is useful to develop a better understanding of complex phenomena by triangulating or corroborating or complementing one set of results with another and thereby enhancing the validity of inferences [28]. The fundamental principle of mixed methods research is combining methods which have complementary strengths, and non overlapping weaknesses. When used alone, according to post-positivists, both quantitative and qualitative approaches are flawed. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches, however, the deficiencies of one approach can be offset by the advantage of the other [10].

On the whole mixed methods design is chosen for this study based on two reasons. First, studying teachers’ professional development needs, challenges and experiences is a complex and multifaceted process that involves the perspectives of different actors so that it would be needed collecting data from different sources. This situation also opens the door to use mixed methods research approach rather than subscribing to only one way. Second, employing a single approach to the study may limit the comprehensiveness of the data, and accuracy of the findings. Therefore, the mixed methods design was employed in this study with the intent to get a complete and comprehensive picture of the topic under study. The quantitative descriptive approach was used to generate data from a wide number of sources about the respondents’ knowledge and practices regarding the needs and challenges of continuous professional development.

3.1. Sampling

A sample is a representative proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis. By observing the characteristics of the sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. The first step in sampling is to define the population to which results will be generalized. A population is the larger group from which sample respondents are selected. Since the entire group of interest to the researcher is rarely available, a distinction is made between the population to which it would be ideal to generalize study results and the population from which subjects can be realistically selected.

The total populations of the study were 58. These were 50 primary school EFL teachers, five principals and three trainers working in Addis Ababa city administration. The researcher selected 5 schools purposively (due to their proximity for the researcher work place and living area), in two sub-cites namely Nifas silk Lafto and Addis Ketema. They were chosen randomly as this sampling type gives equal opportunity to all population to be selected in the study. While the primary aim of this study was to examine PD needs and practices through the eyes of EFL teachers, it invited the views of others who work closely with teachers, namely school principals and trainers. Even though the design of the study invited three groups of participants, it focused primarily on teachers’ as they were the main sources of data. However, including school principals was essential to contextualize the topics raised in the study. Similarly, the trainers also gave evidences about their in-service students without hesitation as they were intellectuals they might not afraid of speaking realities based on the evidence they have. The study was shaped by legal official approval which I collected from English department to obtain access to the selected schools.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

In this study, questionnaires, interview, and field notes were employed to collect data. Two questionnaires were used in the study. One was self-prepared and the other was adopted from Butler [7] proficiency scale matrix. The self- designed questions were prepared to discover the teachers’ CPD needs, experiences and challenges in their teaching-learning context. The items were developed by understanding the topic through reviewing available literatures and issues of Ethiopian EFL teachers CPD programs.

3.3. Questionnaires

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather quantitative data. The teacher surveys are the main quantitative strategy which were designed and employed in this work to gather base line data from EFL teachers. One of the main reasons for choosing to use a questionnaire in this research is due to
its convenience for respondents. Questionnaire provides anonymity to participants; hence it encourages them to provide honest responses. Moreover, the use of a self-completion questionnaire has the potential of eliciting bias-free responses compared to an interview [8].

The two questionnaires were organized into cross-sectional two parts. The first self-designed questionnaire was prepared based on the objectives of the study, literature review insights and personal teaching experiences. Part 1 of self-developed survey consisted of items about teachers’ background information. Part 2 included items representing areas of English language teachers’ professional development needs. A five-level Likert scale was used. The scales were given points. These were for ‘strongly agree’ (5), ‘agree’ (4), ‘neutral’ (3), ‘disagree’ (2) and ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to gather information about EFL teachers’ continuous professional development needs (23 items).

The second questionnaire was adopted from the Butler (2004) proficiency scale based on the Foreign Language Oral Skills Evaluation Matrix (FLOSEM; Padilla, Sung, and Aninao, 1997). This instrument was chosen because it had been successfully used in Japan, Korea and Taiwan to assess teachers’ perceived language proficiency level. The reliability of the instruments for current level of proficiency was reported as .87. I used the instrument to survey the teachers’ current level of English language proficiency. The questionnaire was prepared to rate EFL teachers’ self-perceived language proficiency levels in speaking, writing, reading and listening skills based on descriptions- very limited ability (1 point) to native like proficiency (6 point). Therefore, using the questionnaires, Addis Ababa primary school EFL teachers’ professional development needs, practices and impediments were examined in their teaching-learning context.

3.4. Interview

According to Cohn et al. [8], the purposes of interview include: uses as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives, helps as an explanatory device to identify variables and relationships, and the interview may use in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. The interview will also enable to ask for further clarifications of the issues under consideration [26]. Usually, a semi-structured interview involves an interview guide or suggested questions to understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects’ own perspectives. It will be used this type of interview to acquire a general idea of the direction and results of the interview by focusing on certain themes and suggested questions [30]. As a result of the flexibility, the semi-structured interviews not only shaped and adjusted the questions based on the teachers’ realities and issues emerging from the interviews but also will offer space for detailed explanation, discussion and expansion of the teachers’ responses.

Hence, the interview was significant data source in this study. Semi structured interview guide was developed for each of the three groups of participants. These are English language teachers, trainer and principals. Each guide consisted of questions intended to elicit data pertaining to the research topics. Four teachers who completed the questionnaires, three trainers and five school principals were participated in the interview. These participants were selected purposively by approaching them and requesting their permission for an interview.

3.5. Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The validity and reliability of self-prepared instruments were checked before conducting the main study. Twenty EFL teachers were participated and these participants were excluded from the main survey to avoid data contamination (biased responses).

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

In the first quantitative phase of the study, questionnaires data were collected from EFL teachers at Addis Ababa ten primary public schools to survey EFL teachers’ professional development needs and self-perceived language proficiency. It was from the mid of September, 2019 to early October, 2019. I collected the information so the teachers were not as such busy to enter classes because the government schools usually focus at focus on administrative issues at this time. Therefore, the teachers in the four schools completed the questionnaires at lunch time in the schools departments’ offices and two of the schools in the morning in the school lounges. I was in the school when they were completing the surveys so that I explained the ambiguity faced on the descriptions.

For the interview, after the researcher collected the survey, five volunteer EFL teachers were interviewed the five at the beginning of November, 2019 in different days in their schools at break time. Principals are gatekeepers to teacher participants and other school data; approaching them effectively is important to the quantity and quality of the data which will be obtained from their schools. Hence, the principals took part in a semi-structured interview where they responded to questions on their beliefs of roles and teachers’ professional development needs, practices and obstacles. Finally, I contacted four (three) trainers and arranged appropriate time for interview. I interviewed two at Cottebe metropolitan university and one at AAU in their offices about their in-service EFL teachers.

3.7. Data Analysis Techniques

The data gathered through the instruments were analyzed using the following procedures. Hence, Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie suggested seven stages of mixed methods data analysis process. In this study, four of the stages were employed. These are data reduction, data display, data consolidation and data integration. According to the authors, data reduction refers to condensing the dimensionality of quantitative data (e.g. via descriptive statistics, exploratory thematic analysis, cluster analysis) and the qualitative data (e.g. via exploratory thematic analysis etc.); data
consolidation deals with combining both quantitative and qualitative data to create new or combined variables; and data display refers to describing virtually the qualitative data (e.g. graphs, charts, etc.); in the data integration stage, both qualitative and quantitative data are integrated into either a whole or separate sets. The validity and reliability of the data collected through the instruments were also increased during analysis by using respondent validation, avoiding poor coding of qualitative data, avoiding making inferences and generalization beyond the capability [8].

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately. The thematic approach was followed to display the analyses and findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. The themes for the data analyses were derived from the conceptual framework of the study that is grounded in the basic research questions. Analysis of quantitative data was displayed first and then corroborated by qualitative data analysis in the form of texts and quotes. Therefore, data which were collected through questionnaires were coded, entered, cleaned and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) computer software. Descriptive statistics using figures and tables was employed to display the data. Average score and percentage were applied to analyze and interpret the results. Pearson correlation analysis was also conducted to observe the relationship between gender and self-perceived English language proficiency; and teaching experience and self-perceived language proficiency. Furthermore, it was observed the relationship between the skills. Then, the qualitative data analysis involved various phases of data processing, form organizing and pre-analyzing data to translating, transcribing and coding, categorizing codes and then progressing to thematizing the findings. Before transcribing the audio the researcher listened repeatedly and In transcribed by writing down everything that was recorded sections of the data (Gibson and Brown, 2009). The work of checking and double checking the transcriptions helped the researcher to have familiarity and further acquaintance of the data. Furthermore, the field notes which were collected in relation to the interviews were analyzed and used as supplementary sources to support the interpretation, comparison and triangulation of the findings.

Then, the mixing of quantitative and qualitative approaches was applied during the empirical investigation of EFL teachers’ professional development needs and self-perceived English language proficiency of EFL teachers. The first quantitative data dealt with surveys of teachers’ English language teachers’ professional development needs and the teachers’ self- perceived language proficiency in the target schools. These surveys required analysis of data collected from the teachers at different time points. The second qualitative data which were collected from school directors and trainers dealt with EFL teachers’ CPD needs and challenges that teachers experience in their school context. Field notes were mixed with the qualitative and quantitative data collected from teachers, trainers and principals to enrich the finding. Hence, the quantitative data which was collected from teachers were enhanced with the qualitative information gathered from trainers and principals.

4. Data Analysis

The survey results are presented in figures and tables using descriptive statistics. The interview part is presented by explaining themes quoting the participants words.

4.1. Background Information of the Survey Participants

Table 1 shows the survey participants in terms of gender, educational background and teaching experience years. The total number of survey participants was 50, as mentioned in chapter 3. They were teaching in 6 government primary schools in Addis Ababa city administration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Educational Background</th>
<th>Teaching Experience in years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>1-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be observed from table 1 that there are relatively equal numbers of male and female teachers included in the study. When we see their educational background, majority of the teachers (47) are bachelor degree holders and only 3 teachers are at diploma level. Many of the teachers have teaching experiences between 1-10 years, but a few teachers (10) have long experiences which seemingly show that the teachers’ turn over, meaning teachers’ shift their profession to other career that they think it could help them to lead better life.

4.2. Results of Quantitative Data

What are the (CPD) needs of In-service English teachers? Who are enrolled in a CPD programs?

The quantitative results show that the teachers’ aspirations of PD in English language proficiency, subject matter, pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge to be professionally competent in their career. Figure 1 illustrates teachers’ response of their continuous professional development needs.
The descriptive statistics (mean scores) in figure 1 reflects that teachers’ continuous professional development needs in various skills. The responses average mean demonstrates for all items ranged between approximately 4 and 4.6, and indicates the participants’ timely aspirations and consents for professional development activities. The teachers’ strongly agreed in developing their English language proficiency which is very important to deliver a lesson to students effectively. The participants approved to develop their literature knowledge (4.5), speaking skills (4.4) in English and pronunciation skills (4.3).

The average value (4.3) of the responses to develop English listening ability, grammar knowledge, use of technology and prepare students for national exams depicts the teachers’ agreement to equip and adjust themselves with the current changes in language teaching-learning. Statements such as preparing quizzes, speaking activities, vocabulary lessons, develop teaching methods and research skills have mean value (4.2) demonstrates many respondents’ demand in pedagogic content knowledge, meaning that teaching methods with respect to subject matter content.

Designing literature, writing, and reading lessons, classroom management, appropriate use of course and active teaching methods skills average mean score (4.1) reveals the teachers’ agreement for their lifelong learning. The responses about developing reading skills also exemplifies many teachers need to update their receptive skills. At this level of analysis it can be said that majority of primary EFL teachers need continuous professional development in language proficiency skills, subject matter and pedagogic knowledge.

As can be seen from the above table, when the teachers needs are put thematically the average scores ranges from 4-4.7 which explains the teachers’ high need in professional English language skills and professional knowledge.

What are primary EFL teachers’ self-perceived proficiency in speaking, writing, reading and listening skills?

Concerning speaking, as indicated in table 2, 34% of the respondents rated their speaking proficiency level above 3 but below level 4, meaning that the teachers can express themselves using simple language but they make mistakes and express at a normal speed. Some participants (20%) leveled their perceived speaking proficiency above level 4 but below level 5, denoting that they could effortlessly express themselves at a normal speed and although they have minor pauses in search for the correct manner of expression. Only 2% of the participants leveled their proficiency at 3 which denotes they could express themselves using simple expressions even though they make mistakes and pause to express complex ideas. 2% leveled them as they are fluent, but occasionally have minor pauses in search of correct manner of expression (level 5). However, many teachers (30%) rated their proficiency in speaking less than level 3. Compared with listening and reading proficiency level, it
illustrates that more teachers’ consider their speaking proficiency level tended lower than expected level.

Table 2. Frequency on Each Language Skill Domain: Levels of Perceived Proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Speaking Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Listening Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Reading Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Writing Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>4 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5 (10)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>6 (12)</td>
<td>7 (14)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
<td>13 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>17 (34)</td>
<td>13 (26)</td>
<td>16 (32)</td>
<td>8 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5 (10)</td>
<td>4 (8)</td>
<td>9 (18)</td>
<td>6 (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10 (20)</td>
<td>15 (30)</td>
<td>6 (12)</td>
<td>4 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50 (100.0)</td>
<td>50 (100.0)</td>
<td>50 (100.0)</td>
<td>50 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of listening, 30% of the teachers considered their proficiency level as 4.5, indicating the participants could understand the main point(s) of a short dialogue or passage. 20% of the respondents could understand the main point(s) of a short dialogue or passage if spoken at slower than normal speed with some repetition (level 3). 8% of the teachers perceived their listening proficiency level as 4, meaning they could understand most of what is said; 6% of the participants’ rated that they could understand nearly everything at normal speed, although occasional repetition may be necessary. On the other hand, 24% of the teachers rated their listening proficiency level below 3. Compared with the teachers’ reading proficiency levels, it was noted that more teachers’ ratings leaned towards lower levels.

Regarding reading, 32% of the teachers rated their proficiency level between levels 3 and 4, implying that the participants could understand the main point(s) of a short passage written in ordinary English with some assistance of dictionary and grammar book. 20% of the participants’ considered their reading skills as level 3, the teachers could understand the main point(s) of a short passage written in ordinary English if they can have some assistance such as the use of a dictionary and a grammar book, although there are usually some parts that remain unclear to them. 18% of the respondents could read and understand most of what is written in regular English texts, although depending on the genre of the texts, though they encounter some unclear words and may need to consult a dictionary in order to comprehend the texts (level 4), and 12% of the teachers leveled them between levels 4 and 5 which means the respondents could read nearly everything with ease. However, some (18%) respondents rated their levels below 3. Compared with listening, writing and speaking proficiency level, the teachers assessed their level higher in reading, 82% of them perceived that they possessed a proficiency level of 3 or higher.

Concerning writing skill, 26% of the respondents rated them as level 3, indicating the teachers write letters and short essays using relatively simple language. They could produce a few complex sentence constructions but with noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. They usually take a long time to write when they try to express complex ideas. 16% of the teachers assessed themselves in writing as between levels 3 and 4. They could write letters and short essays using relatively simple language, and produce a few complex sentence constructions 12% of the teachers have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write English with relative ease; however, they occasionally make some noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary (level 4) and 8% of them rated as level 4.5.

On the other hand, 4% of the respondents leveled them as level 5, indicating they could write English almost like a native speaker, but minor unconventional uses of vocabulary and expressions. However, several respondents (34%) rated their writing proficiency below level 3, indicating that they could only write short paragraphs using simple sentences. The teachers’ rated perceived writing proficiency level is relatively similar to speaking proficiency levels (30%).

Table 3. Overall averages of self-perceived English language proficiency statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation.</td>
<td>1.72</td>
<td>1.182</td>
<td>1.041</td>
<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from table 3 that all the domains are rated closely even though self-perceived reading was rated relatively the highest, meaning the teachers can read nearly everything with ease, although it is still slower for them to read in English than in Amharic; they occasionally may encounter some unfamiliar words. The other skills (speaking, listening and writing) mean score values do not show significant differences according to the descriptions. The average score of the respondents illustrate that their perceived English language proficiency skills in speaking, writing and listening approximately high intermediate. That is the teachers can effortlessly express themselves at near normal speed. Occasionally, they have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less-common expressions in speaking skills. In writing skills, the participants have enough vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write English with relative ease; however, they occasionally make some
noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary. On the other hand, they can understand most of what is said (all main points and most details) when the conversation is at a near normal speed in listening skills. Therefore it could be concluded that the teachers have no difficulty in using the language in all domains though they need continuous trainings to reach the level to use the language fluently and accurately.

4.3. Results of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data were collected from teachers, principals and trainers. First the interview data collected from each group were transcribed conventionally. Doronyi [16] suggests a principled pick-and mix to select ideas therefore the transcription was read and re-read before coding. The author further explained that coding involves highlighting extracts of transcribed data and labeling these in way that they can be easily identified, retrieved or grouped. This helps to code and recode the categories to emerge other salient content categories linked to various data segments so as to get the themes and then organized thematically for analysis [6]. The authors argued thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in detail. It describes patterns across qualitative data. A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.

This study was conducted by collecting information from three groups of participants aiming to answer the research questions. English teachers, trainers and principals were participated for qualitative data. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The themes identified are put based on the data collected from the participants’ survey results about development needs, practices and challenges.

The interview data were collected from the trainers (T1, T2, and T3), principals (P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5), and English teachers (E1, E2, E3, and E4). All the interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. The transcribed data were analyzed thematically as Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) described thematic analysis gives flexibility, relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do. It can usefully summarize key features of a large body of data. It can also highlight similarities and differences across the data set. Besides it can generate unanticipated insights and allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data. The themes were identified by subsequent readings of the transcripts. The following themes developed from the transcripts. The results of the qualitative data were analyzed here by discussing the themes emerged from the interview and supported by presenting quotes of the verbatim

4.4. English Language Teachers’ Interview

I interviewed four English language teachers to get information about their professional renewal needs, practices and the hindrances they have in their teaching learning context. I coded them as E1, E2, E3 and E4. In the following part I present their interview results thematically.

4.5. Professional Development Practices

English teachers should adjust themselves to be experts in their field to meet students’ needs by updating themselves using the available professional learning opportunities. The data reveals that it is not as such satisfactory but the teachers try a few learning activities. These are: use internet, action research, reading books, improve my computer skills, few professional trainings and learn other fields and lesson plan preparation. The teacher participant (E2) spoke as: “… for me currently I use the internet to develop my skills. I do the action research not depending to develop my skills but to help the students to solve problems like reading.” Similarly E3 expressed his limited experiences in the following words “Sometimes I practice self-reflection, action research. I do by myself. I try to get additional training from reading, different books, by listening native speakers’ audio… internet most of the time.

In the same vein the other teacher (E1) voiced his experiences are upgrading, internet and reading novel sparingly. “I attend summer program, internet. I sometimes try to develop myself reading some novels and other related material”.

The teachers’ explained the restricted professional development opportunities in the schools. For instance, action research which does not focus specifically on their subject but for school improvement in general. The other activities like internet and reading novels are individual learning activities. One of the participants (E3) elucidated his dissatisfaction about lack of subject specific professional learning practices in the following manner. “There are no exceptional trainings for English language teachers. To develop my profession there is no opportunity other than in class, but outside classroom no any opportunity even to speak…to communicate” E3.

English language teacher (E4) spoke the limitedness of training practices in his school in a similar way as “very limited…one or two very small trainings but not specific and sufficient. Similarly, E1 described the situation in the following way. “Very little support, there is a program called CPD we do it monthly but I do not think it is related to our English language profession” (E1).

The teachers were not only expressed the limited professional learning experiences but also the insignificance of the activities. The words of teacher (E4) clarified the opportunity provided by his school like: “I attended a program but not beneficial because it is business oriented more business oriented ….I think the seminar prepared for reports and not scheduled”.

However, the teachers try to develop their profession by involving in few activities, they sadly expressed they have no interest in teaching profession. For instance E1 expressed his view that he was interested to join the profession at first but started to dislike it later and directed to his social and
professional status as:

“Primarily I liked it what I have there was respect there was many things. It was interesting job but nowadays this profession is... I am hating it... I do not have interest because nobody do not concern; the salary is low, overload on other activities. I am not satisfied. Currently the status is not encouraging as compared to other fields. I am learning MA in summer program. I learned computer.” (E1).

Similarly E4 spoke his displeasure as follows. “I am afraid I cannot say really like teaching because I learn other subjects. I am taking other fields. I have completed hotel and tourism and I am still learning marketing management because of the salary we know…”

The above quotes demonstrate that there are no sufficient professional development opportunities to equip the teachers with demanding current knowledge of English language and use it for various communicative purposes. They also illustrate teachers’ low enthusiasm in growing in the teaching profession. Hence many of the words not only explained limited practical learning opportunities but also the teachers’ desperate motivation to update or upgrade them in the field.

4.6. Professional Development Needs

In Ethiopia English language is a foreign language. There is no context to develop the language outside classroom so that English language teachers are required to be proficient to fill the context gap and deliver the content so as to make teaching- learning successful. Hence, proficiency in foreign language is mandatory at least to the threshold level and this could be possible if the teachers are involved consistently in an ongoing professional development activities. The respondents stressed in developing the macro language skills in addition to other skills. They spoke of the need of trainings in speaking, writing, listening and reading skills.

English teachers spoke of developing their English language productive and receptive skills. Representative of the teachers regarding the skills E1 said as “my professional development needs as a language teacher is to improve my English language skills such as speaking, reading, writing and listening. So my needs are to be fluent and accurate English language speaker. So improving these skills …major macro skills are my needs off development”. In addition to the macro skills they spoke to develop their pedagogic knowledge.

English teachers spoke of the challenges they face in their professional development movement. The following words the teachers’ describe unavailability of technology impedes their ongoing professional development. For instance, the participants spoke as: “there is no sufficient material to teach or develop my skills” (E2); “there is no wi-fi/ internet in the school” (E3) and “there is no room for listening, listening lab” (E4). Here the teachers perceive the access of the mentioned technological materials help to enhance their career.

Collegial challenge was mentioned by the participants that hinders their ongoing professional development. The quotes taken from E1 and E2 explain the teachers’ view. “Practically there is no helping one another (E1) and “no one contributes to my professional development in the school” (E2). Besides, E1 expressed his dissatisfaction of colleagues. “There is a discouragement from others when speaking English” (E1).

Teacher interviewees believe that institutional obstacles have impact in their career renewal process. The challenges are expressed in the following way. E2 and E1 and E3 spoke the unavailability of training in the school. “There is no skill development program in our school (E2); “very little support from the school” (E1) and “there is no opportunity in the school, it is institutional problem (E3); and E4 confirmed the over burden activities in the school. “There are so many unnecessary activities, overload work for teachers” (E4).

Teacher participants proved that policy impacts their professional development. Their accounts are as follows: E1 and E3 expressed complain of low salary for teaching profession. “Regarding the salary as compared to other civil servants low paid job (E1) and “there is no incentives, less salary so I hate of the profession, and consider as a transition (E3)”. E4 spoke the training time limit. “Summer program time is very short “(E4). E3 and E1 told the policy’s inherent problem for training English language teachers. “The policy has problem for teaching English (E3); and “No exceptional training for English teachers (E1).

The participants also mentioned their concern of contextual challenges that obstructs their professional development. For instance, E3 told that “ The main problem for English teachers is we do not use the language outside” (E3). Similarly E4 proved the verbatim in the following way. “There is no experience sharing outside or in the school” (E4).

Hence it could be generalized from the participants’ words is that context, technology, colleague, policy and institutions have great impacts for their professional renewal activities.

4.7. Trainers’ Interview

Trainers were asked about their in-service trainees’ professional development needs. They expressed their concern of primary EFL teachers’ English language proficiency.

4.8. Language Proficiency Needs

The trainers pointed out that their in-service English language teachers’ deteriorated language proficiency expressing their views piteously. They mentioned the teachers’ language inefficiency in writing and speaking in a distressed way. In relation to this T1 said: “...language proficiency extremely poor … students coming from schools their ability of proficiency extremely weak… They are not able to express themselves in speaking or in writing”. In the same vein, T2 expressed his dissatisfaction in the following verbatim.

“...majority of the trainees… of course are not that much proficient …it is a major challenge. The majority of the students are not that much proficient…of course there exceptional students but their number is not very counted. The vast majority of the student community… be it speaking
or writing mainly. When you come to writing, they are not interested. I am so sorry. It is a pity.

In the same vein T3 indicated that the in-service trainees inefficiency in English language as: “….our students learning in the summer program are very poor in their language proficiency...”

The qualitative data collected from trainers demonstrate that primary English language teachers’ proficiency deficit in macro skills particularly in productive skills which is basic to deliver contents in the classroom. Proficiency in the language is indispensable not only to communicate with the students but also to enhance quality of education to meet societal expectations as it is the ultimate goal of teaching-learning process. The trainees’ language proficiency needs are speaking, writing, listening and reading skills. The interviewees stressed on the mentioned macro skills even though vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation are mandatory for language teachers. This result contradicts to what the teachers rated their perceived proficiency levels. Hence it could be said that the teachers are at high necessity of English language proficiency.

4.9. Principals’ Interview

Five principals’ (P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5) were interviewed and analyzed to compliment the teachers’ survey responses. As mentioned in chapter three, I conducted the principals’ interview in Amharic adopted a rough translation rather than word-for-word translation because I was faithful to the spirit of the originals rather than translating everything closely. Here I used the translation of the interview in quotes.

The principals expressed that their English language teachers’ need all sided training which repair their deficiency. It should focus on language proficiency which include reading, speaking, listening and writing in addition to teaching methods. In line with this idea P1 spoke as “most of the time it is observed that teachers use their vernacular language to teach English….when we examine these these teachers do have problems in using appropriate words to speak, and grammar etc.”

The principals spoke about their English language teachers’ standard in a piteous way. It might be the challenges they observed from experiences. P2 expressed as “…deficiency in English language extremely high. It is below the standard and it is discouraging”.

Similarly P3 described his belief of the teachers’ difficulties in using the language as follows. “As to me English language teachers have challenges in speaking skills because most of the time these teachers are using Amharic in the classroom as a result the students develop this habit…sometimes I think teachers face problems in understanding their students English language skill”. The other participant P1 told indirectly the parents complaint as “there are complaints from the parents when they see their children English subject results”. On the other hand one the interviewee (P4) explained about the language teachers training that “if I have been given opportunity to prepare training, I design deficiency based training and focus on speaking and writing in addition to grammar”. In the same vein (P2) expressed what the focus of trainings for English language teacher should be as “the trainings in school is very important but should include English language teachers because the problem in this area is high. English language trainings should focus primarily to develop their language proficiency instead of teaching methods”.

The principals also mentioned various causes to the constraints. One is the contextual limitation in which English in our country is a foreign language, and the only option is classroom even that can also be sometimes switched to mother tongue. Regarding the unavailability of context, P1 spoke that “English language is a foreign language; there is no other opportunity except classroom to share ideas, to use in daily activities and develop the language”. Similarly P5 told the limitation that affect teachers that “As English language is a foreign language, teachers are not effective due to the limited access”.

The policy implementation has also great influence on the teachers. The other is teachers’ educational background. For instance, P3 described how trainings are provided. “Most of the time the trainings are top-down by the government but I think it should be subject specific”. It influences the quality of teachers because many are selected for teaching profession from low scored students in grade 10 or 12. These candidates seem to have no interest in the career. In line with this P1 expressed his view about teachers’ idleness as: “teachers are not doing anything except daily routine school activities. They do not even have experience of reading and updating their knowledge. Many teachers have problems in expressing their ideas using the language”. P2 also expressed his concern of teachers’ interest about school trainings and their career selection as follows. “Teachers do not have interest in school CPD because they perceive it as political instead of professional improvement…when candidates are selected from low scored students from grade 10 or 12.” Similarly P4 and P5 told that “I do not think all teachers join teaching profession in their choice because they leave after certain times. (P4)” and “majority of the teachers join teaching profession as a transition (P5)”.

The training system is also questionable and some teachers are recruited for political consumption. P1 pointed his assumption of the training policy as: “there is a problem in the training system and policy”. In the same attitude P4 spoke about the failure of quality of teaching and teachers’ selection in the following words. “It is observed that the quality of teaching is deteriorating. the government should find ways for the area to join candidates in their interest…. I have feeling of selection criteria for teaching profession because it has impacts on their motivation”. On the other hand, P2 expressed teachers’ main interest in trainings. “Teachers participate in summer program for salary improvement. Their interest is not to update or upgrade the profession” P5 also viewed as: “I believe that the teachers’ interest comes first. The other thing is the incentives have values. Teachers are forced to participate in professional development activities”. The evaluation system in the
training colleges focuses on continuous assessment to reduce attrition rate. In line with this, P2 spoke his observation of continuous assessment in training institutions. “In the college the trainees are assessed continuously and given points without assessing their ability which has negative impacts on the teaching –learning process”

In sum the principals expressed their concern of EFL teachers’ current levels of language proficiency skills. They discussed that the deteriorated quality of the teachers productive and receptive skills. The causes could be top-down selection criteria, short period of time, lack of sustainable and insufficient (few) trainings, lack of specific opportunity for EFL teachers, absence of government focus and educational background of teachers. Furthermore, low teachers’ salary and benefits, teachers’ motivation and interest have their own impacts.

5. Discussion

The present study explored primary EFL teachers’ ongoing professional development needs, practices and challenges. It has also assessed the teachers’ perceived English language proficiency levels in speaking, writing, listening and reading. In the following part, I present discussion of the results.

To examine the teachers professional development needs, the 23 items analysis identified the teachers’ professional development needs. The survey participants strongly agreed that they need to have English language proficiency skills and literature knowledge. Majority of the teachers strongly agreed that they need training to develop their speaking ability. It is also observed that the mean (4.56) for English language proficiency indicating several of primary English language teachers’ high interest to develop their ability in basic language skills. Richards [34] illustrated competency in English language teaching draws on content or subject matter knowledge, teaching skills, and the ability to teach in English. This skill is usually viewed as influenced by the teacher’s language proficiency. The other productive skill, about writing need, is also agreed by many respondents in the survey. Similarly the participants chose agreement about training in receptive skills- listening and reading. More importantly the survey results show how much primary EFL teachers’ need English language proficiency to teach students successfully. The results support Getachew, Eba and Zeleke’s study [20] about primary EFL teachers professional development needs. Their findings indicate that the teachers’ need professional development in speaking, writing, grammar skills and vocabularies. Similarly, Yan and He’s findings [41] in the Chinese EFL teachers group verify the present research results. They found that the teachers’ high development needs in spoken English competence and methodology. Effective professional development should be understood as a job-embedded commitment that teachers make in order to further the purposes of the profession while addressing their own particular needs. Teacher success stories are living theories of educational quality and should be shared with the wider educational community for the benefit of all involved [15]. Similarly, Safie, et al. [35] argued that for English language teachers to claim to be really qualified and professional for the great task of ELT, the only choice is equipping themselves with subject matter and pedagogic knowledge. To achieve this, attention needs to be given to the processes of professional development and other factors that enhance such development. Besides, PD is needed for second language teachers to help their students develop proficiency in the target language and an understanding of the cultures associated with that language [15].

Trainees’ and principals’ interview results are also corroborated that the teachers’ extreme deficiencies in macro skills which call for immediate remedy. This makes known trainings for language teachers should focus on these skills. The teachers’ verbatim also revealed their need in the productive and receptive skills. The principals and teachers spoke that trainings in the school should address specifically English language teachers as they need to communicate and deliver the subject matter to students. Literature indicates that foreign language teachers need to have subject matter knowledge- which has a number of components. These include knowledge of second language acquisition theory, pedagogical knowledge, curricular and syllabus knowledge, cultural knowledge, as well as teachers’ proficiency in the target language and an awareness of the structure and features of the target language [34]. Butler’s [7] case study finding on Korea, Taiwan, and Japan elementary school teachers suggested that levels of English proficiency necessary for teaching elementary English should be identified in accordance with appropriate guidelines for English proficiency development in the specific context of the elementary English teaching. Hence, the data shown that teachers are not part of decision makers rather they accept the limited in-service program provided by the government to upgrade or update their levels. This process only allows teachers to involve in the development without identifying their immediate needs.

From the survey results, it is observed that the average value of the teachers’ English language proficiency in speaking, reading, listening and writing skills. It can be seen from the table the mean average of speaking is 3.83, and with a median score of 4. This information is a representative of a high intermediate proficiency rating for the sample, meaning the teachers can smoothly express themselves “at near normal speed but may have to slow down when expressing complex ideas and less-common small expressions” [7]. It is also indicated in the table, the teachers’ rating about the other productive skill, writing proficiency, which is very difficult skill to master has a median value of 4, and average mean of 3.99 which corresponds to the description people at this level have “sufficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge to write in English with a relative ease though sometimes they make some noticeable mistakes in grammar and vocabulary.

Reading is a receptive skill which is important to understand and comprehend texts. The mean for reading is 4.57, and a median score of 5, demonstrates the participants
have mid advanced reading proficiency [7]. This means the teachers can read nearly everything with ease, although it is still slower for them to read in English than in Amharic when they encounter some unfamiliar words and expressions. The descriptive analysis of the other receptive skill, listening, has a median of 4 and mean of 4.05 which explains that people at this level have high intermediate skills. The teachers can understand most of what is said (all main points and most details) when the conversation is at a near normal speed” [7]. The findings depict that the teachers have high intermediate level of language proficiency which means they have good command of English which contradicts the trainers and principals interview results. On the whole the results support Wulyani’s [40] finding that Indonesian EFL teachers tended to overestimate their own overall English language proficiency. However, the results contrasts Getachew, Eba and Zeleke’s [20] study which shows that primary school EFL teachers did not perform the minimum requirements which were expected from them to be English language teachers. The interviewees strongly expressed that the teachers have high deficiency in English language skills. Research findings in Ethiopia about primary EFL teachers’ language proficiency and teaching skills do not also verify the results of the teachers’ rated self-perceived English language proficiency [24].

6. Conclusions

The ultimate goal of CPD is students’ success by equipping teachers’ with subject matter and pedagogic knowledge. Even though majority of the teachers show their interest to engage in professional development activities, they seem to have no interest in the teaching profession. Zein [42] discussed that “comprehensive professional development needs analysis occurs when relevant aspects of both profile and professional needs of teachers are seen as concomitantly related to each other within the professional environment in which the teachers operate” (p. 307). On the other hand the findings illustrate that these teachers need English language proficiency. The professional development opportunities provided by the government have no teacher control over aspects such as contents (topics), time schedules and procedures. However, literature depicts that EFL teachers need suitable training and resources with in realizable time frame to be able to use English as both the medium and target of instruction Richards [34]. Professional renewal is connected to teacher’s knowledge of self, students, school, and social context. The data from the participants seemed to show that these teachers do not practice and reflect. They also do not have access and their own effort to gain new knowledge, experiment and practice in or outside their classroom.

Villegas-Reimers [39] explains that the opportunities of teachers’ participation in the PD have a significant impact on teachers’ beliefs and practices; on students’ learning; and on the implementation of educational reforms in addition to maintaining personal satisfaction and economic benefits. The existing knowledge for these teachers is gained through their teacher education program (as they are foreign language speakers) they attended. The teachers could not express their right decisions. The development of teachers’ knowledge should be understood and supported in relation to teachers’ experience and the way that they respond to their work contexts.

This study aimed to investigate primary EFL teachers’ continuous professional development needs self-perceived English language proficiency in macro skills. It employed mixed methods design approach through collecting data using questionnaires, interviews and field notes.

Every profession needs its own quality to transpire things go in the right direction and reach the intended goal. It is also clear that teaching profession seeks careful delivery of knowledge and skills that could bring about behavioral and attitudinal changes in the learners. Day [14] argued that the insufficiency of being only qualified teachers for professionalism over a career span; but the inevitability of regularly updating subject matter knowledge, teaching methods and skills. Besides the teachers are required to adjust to current changes in technology and respond to challenges coming from students.

The findings from the participants’ view stressed that primary in-service English language teachers’ need to be proficient in basic language skills. Therefore, the respondents proved that they need to develop their English language proficiency skills, subject matter, pedagogic and pedagogic content knowledge.

Furthermore, regarding self-perceived language proficiency, it was found contrasting results. The teachers rated their proficiency level high intermediate. It implies that the teachers have good command of English language. However, the survey results about professional development needs proved the teachers need to develop their English language proficiency skills. Similarly, the trainers and principals interview revealed that majority of the teachers were at risk in English language proficiency skills.

References


