

# ENGLISH LANGUAGE PLANNING CONGRUENCE WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION

## Congruence between Planning and Implementation of Undergraduate English Language and Literature Program

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### Abstract

This study was aimed at examining the congruence between the planning and implementation of the nationally harmonized undergraduate modular English language and literature program in the case of Wachemo and Wolkite universities in Ethiopia. Modularization was adopted mainly to ensure competence-based organization of the programs in Ethiopian higher education institutions, ensure the learner-centered curricula and determine students' workload. In line with modular instruction, it is believed that almost all Ethiopian public universities have the teaching and learning of EFL as a separate program of study, named as English Language and literature. However, the congruence between the planning and implementation of the program with the realization of individuals' views and the challenges is one of the vital steps towards achieving the expected outcomes. Accordingly, 183 participants comprising 22 instructors 159 students and 2 department heads were involved to respond and reflect their views with the challenges. The results revealed that though the participants had a relatively higher view towards the planning, they were disappointed with the incongruence of the implementation with the planning or the major assumptions of the program due to several conceptual and contextual challenges. Students' low English language background, students' low interest to study English language and literature as their field of study, block mode course delivery, low quality assessment mechanisms and instructors' low commitment are among the challenges to impede the implementation. As such, to ensure effective implementation of the program, solutions should be made in accordance with the views and the challenges.

### Keywords

Assumptions of modular instruction, conceptual and contextual challenges congruence, implementation, planning, views

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### 1. Introduction

Among the recent major changes one can witness in the world of education is the paradigm shift in relation to knowledge construction. Previously knowledge was believed to be imparted from teachers to learners, but now this view has received little or no acceptance due to the paradigm shift in the area. It is noticeably evident that the teaching and learning theories which advocate that learners construct knowledge influence the pedagogical philosophy of the day (Driscoll & Wood, 2007). This is generally referred to as constructivism theory of learning. The proponents of the theory

advocate that learners construct their own knowledge, and this notation seems to dominate the current pedagogical outlooks (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). This shows that the traditional teacher-centered approach emerges to get little or no acceptance and hence constructivism tends to get attention which may, in turn, mark the tendency to the student-centered learning paradigm.

Despite the challenges, the endeavor to implement student-centered approach, especially in the higher education institutions tends to get high acceptance in the Ethiopian context. Regarding the challenges, a successful implementation of the student-centered approach according to (Eggin, 2003) tends to be demanding as changing the tradition of 'one-size-fits-all' in the institutions would not be simple. Next, the student-centered approach requires the institutions to identify the needs of the students meticulously and then determine the competence, knowledge and skills that the labor market demands the employability of the graduates among others (Cloete et al., 2006; Knight & Yorke, 2004). And finally, this approach demands the institutions to undertake educational reform that might help them implement and manage the change (Betts & Smith, 1998). In relation to educational reform, the other paradigm shift in line with constructivism theory of learning in general and student-centered approach in particular is the practice of modularization approach in higher education institutions.

Modularization was first designed and implemented in the United States of America (USA) in the 1960s to help students choose modules flexibly. Harvard University had played decisive roles in introducing the flexible and elective modular instructional approach (Dochy, Wagemans, & de Wolf, 1989). According to Young (1998), however, the origin of modularization was not only related with the endeavors of the academic institutions to increase curricular flexibility, but it was also connected with the attempts of the government of the USA to standardize curricula of that nation. Then, European universities and colleges had adopted modularization in their higher education systems (Betts & Smith, 1998; Moon, 2002; Scott, 2000). Modularization had been adopted and implemented in Europe mainly to enhance autonomous learning, give students opportunities to pursue their studies at their own pace and interests, help them flexibly choose what, where and when to study, and to commence continuous assessments as well (Dochy, Wagemans, & de Wolf, 1989; Moon, 2002; Nelson & Brown, 1984; Toohey, 1999).

Similarly, the idea of adopting modularization in the Ethiopian public universities is more or less related to business processes adjustment movement. In connection with the idea of Business Processes Re-engineering (BPR), attempts had been made to readjust the teaching-learning processes in higher education institutions. It was reported in the guidelines of the nationally modularized curriculum that the HEIs' BPR findings had implicated the adoption of modularization in the universities, and, therefore, it had received attention. Based on the report of the MoE (2013), modularization was adopted mainly to ensure competence-based organization of the programs in the institutions, ensure the learner-centered curricula and determine students' workload.

The implementation of modularization requires harmonization of courses across universities in a nation (Quinn, 1978). Accordingly, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education had given the public higher education institutions consent to implement modular instruction and facilitated the harmonization of the curricula across the public universities. To this effect, the ministry recruited and trained some lecturers and education policy research experts in 2012 on how to design modularized curricula and implement it. After the training, a national core module team was established to prepare a guideline for the curriculum harmonization. Then, teams that harmonized the modular curricula for the public universities were organized at national level. And also, two national councils, namely Councils of Higher Education Curriculum and Institutional Change had been organized to follow the harmonization and implementation of modularization in the universities. The Higher Education Curriculum Council, in which ministerial officers were members, was established to supervise the overall processes of modularization, whereas the Council for Institutional Change in the Higher Education Institution, which was set to embrace universities' presidents, was organized to closely follow and manage the implementation.

In line with modular instruction, it is believed that almost all Ethiopian public universities have the teaching and learning of EFL as a separate program of study, named as English Language and Literature. The current curriculum of the teaching-learning processes of the program is grounded on modular instructional approach which has focused on developing learners' communicative competence. This is because the impact of learner centeredness on language teaching is evident with the development of communicative approaches which shifted the attention of the teaching-learning processes from language form to language function or to language use in accordance with the needs of learners (Harris & Cullen, 2010; Tudor, 1996; Weimer, 2002). Appropriate planning and effective implementation of the program in line with its planning, however, is one of the vital steps towards achieving high quality language instruction.

As mentioned before, modularization has been regarded as educational innovation which ultimately focuses on competence-based education. The successful implementation of an educational innovation, however, is closely related to how well the change agents are aware of the goals and the philosophy that emphasizes the change, on the one hand, and their understanding of the strategies, on the other hand. For instance, it is evident that there have been several constraints in the effective implementation of modularization. In this regard, Lattuca & Stark (2009) noted that the availability of resources in an institution, academic governance, attitudes and experiences of teachers and students can strongly influence the implementation of modular curriculum.

An effort was made by Dejene (2016) to investigate the practices of modular instructional approach in the undergraduate program of English Language and Literature with special reference to three public universities in the country and he concluded that the current practices of modularization in the public universities do not go with the principles of modularization. However, there is still lack of systematic evaluation in relation to realizing the views of instructors, students and department heads and identifying major conceptual and contextual challenges in the implementation of the program to achieve the objectives mentioned in the curriculum in particular and the major assumptions (such as competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students' learning) of modular instruction in general. This study was, therefore, to make an examination of the congruence between the planning and implementation of the nationally harmonized undergraduate modular English language and literature program with special attention to the views of instructors, students and department heads and the major conceptual and contextual challenges for the incongruence (if any) with particular reference to Wachemo and Wolkite universities in Ethiopia. To achieve the objective of the study, the following two research questions were set: (1). How do the participants view the planning and implementation of the nationally harmonized undergraduate English language and literature program; and (2). what are the major conceptual and contextual challenges (if any) that hinder the actual implementation of the program in congruence with its planning.

## **2. Research methods**

The researcher followed the pragmatists' paradigm in general and a sequential mixed (both qualitative and quantitative) approach.

### **2.1. Participants of the study and tools of data collection**

All the available instructors and students (first, second and third year students) of the department, and 2 department heads (one from each sampled university) were taken purposively through availability sampling technique for the questionnaires. 18 students from each year level (9 from each sampled university through systematic random sampling) were sampled for students' FGDs. And finally, the 2 department heads (one from each sampled university) were taken purposively through availability sampling technique as participants of individual interview. Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP (context, input, process, and product) academic program evaluation model was adapted and used in the preparation of the questions for data collection.

### **2.2. Procedures of data collection**

Following the adaptation of Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP (context, input, process, and product) academic program evaluation model and using it in the preparation of the questions to collect data, the nationally harmonized English language and literature modular curriculum document for undergraduate program was reviewed to see its underlying assumptions in general and aims, objectives, professional profile, graduate profile, and the core competency areas, and organization of the courses in particular. Then, a pilot study was made to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaires for all participants of the main study, and some modifications were made accordingly.

The participants were asked to their willingness and to read an informed consent form, and were promised their complete anonymity before participating. In order to obtain more accurate and genuine responses, the purpose of the research and individual questions were also explained and clarified. Data of questionnaires for all participants of the main study were collected first and triangulated with FGDs of both instructors and students and individual interviews of department heads.

Concerning the proper administration of the questionnaires to students, precaution was made. Fearing the questionnaires were too much to create boredom that the students might not give much emphasis in filling out the questionnaires, the researcher requested some instructors to allow him their class time so that the students would fill out the questionnaires under his own supervision with clarification and other necessary supports.

Most of the student participants of the pilot study had faced difficulty of supplying the intended responses in English, especially in their reflection during open ended questions of the questionnaires and FGDs. As such, to avoid lack of information due to English language barrier, the students were asked to discuss and reflect in the language to which they are more familiar and through which they can effortlessly express their ideas. Tape recorder was used to record the discussion because tape recorders are invaluable for focus group discussions (e.g., Kreuger, 1988). Notes were also taken in conjunction with the discussion.

### **2.3. Methods of data analysis**

The collected data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative data collected through FGDs, individual interview and open-ended questions of the three categories of questionnaires (questionnaires to instructors, students and department heads) were organized thematically based on the research questions. Organized notes, in the form of description, were written, analyzed and interpreted with support of relevant literatures. In describing the participants' reflections, codes like instructor or student from WCU/WKU (for instructors and students in questionnaires) DH1 or DH2 (for department heads both in questionnaires and interviews), UCI1/UKI1....UCI12/UKI12 (for instructors in the FGDs) and UCS1/UCS2....UCS18/UKS18 (for students in the FGDs) were used to keep the anonymity of participants.

In analyzing the quantitative data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was employed. In organizing the closed-ended questionnaires' data for the analysis, firstly, the papers were separately coded based on their categorical sources. Secondly, separated databases were set on the SPSS spreadsheets. Then, quantifiable data were verified, encoded and processed by using SPSS. Particularly, descriptive statistics (to analyze mean scores regarding the participants' views on the planning and implementation of the program), Dependent Samples T-Test or Paired Samples T-Test (to test the difference between the participants' views on the planning and implementation of the program) and Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (to test the difference between the total participants' views on the planning and implementation of the program) were applied on five-point likert scale. In doing so, frequencies, means, standard deviations and significances were demonstrated. Finally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was also calculated to see the internal consistency of the data.

## **3. Results and discussion**

This section presents the findings sequentially from quantitative to qualitative followed by overall discussion with triangulation of the quantitative data with that of the qualitative. Accordingly, the section presents both types of data separately in line with one major similar theme: participants' views on the English language and literature curricular document and its implementation.

### **3.1. Findings of the quantitative data analysis**

This section is about presenting the findings of the quantitative data obtained through the close-ended items of the questionnaires to instructors, students and department heads. The items were meant to collect data regarding the participants' views on the nationally harmonized undergraduate English language and literature curricular document and instructors' teaching and students' learning in the implementation of the program in the sampled public universities. 183 participants were involved in the study. As the researcher made a big effort to ensure a high response rate of the student participants' through letting them fill out the questionnaires under his close supervision during their class time, all the student participants returned the questionnaires by taking the necessary care, except that only three instructor participants did not return the questionnaires because of some inconvenience. Similarly, each department head in the two sampled universities returned the questionnaires. That is, whereas 159 out of 159 student participants and 2 out of 2 department head participants from both sampled universities returned the questionnaires, 22 out of 25 instructor participants from both sampled universities returned the questionnaires. Hence, the findings are presented and discussed accordingly in the following sections.

#### **3.1.1 The participants' views on the curricular document and its implementation**

##### **3.1.1.1. Instructors' views on the curriculum document, their own teaching and their students' learning in the implementation**

As it is indicated in Table 1, the mean scores of the 22 instructor participants' views on the English language and

literature curriculum document (6 items), their own teaching (10 items), their students' learning (6 items) and the implementation in general are 3.89, 3.59, 2.95 and 3.27, respectively with their respective standard deviations 0.409, 0.645, 0.510 and 0.497.

**Table 1. Summary of descriptive statistics for mean scores of instructors' views on the curriculum document, their own teaching, their students' learning and implementation in general**

Instructors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Views on the Curriculum Document	22	3.8788	.40965
Views on their Own Teaching	22	3.5870	.64800
Views on their Students' Learning	22	2.9527	.51091
Total Views on Implementation	22	3.2699	.49704
Total		22	

Note: N = number of instructor participants

As shown in Table 1 above, the mean scores indicate that the instructors were found to have a relatively better view towards the curriculum document than their view towards their own teaching and their students' learning. This, in other words, means that there is a difference between the planning of the curriculum document and its implementation being lower.

Moreover, in order to indicate the difference between the instructors' views on the curriculum document and its implementation, Dependent Samples T-Test was applied and the mean scores were tested for their differences from the expected mean value (3.00) in a five-point likert scale. The results of the Dependent Samples T-Test are presented in Table 2 (paired samples statistics) and Table 3 (paired samples test) below:

**Table 2. Summary of paired samples statistics for the difference between instructors' views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Instructors' view on the planning of the curriculum document	3.8788	22	.40965	.08734
Instructors' view on the implementation	3.2699	22	.49704	.10597

Note: N= number of instructor participants

**Table 3. Summary of paired samples test for the difference between instructors' views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Paired Differences						T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval of The Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 Instructors' view on the planning of the curriculum–Implementation	.60892	.43177	.09205	.41749	.80036	6.615	21	.000	

In brief, the above tables shows that the instructors' view on the planning of the English language and literature curriculum document is significantly deviated ( $M=3.88$ ,  $SE=0.09$ ) from their views on its implementation ( $M=3.27$ ,  $SE=.11$ ),  $t(21)=6.62$ ,  $p<.05$ , two tailed.

3.2.1.2. Students’ views on the curriculum document, their instructors’ teaching and their own learning in the implementation of the program

As it is indicated in Table 4, the mean scores of the 159 student participants’ views on the English language and literature curriculum document (2 items), their instructors’ teaching (9 items), their own’ learning (12 items) and the implementation in general are 3.93, 3.59, 3.23 and 3.41, respectively with their respective standard deviations 0.755, 0.465, 0.552 and 0.439.

**Table 4. Summary of descriptive statistics for mean scores of students’ views on the curriculum document, their instructors’ teaching, their own learning and the implementation in general**

Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Views on the Curriculum Document	159	3.9344	.75473
Views on their Instructors Teaching	159	3.5920	.46547
Views on their Own Learning	159	3.2312	.55279
Total Views on Implementation	159	3.4116	.43900
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>		

Note: N = number of student participants

As shown in Table 4, the mean scores indicate that the students were found to have a relatively better view towards the curriculum document than their view towards their instructors’ teaching and their own learning. This, in other words, means that there is a difference between the planning of the curriculum document and its implementation being lower. In order to indicate the difference between the students’ views on the curriculum document and its implementation, Dependent Samples T-Test was also applied and the mean scores were tested for their differences from the expected mean value (3.00) in a five-point likert scale. The results of the Dependent Samples T-Test have been presented in Table 5 (paired samples statistics) and Table 6 (paired samples test) below:

**Table 5. Summary of paired samples statistics for the difference between the students’ views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Students’ view on the planning of the curriculum document	3.9344	159	.75473	.05985
Students’ view on the implementation	3.4116	159	.43900	.03481

Note: N = number of student participants

**Table 6. Summary of paired samples test for the difference between students’ views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Paired Differences						T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval of The Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1 Students’ views on curriculum – Implementation	.52277	.74495	.05908	.40608	.63945	8.849	158	.000	

In brief, students’ view on the planning of the English language and literature curriculum document is significantly deviated (M = 3.93, SE = 0.06) from their view on its implementation (M = 3.41, SE = 0.03),  $t(158) = 8.85$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , two tailed.

### 3.2.1.3. Department heads' views on the curriculum document, their own coordination of the program, instructors' teaching and students' learning in the implementation

As it is indicated in table 7, the mean scores of the 2 department head participants' views on the curriculum document (5 items), their own coordination of the program (8 items), instructors' teaching (7 items), students' learning (6 items) and the implementation in general are 3.40, 2.62, 3.00, 2.97 and 2.84, respectively with their respective standard deviations 0.565, 0.177, 0.202, .589 and 0.322.

**Table 7. Summary of descriptive statistics for mean scores of department heads' views on the curriculum document, their own coordination of the program, instructors' teaching and students' learning in the implementation**

Department Heads	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Views on the Curriculum Document	2	3.4000	.56569
Views on their Own Coordination	2	2.6250	.17678
Views on Instructors' Teaching	2	3.0000	.20203
Views on Students' Learning	2	2.9167	.58926
Total Views on Implementation	2	2.8472	.32269
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		

Note: N= number of department head participants

As shown in Table 7, the mean scores indicate that the department heads were found to have a relatively better view towards the English language and literature curriculum document than their view towards their own coordination of the program, instructors' teaching and students' learning. This, in other words, means that there is a difference between the planning of the curriculum and its implementation with being lower.

In order to indicate the difference between the department heads' views on the English language and literature curriculum document and its implementation, Dependent Samples T-Test was also applied and the mean scores were tested for their differences from the expected mean value (3.00) in a five-point likert scale. The results of the Dependent Samples T-Test have been presented in Table 8 (paired samples statistics) and Table 9 (paired samples test) below:

**Table 8. Paired samples statistics of the difference between department heads' views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 Department heads' view on the curriculum document	3.4000	2	.56569	.40000
Pair 1 Department heads' view on the implementation	2.8472	2	.32269	.22817

Note: N = number of student participants

**Table 9. Paired samples test of the difference between department heads' views on the curriculum document and its implementation**

	Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2tailed)
	M	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval of The Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Heads' views on the curriculum document – Implementation	.55278	.24300	.17183	-1.63047	2.73603	3.217	1	.192

In summary, department heads' view on the planning of the English language and literature curriculum document is significantly deviated ( $M=3.40$ ,  $SE=.40$ ) from their view on its implementation ( $M=2.85$ ,  $SE=.23$ ),  $t(1)=3.22$ ,  $p<.05$ , two tailed.

### 3.2.1.4. Total participants' views on the planning and implementation of the English language and literature program

As it is indicated in table 10, the mean scores of 183 total participants' views on the curriculum document and its implementation in general are 3.92 and 3.39, respectively with their respective standard deviations 0.720 and 0.449.

**Table 10. Summary of descriptive statistics for mean scores of total participants' views on the planning and implementation of the program**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total participants' view on the planning of the document	183	3.9219	.72040
Total participants' view on the implementation	183	3.3884	.44919

Note: N = number of total participants

As shown in table 10 above, the mean scores indicate that the total participants were found to have a significantly higher view towards the curriculum document than their view towards its implementation, i.e., their views towards instructors' teaching, students' learning and department heads' coordination.

In order to show the difference between the total participants' view on the curriculum document and its implementation, Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test was also applied and the ranks were tested for their differences from the expected mean value (3.00) in a five-point likert scale.

**Table 14. The total participants' views on the planning and implementation of the curriculum document**

	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Total Participants' Views on the Implementation-Total Participants' Views on the planning of the Curriculum Document	Negative Ranks	154 <sup>a</sup>	14368.50
	Positive Ranks	29 <sup>b</sup>	2467.50
	Ties	0 <sup>c</sup>	
	Total	183	

Note: a = Total Participants' Views on Implementation < Total Participants' Views on the planning; b = Total Participants' Views on Implementation > Total Participants' Views on the planning; c = Total Participants' Views on Implementation = Total Participants' Views on the planning.

#### Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	Total Participants' Views on Implementation - Total Participants' Views on the planning
Z	-8.293 <sup>b</sup>
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Note: a = Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test; b = Based on positive ranks.

In general, Related samples Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test revealed that the total participants' views on the planning of the curriculum document is significantly higher (Mdn=3.92, N= 183) than the total participants' views on the implementation of the curriculum (Mdn= 3.39, N= 183), T = 2467.50, p < .05.

### 3.3. Findings and interpretations of the qualitative data

In the interpretation of the qualitative data, the author validated the findings of the quantitative data discussed in the preceding section.

#### 3.3.1 The participants' views on the English language and literature curricular document and its implementation

The majority of the participants believed that the curriculum document is relatively good mainly for its theoretical

inclusion of various courses with various contents which enable the students to widen their scope of understanding English language and their future job opportunities. For instance, the following are responses from instructors, students and department heads, respectively: “Of course, all the courses are important for the students’ future life [future job needs] because they are going to join different job opportunities, such as journalism, PR [Public Relations], etc.”; The courses that we are learning may significantly change my skill [English language skill]. This is because...when I leave from here [from the campus], after my graduation, I have the chances of being a journalist, a teacher and working in different areas. But, in my learning here in the university, my effort to know plays the major role”; and “As each course [in the curriculum] have [sic. has] its own practical and theoretical parts, it may help them to adopt different kinds of skills.”

Similarly, to validate their responses in the questionnaires, instructors and students in the FGDs and department heads in the individual interviews were asked to reflect their views, and they confirmed that the various courses of the program are relevant to the students’ future job needs. For instance, one of the instructors said: “As to me, the program is very essential and important for the students because this program is entertained with all specializations which are [sic., such as or like] literature, TEFL [Teaching English as a Foreign Language], linguistics and journalism. And, there are lots of courses in the different specializations. Therefore, the program highly helps students to join different jobs” (UCI3). In a similar way, one of the students said: “Of course, the courses are related to our job needs in that there are courses of 3<sup>rd</sup> year like that of Journalism, Public Relations which will enable us to develop our communication skills more...(UCS1).

One of the department heads in the interviews also noted: “It [the English language and literature program] is relatively good when compared to other fields...because they [the students] are lucky to join different institutions like teaching, media and any other PR [Public Relations] activities” (DH1).

Nevertheless, though most of the participants were appeared to have a relatively better view towards the planning of the curriculum document mainly for its theoretical adoption of different courses which may enable the learners to have various job opportunities, they were still dissatisfied with the planning of the document due to its major limitations that can even directly or indirectly affect its implementation to be incongruent with the three major assumptions of modular instruction in general and that of the nationally harmonized undergraduate English language and literature curriculum document in particular, namely competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students’ learning. These limitations were also evident during the analysis of the document. The limitations are: organizing some basic courses into block manner; and arranging courses to be delivered at a similar academic term or semester without keeping course pre-requisite order or sequence.

Regarding their dissatisfaction with the block courses of the curriculum document, the following instructors, students and department heads in the questionnaires, FGDs and interviews, reflected respectively as follows on the questions related to sufficiency of time and appropriateness of workload for students’ preparation: “Regarding the block courses, students seem much more tensioned to complete [courses] and to take exams. In my point of view, some practical courses like ‘Spoken English’ should be semester-wise courses” (Instructor from WCU); “ELL [English Language and Literature] is a good field. But, the problem, most of the time, is that there are several block courses. So, these should be minimized or should not make us overloaded” (Student from WKU: translated from Amharic); “It is unthinkable because they [the instructors] intend just to cover and finish their courses” (First year student from WCU: translated from Oromo); and “sometimes, the students are overloaded by different kinds of block courses” (DH1).

The participants’ responses in the questionnaires were validated through the data from FGDs and interviews, and they were also found to express their dissatisfaction with the block courses for they do not allow both instructors and students to make timely and appropriate preparation. For example, the following are from the voices of instructors, students and department heads, who were coded as UCI11, UCS2 and DH2, respectively: “Sometimes I see how the courses are assigned. Some basic courses for the particular students are assigned as block courses and some courses which are not that much basic for those particular students is [sic. are] given in the whole semester...”(UCI11); “We don’t have sufficient time for preparation; we have never had; beginning from first year to third year, we have spent our time, especially during second year, with being much stressed ” (UCS2); and “I believe that a thing that can create a problem within our curriculum is the block course” (DH2).

The participants were also asked in the questionnaires, FGDs and interviews to reflect their views regarding whether or not the nationally harmonized English language and literature curriculum document congruent with the three major principles or assumptions of modular instruction, namely competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students’ preparation. Accordingly, in concluding their views on the planning of the English language and literature curriculum document, one of the instructors in the FGDs forwarded as follows:

“By the way, the curriculum has its own drawbacks. For instance, I can take it with my courses. The courses are designed to be block courses. But, their nature can’t allow to be given that way or in a block way. Even, the skill process like Spoken I, II, these [sic \_\_\_] courses cannot be given in a block way because they are skill processes. Therefore, it has such kind of problem” (UCI3).

The students in the FGDs gave similar conclusion as if the existence of block course in the curriculum is a serious problem. For example, UKSI10 reflected as follows: “In my opinion, teaching courses, especially the most important ones, in block manner is a big problem” (UKS10: translated from Amharic). The department heads in the interviews concluded with a similar view with that of the instructors. DH1, for example, said: “It is better if we revise its harmonized curriculum, especially those block courses” (DH1)”.

In general, though the participants were found to acknowledge the principles (competence based-education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students’ learning) of the document, but most of them seemed to criticize the principles for they are only principles without practicality mainly due to block courses which leads to lack of appropriate time duration in order for the students to finish the program with having the necessary or expected competences.

### **3.3.2. The participants’ views on the implementation of the program**

Participants’ views on the implementation is to mean instructors’, students’ and department heads’ views on instructors’ teaching and students’ learning.

#### **3.3.2.1. Participants’ views on instructors’ teaching in the implementation of the program**

In the questionnaire, all the available instructors were asked about 7 open-ended questions and requested to give their views accordingly. The first question was in relation to whether or not the instructors have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach. Accordingly, the participants from instructors, students and department heads believed that most of the instructors have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach. According to the participants, there are also instructors who need additional training in terms of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitude. For instance, one of the instructors confirmed: “I have necessary [sic the necessary] enthusiasm on the course I teach. But, to be honest, I understand that I need additional skill and knowledge to make my students/clients well-informed about courses [sic the courses] I teach” (An M.A linguistic instructor from WCU with 10 years of high school and 5 years of university teaching experience) Similarly, one of the students in the questionnaires said: “Some instructors teach effectively, but there are also others who do not teach effectively” (Student from WCU: Translated from Oromo).

The instructors were dissatisfied with the imbalance between theory and practice in the courses they teach in particular and the teaching and learning of the program in general. Lack of appropriate language resources or materials, workload and the students’ passive approach to participate in practical aspects due to their English language background problem were seemed to be among the major responsible factors. One of the instructors, for example, noted: “Whenever we are trying to apply what we have learned theoretically, there are gaps....So, to apply what we have learned theoretically or scientifically, there is material problem; there is...as you have said before, there is workload problem; there is students’ background problem and etc problems....” (UKI10). In a similar way, one of the department heads stated: “There is a practical problems [sic. problem]....so...since there is a practical problem regarding material availability, the university must provide some important materials. Particularly, in the area of communication, journalism, literature and linguistic, there is no any [sic. \_] material...” (DH1).

As shown in the above responses, the English language communication between instructors and students was found to be one-way. That is, the instructors try to make it two-way, but dominate the communication in that the students lack interest to use English because they have got low English language background. This was also confirmed by the instructors in the FGDs. For example, the following are the recorded voice of one of the instructors: “Regarding this question, putting myself in this case, I say that there is a poor communication between the teacher and students. There are different factors for this, may be related with students’ background, especially mother tongue interference....So, there is poor communication between the teacher and students” (UCI5).

The following student whose linguistic background is ‘*Afan Oromo*’ or Oromo language also reflected in the questionnaires as follows: “We have no communication [two-way] because the instructors always speak in Amharic. So, we have no communication” (First year student from WCU: translated from Oromo). Another student in the questionnaires also said: “The main problem that I face in the teaching-learning process is a problem of language. I have

missed a lot. The reason is that I know Oromo language, but I have a problem of understanding the explanation which is given in Amharic language” (Second year student from WCU: translated from Oromo).

According to the participants, the instructors’ teaching is accompanied by unsupportive classrooms that are characterized by absence of audio-visual materials or resources and their insecurity from disturbances of other department students. In support of this idea, an instructor in the FGDs said: “...in terms of having the necessary materials or resources, language laboratories in the classrooms, I believe that the classrooms are not supportive” (UCI6).

In the researcher’s attempt to analyze as to whether or not there are unreasonable interferences in their teaching, the instructors reflected their disappointment for they have no academic or professional freedom due to unnecessary interference from their department heads in particular and their university management in general. According to the instructors, the interference is dominantly related to evaluation of their students’ academic performance. For instance, one of the instructors in the questionnaires noted: “Nowadays, it is known that the quality of education is decreasing. Our university obliges us to add marks for students focusing on quantity rather than quality” (Instructor from WCU). In another instance in which the instructors were asked if they continuously assess their students through quality assessment techniques, most of the instructors believed that they continuously assess their students, but they also believed that their way of assessment lacks quality due to lack of freedom to do so due to the interference from department heads in particular and university management in general. For example, the following instructors in the FGDs stated:

Most of the time, we are expected to assess the students properly according to the objective or in line with the course objectives in general and the lesson of assessment in particular. But unfortunately, the workers who are above us may force us. For example, sometimes we are supposed to change grades in unwanted way [a wrong way] without our interest or reasonable matters. The other problem is the so called remedial exam. This is making us to [sic. to be] dissatisfied It is also making our work to [sic. \_\_\_] be disgusting because we are doing this again and again. The students are not working properly; as a result, we are supposed to push [let them pass] our students; we push them. So, when we come to the quality, the quality fails down because we are not working according to our ethics or according to what the program needs. So, this leads to the quality failure (UCI4).

As a teacher, I am expected to assess my students based on the objectives that the students are expected to achieve and according to the curriculum. But, the students have poor background in English. So, we are obliged to make our assessment based on the students’ level, not on the objectives (UKI12).

### 3.3.2.2. Participants’ views on students’ learning in the implementation of the program

In here, all the participants were asked different questions and made to reflect their views related to students’ learning in the implementation of the program. One of the questions was on the extent that the students are interested in studying English language and literature during and after joining the department. Almost all the participants believed that almost all of the students from first year to third year did not choose the department for they had no interest before to join English language as their field of study and they are still with low interest.

This could be confirmed in the statement by one of the instructors: “...For example, this year, no student chose the department. No student! Last year, one student or two students selected the department” (UCI4). The data obtained from instructors regarding their views on students’ interest in the English language and literature department were validated through the data obtained from their students themselves and department heads. The majority of the students shared their instructors’ idea that the students did not join the department with their own interest, but they were obliged by their institutions. As a result, they were also found to be less interested in staying in the department even after they joined it. For example, the following are quotes from a student in the FGDs to confirm the students’ low interest in choosing and studying the program as follows: “I think it is obvious. That is, there is no one who chooses the department. For example in our class, no one joined the department with interest except one student. Even this student joined the department due to the fact that he might have a better experience or exposure in English language than others” (UKS18: translated from Amharic).

In the questionnaires of department heads from both sampled universities were also found to share similar views as follows: “[sic They have] poor motivation starting from choosing the program. There are many factors for this. In my opinion, their background matters” (DH1)]; and “I don’t think the students have interest to attend the program” (DH2). The participants also tried to mention the views students hold on the teaching profession as another factor for students’

low interest in the English language and literature department. For example, the following are from the reflections by instructors: “And, the other thing may be a view towards teaching profession because of like payment. All of we know that how it is valued. Usually, if students join English department, they are going to be English teachers, most of the time; so they don’t want to be teachers” (UKI11). Similar idea was shared by the students themselves. For example, UCS4 responded as follows: “...In addition, if you join English department, you have a high probability of being a teacher. For example, the work which I hate most is being a teacher. So, this may be the other treason behind our low motivation to join English department” (UCS4: translated from Amharic). Finally, indicating the students’ low background and low interest as major factors, all of the participants concluded that the students are less active in their classroom participation.

### **3.4. Discussion of the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data**

In here, an attempt was made to show the consistency of the findings of the quantitative data with that of the qualitative based on the data validation made in the analysis through both data and tool triangulation. And, for the organization and ease of the discussion, an attempt was made to discuss the findings in line with the three major themes adapted from the objectives of the study: the participants’ view towards the planning of the nationally harmonized English language and literature curriculum document, the participants’ view towards the implementation of the nationally harmonized English language and literature program, and the underlying challenges of implementing the program.

#### **3.4.1. The participants’ view towards the planning of the curriculum document**

The findings revealed that the instructors in both sampled universities were found to fulfill at least the minimum requirement (all having second degree in the area according to the direction of the Ministry of Education which is currently called Ministry of Science and Higher Education) to teach in the English language and literature department with adequate experience (almost 60% of them are with above 5 years of experience) to implement the nationally harmonized English language and literature program in line with its major assumptions, especially student-centered teaching/learning approach. However, as a mere academic qualification with experience may not necessarily guarantee the implementation of the modularized and nationally harmonized English language and literature program without considering other necessary factors, such as both conceptual and contextual which might be linked to the views of the instructors in relation to its planning and implementation. This is because teachers within the context of teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) are individuals who enter teacher education programs with personal values and beliefs [in addition to their prior experiences,] that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 401).

The findings show a relatively different view of instructors regarding the planning of the curriculum document and its implementation (their own teaching and their students’ learning), with their view on the planning of the curriculum document being significantly deviated from their views on its implementation. That is, the findings indicate that the instructors have got a relatively better view towards the document than its implementation (their own teaching and their students learning). They, of course, proved this in their rating on a one-to-five point likert scale of the questionnaire, i.e., their views on the document (3.89), their views on their own teaching (3.59) and their views on their students’ learning (2.95).

The instructors in the questionnaires and in the FGDs were also found to be more critical in explaining the related open-ended questions and expressed their discontent with the curriculum document in general though they partially believed that the curriculum document is good mainly for its theoretical adoption of different courses which may enable the learners to have different job opportunities. The design of some basic courses into block manner, designing courses to be delivered at a similar academic term or semester without keeping course priority order, and giving more emphasis to other courses like that of literature than speaking and writing courses which they believe are the students’ dominant aspects of their problem of the language are the limitations of the document reflected by the instructors. These were, actually, evident in the analysis of the document which reveals the document to be inconsistent with the three major assumptions of modular instruction, namely competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriated workload for students’ preparation.

The findings also indicate that the students have a relatively higher view towards the document than its implementation (their aggregate views on instructors’ teaching and their own learning). They, of course, proved this in their rating on a one-to-five point likert scale of the questionnaire, i.e., their views on the document (3.93), their views on their instructors’ teaching (3.59) and their views on their own learning (3.23). According to the findings, the fact that

the students have a relatively higher view towards the planning of the program than its implementation found to be attributed to their strong view regarding the variety in the courses in order for them to gain different knowledge which may, in turn, enable them to have different job opportunities. This was, in fact, found to be consistent with the idea that knowledge of English is regarded [in Ethiopia] as a guarantor of a good job that pays well (Jeylan, 2006) Though the findings of the quantitative data reveal that the students were found to have a relatively higher view towards the curriculum document, the findings of the qualitative data also implied that the students shared their instructors' disappointment with the problems mentioned before, especially the presence of those block courses which they believed to be the major challenge in relation to making adequate preparation for their learning.

The findings of the quantitative data still reveal a relatively different view of department heads regarding the planning of the curriculum document and its implementation (their aggregate views on the instructors' teaching, their coordination of the department and the students' learning), with their view on the planning of the document being significantly deviated from their view on its implementation. That is, the findings indicate that the instructors hold a relatively higher view towards the document than its implementation. They, of course, proved this in their rating on a one-to-five point likert scale of the questionnaire, i.e., their views on the document (3.40), their views on their coordination of the department (2.62), their views on the instructors' teaching (3.00) and their views on the students' learning (2.97).

The relatively higher view that the department heads hold about the planning of the curriculum document (3.40 mean rating), as compared to their view towards its implementation (2.84 mean rating) was found to be lower than that of the instructors and the students, with their mean rating being 3.89 and 3.93, respectively. This might reveal the relatively higher dissatisfaction of the department heads' with both the planning and implementation of the program. Irrespective of their dissatisfaction with both, the findings of both the quantitative and the qualitative data proves that the relatively higher view that the department heads hold towards the planning of the program than that of its implementation might be attributed to their view that inclusion of various language courses in the program would enable the students to have various job opportunities, such as teaching, working in media and participating in public relation activities (the claim which is almost similar with that of the instructors). This, for instance, could be proved in the item statistics which shows the department heads' relative high mean rating (4.00) to the related item on a one-to-five likert scale.

The fact that the curriculum document includes a variety of courses, mainly of English language, which paves the opportunities for the students to work in different job arena could also be proved in reviewing the document, particularly in reviewing organization of the modular courses of the program. That is, though it was analyzed that there was a mismatch between the number of the competency areas (9) and the number of core modules (11), various courses are designed from 11 core modules, such as Basic English Skills, Aural-Oral Skills, Basics of Linguistics, Reading and Writing Skills, Language Use and Meaning, Basics and Genres of Literature, Surveys of Literature, Literary Criticism, Writing for Media, Editing and Reporting, Communication Theories and Practices, and Researching and Reporting Skills.

Despite their relative higher view on the nationally harmonized modular curriculum document than their lower view towards its implementation, the findings, mainly the qualitative ones, reveal that the block courses, as it was already emphasized by both the instructors and the students, were found to be the department heads' major source of disappointment with the document. They believed that the block courses get both instructors and students overloaded and, therefore, block them so that they may not have appropriate or sufficient time for the successful implementation of the program, particularly in line with appropriate work load for students' learning, one of its major principles, which may, in turn, affect the rest of the principles, such as competence-based education and student-centeredness.

In summary, though the quantitative findings show that the total participants have a relatively higher view towards the planning of the modular curriculum as compared to their lower view towards its implementation, the participants' qualitative reflections were found to increase their discontent with the document mainly because of the block mode teaching/learning of the block courses.

### **3.4.2. The participants' view towards instructors' teaching**

Despite the instructors' rating which indicates that they have a relatively higher view towards their teaching than that of their students learning which is even below the expected mean (3.0), it can be concluded that they have got lower views in general towards the implementation of the program. As it could be seen from the item statistics, the instructors' higher view towards their teaching might be linked to the fact that they believe: they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach; there is a balance between the theory and practice in their teaching; and there

are two-way communications between them and their students.

The instructors' claim that they have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach was found to be consistent with the findings of the qualitative data in which they reflected that they have the required qualification to teach the given courses. The majority of them were also found to emphasize their experiences of teaching in university. Both their qualifications and experiences could, of course, be proved during the analysis of their personal information. The findings also indicate that the department heads hold a high level of view (4.00 mean rate) about the instructors' knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach. However, the findings imply that the instructors still believe that they need additional trainings for further knowledge, skills, experiences and attitudes in relation to their specializations. This is, of course, consistent with what Brindley and Hood (1990) emphasized that ongoing in-service training [for teachers] and [teacher] professional development constitute important components of any projected implementation.

Moreover, according to the quantitative findings, the level of view that the students hold about the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses their instructors teach (3.53 mean rate) was found to be lower than that of the instructors themselves have towards their own teaching (4.59 mean rate). This might be attributed to the fact that the students' dissatisfaction with the existence of some instructors who lack the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach. This could also be consistent with the findings of the qualitative data. In other words, the students believed that though most of the instructors have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the courses they teach, there are instructors who need additional training in terms of subject matter and pedagogical knowledge, skills and attitude. The instructors' reflection of their views with faulty and fragmented sentences could indirectly confirm this.

The findings of the qualitative data, however, could not confirm the instructors' high level of view related to the balance between theory and practice and the two way communication between them and their students. That is, the qualitative data reveals that the instructors were seemed to be dissatisfied with the imbalance between theory and practice in the courses they teach in particular and the teaching and learning of the program in general. This problem was found to be linked to lack of appropriate language resources or materials, workload and the students' passive approach to participate in practical aspects due to their English language background problem. The instructors' claim about the imbalance between theory and practice was also found to be consistent with the views of both their students and department heads. For instance, the mean rate (2.50), which is even below the expected mean (3.00), by the department heads, confirms their low level of view towards the theory/practice balance. Like that of the instructors, the findings of the qualitative data imply that both the department heads and the students were appeared to associate the problem with the students' English language background problem, lack of language laboratory rooms and materials for practical lessons which leads the instructors' to over-emphasize on teaching theoretically.

Unlike the instructors' qualitative data that they gave both in questionnaire and FGD, the reason for their inconsistency by giving high rate to close ended item of the two-way communication was found to be their misunderstanding of the item as if it was to mean the general communication or relations, but not that of the English language between them and their students. As such, the item was rephrased in the open-ended part of the questionnaires and even clarified in the FGDs as if the two-way communication was to mean the communication in English language. Accordingly, the qualitative data reveals that the communication between instructors and students is more of one way which is dominated by the instructors due to the students' inability and reluctance to use English, but their preference to use their mother tongue or to keep silent because of their low English language background, which is one of the factors which Krashen (1982) identified as 'affective filters' or variables, such as quality of instruction, learners' interest/motivation, age, personality, cognitive ability, anxiety, self-confidence, access to the target language and L1 [mother tongue] development, to block students from acquiring second language or learning foreign language.

Though resource support in terms of human, material, and finance is indispensable in determining the successful implementation of an innovation (Carless, 1999a; Li, 1998), the findings reveal that shortage of appropriate English language teaching materials or resources is a serious problem in the English language and literature department of the sampled universities. For instance, the instructors' mean rate (2.95) on a one-to-five point likert-scale regarding the availability of teaching resources in general indicates their disappointment with lack of resources. All the participants could prove this in their previous responses regarding the theory-practice balance in their teaching and in relation to their views on the students' learning in general and their reflection of the challenges that the students face in applying the knowledge and skills and developing their English in particular.

As the findings of the qualitative data imply, the English language classrooms were not found to be as such supportive for the instructors' teaching. This is a problem which might also be attributed mainly to lack of resources, particularly the absence of smart language classrooms or laboratories with the required audio-visual materials, and their insecurity from disturbances of other department students. However, the findings indicate that large class size which does not allow enough chances for English language students to communicate with each other (e.g., Hayes, 1997) was not found to be as such a case in the sampled universities. This might be due to the students' low interest to join the department during their entry, which, in turn, contributed to the presence of a few manageable number of students.

In connection with analyzing the extent that the instructors continuously assess their students in particular and the quality of their overall assessment in general, the findings from all the participants imply that the majority of the instructors assess their students continuously. In their response to the related close-ended item, the instructors' mean rate, for example, was found to be 4.41. This was also consistent with the findings of the qualitative data. That is, the instructors believe that they continuously assess their students through giving several tests, quizzes, assignments, and encouraging them to make various presentations and the like. Nevertheless, as it is desirable for testing to help bring about beneficial outcomes in teaching and learning (Turner, 2000), an effort was made to analyze if the instructors continuously assess their students through quality assessment techniques.

The findings imply that the majority of the instructors believed that they continuously assess their students, but they also believed that their way of assessment lacks quality due to misconceptions in the administration of the sampled universities. That is, the instructors believed that their way of assessment in general lacks quality due to the fact that they lack freedom to give quality assessment because of the interference from department heads in particular and university management in general. Similarly, in the researcher's attempt to analyze whether or not there are unreasonable interferences from their department heads in particular and their university in general, the instructors were found to be disappointed for they have no academic or professional freedom to teach and assess their students' academic performance based on the way they teach according to the objectives of the courses they deliver in particular and the general goal of the program in general. This also shows that the instructors have no room in their own profession to make CPI (Critical Practitioner Inquiry) which, for researchers, such as Jeylan (2006), "promotes education as a practice of freedom and encourages practitioners to sense and transform factors that perpetuate injustice and inequality in schools, classrooms, and wider society".

According to the instructors, they are usually forced or encouraged by the universities administration in general to use easy assessments so that their students score better grades and pass to the next level regardless of attaining the expected competences from the given course in particular and the program in general. This was also found to be consistent with what Alderson and Wall (1993) argued: "for teachers, the fear of poor results, and the associated guilt, shame, or embarrassment, might lead to the desire for their pupil to achieve high scores in whatever way seems possible". In their explanation of the powerful impact of testing, Alderson & Wall, 1993 added that "teachers and learners do things they would not necessarily otherwise do because of the test".

The findings also indicate that the instructors, though it is interesting that they are sometimes able to participate in different workshops and trainings, they are still found to be discontented with the inadequate support they have from their department heads and the university mainly because of lack of appropriate follow up and adequate English language resources and laboratories in the department.

### **3.4.3. The participants' view towards students' learning**

The findings of the quantitative data reveal that the instructors were less satisfied with their students learning. This could be confirmed in their mean rate (2.95) which is even below the expected mean (3.0). As it could be seen from the item statistics, the instructors' lower view towards their students' learning might be due their dissatisfaction mainly with the fact that: the students did not join the English language and literature program with their own interest; the students joined the English language and literature program with low background of English language; the students do not participate actively in the classroom; the students face problems in using or applying their knowledge and skills; and there are problems related to the students' learning in general.

The instructors' discontent with the problems mentioned above together with the unsuitable classroom and the students' unsatisfactory level of competence in the language was found to be consistent with the findings of the qualitative data. Concerning the students' interest during placement to join the department, the findings imply that almost all the participants believed that almost all of the students from first year to third year did not choose the department for they

had no interest before to join English language as their field of study and they are still with unsatisfactory interest. For instance, the findings of the quantitative data imply the instructors' strong disagreement (1.81 mean rating) that their students were not placed with their own interest. In their reflections to the related open-ended question in the questionnaires and FGDs, the instructors also strongly confirmed that the students are unconcerned about studying the English language and literature program even to the extent it can be said that no student wants to join the department.

The findings of both quantitative and qualitative data also indicate that the instructors' discontent with their students' interest to study the program was found to be consistent with the views of both their students themselves and the department heads. The mean rate (1.99) by the students to the related close-ended item confirmed their strong disappointment with joining the department without their desire. They also reflected their disappointment in responding to the close-ended questionnaires and FGDs. That is, the students were found to disagree with the sampled universities' placement mainly because the universities obliged them to join the department instead of keeping their own choices. This was also confirmed in the interview to their department heads. In short, the findings reveal that the students are less interested in studying in the English language and literature department before and after entering the department. This implies us to doubt the students' success with little or no interest or motivation in their learning for the fact that "there is very little school learning without mental activity on the part of the learner. The most effective learning takes place when there is maximum of mental activity. Maximum mental activity is best attained through strong motivation" (Pruthi, 2004).

The findings also reveal the students' fear of failure or anxiety (Harmer, 1991) due to low English language background and the negative views they hold on the teaching profession as the underlying factors responsible for the students' low interest in studying the program. The students' low interest to join the English language and literature department seems to contradict with what Jeylan (2006) pointed out in his general overview of English language education in Ethiopia. For Jeylan:

"If a person is good at speaking in English, he/she is immediately rated as educated, civilized and knowledgeable. Teachers and parents encourage children to learn English and make them believe that English entitles them to a wonderful life. Knowledge of English is regarded [in Ethiopia] as a guarantor of a good job that pays well."

It is certainly true that students and parents in Ethiopia have positive attitude towards having the knowledge of English mainly due to the factors mentioned by Jeylan, and, in fact, the findings of this research has no contradiction with this sense. When it comes to students' interest to study the language as their field of study, but not generally to be able to communicate in English, the findings of the current study revealed the students' low interest to study the English language as their field of study mainly because of their low background in the language and indirectly their negative view towards the teaching profession.

According to the findings, because of students' expectation as if they are most likely to be teachers after completing the English language and literature program, the major reason behind the negative view that they have towards the teaching profession was found to be the low salary or income that teachers earn which the students believed to be a factor for the teachers' low economic and social status. In investigating professional learning of teachers in Ethiopia with challenges and implications for reform, Gemedo and Tyanjala (2015), among many researchers, confirmed the poor working condition of Ethiopian teachers. They found out that teachers' monthly income runs out before the month ends without even covering their living expenses, such as expenses for food, shelter and clothing which are believed to be the most basic for survival. Asimeng-Boahene (2004 cited in Jeylan, 2006: 364) also emphasized low morale on the part of teachers as a result of their low living standard as one of the factors attributed to the failure in making the desired improvements on African education, including that of Ethiopia.

The findings reveal that the students had no a reasonably good English language background. For example, in their response to the item to check if they had a good background in the language before they joined the department, the instructors' and the students' mean rating of disagreement 1.62 and 2.37, respectively show the students' low background. This was already confirmed in the qualitative findings that all the participants agreed as if low background is a critical factor for the students' low level of interest in studying the program.

The findings also reveal the instructors' dissatisfaction with the students' participation in the classroom. Their 2.57 mean rating of disagreement in their response to the item to check if they have active classroom participation revealed their dissatisfaction. This was also consistent with mainly the findings of the qualitative data that the students themselves emphasized their low participation mainly due to the fact that they joined the department without a reasonably good

background in the English language which has become a major cause for their low desire to make active participation. This is consistent with the notion that motivation involves the attitudes and affective states which can affect the extent learners make effort to learn second language (Ellis, 1997).

Regarding the instructors' views towards their students' learning, the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data proved more challenges that the students face and less opportunities they have in their attempt to effectively attend the English language and literature program and improve their skills of the language. The students' low English language background, their low interest in the English language and literature department, a serious shortage of English language resources, lack of appropriate preparation for their learning due to block courses and non-goal oriented assessment mechanisms were found to be the major responsible challenges. The findings also reveal that the instructors, as a result of these challenges, lacked confidence in the students' current level of English language competence which was indicated by the instructors' mean rating of disagreement (3.24) for the close-ended item to check their view as regards whether or not the students have shown improvement after their entry. This was found to be consistent with the reflections of both the students and the department heads in different instances. For instance, the mean rating by the department heads was found to be 3.0.

In general, as regards the implementation of the nationally harmonized English language and literature program, the findings of both quantitative and qualitative data from the total participants imply that it is low or unsatisfactory due to several contextual and conceptual challenges mentioned below in its separate section.

#### **3.4.4. The underlying challenges hindering the implementation of the English language and literature program**

As a result of reviewing the nationally harmonized English language and literature modular curriculum document and analyzing the participants' views towards both the planning and implementation of curriculum document, this section presents the major conceptual and contextual challenges that were identified and found to impede the implementation of the English language and literature program in the sampled universities.

In the first place, it was found that students are obliged to join the English language and literature department without their own choices. The students' fear of failure due to low English language background and the negative views they hold on the teaching profession were found to be the underlying factors responsible for the students' low interest to join the English language and literature department. The students' low interest to join the department is found to have a relation with their low English language background. The students' low English language background was also found to have a relation with their lack of quality English language instruction in their previous schools where "students are endowed with more of grammar-based instruction and analyzing grammatical rules and grammar-based writing exercises" (Jeylan, 2006) and lack of exposure to the language inside and outside their schools due to the fact that English is foreign to most, and is known and used only by a small minority of educated, economic and political elite in Ethiopia (Bogale cited in Kumar, 2013).

It was also revealed that the students' low tendency to join the department has to do with their negative view towards the teaching profession. This is because of the students' expectation as if they are most likely to be teachers after completing the program. The major reason behind the negative view that they have towards the teaching profession might be attributed to the low salary or income that teachers earn which is to be a factor for the teachers' low economic and social status. This was also confirmed by researchers like Kumar (2013). In his investigation of the constraints in mastering English in Ethiopia, Kumar (2013: 47) found out disrespect towards the teaching profession as one of the non-linguistic impediments and said: "Due to low remuneration, teaching is not preferred as a noble profession in Ethiopia. Teaching is taken as a last resort by many young English teachers. They are more ambitious of becoming merchants, medical professionals or engineers but not teachers."

Moreover, the quality of continuous assessment in particular and assessment in general was found to receive less emphasis due to misconceptions in the administration of the sampled universities. That is, the sampled universities tend to focus on their students' academic performance rather than to help them achieve the expected competences of the program. This was even found to contradict with the fact that a modular instruction emphasizes the methods of assessment to be directly related to the learning outcomes identified within the modules (e.g., Betts and Smith, 1998).

Lack of appropriate English language instructional resources and smart classrooms was found to be another critical obstacle. This contradicts even with what was stated in the curriculum document. That is, the document states well-equipped English language laboratory, sufficient audio-visual materials and sufficient and well-furnished classrooms to be available for the implementation of the program.

Finally, the findings reveal that the English language and literature instructors were found to have less commitment in the implementation of the program mainly due to the following reasons: Students' lack of reasonable background in English language, which led instructors to use Amharic language to explain to or communicate with the students, and the students' low interest in the department; lack of appropriate English language instructional resources and smart classrooms; instructors' lack of freedom to make goal/objective-oriented assessment due to unnecessary interference from the institutions; inappropriate follow up by department heads or their way of evaluating and rewarding the instructors' efficiency mainly based on their submission to departmental rules and regulations irrespective of their relevance to the objectives of the program; and the students' grade-oriented or irrational evaluation of the instructors' efficiency.

#### 4. Conclusions

Within the framework of Stufflebeam's (1983) CIPP evaluation model, instructors, students' and department heads' views on the planning and implementation of the nationally harmonized undergraduate English language and literature curriculum document was analyzed with particular focus on the congruence of the implementation with the curriculum document in general and its major assumptions, such as competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students' learning. Accordingly, the findings showed that there is a problem of congruence between the planning and implementation of the English language and literature program in the sampled universities. The participants were appeared to be unsatisfactory with both the planning and the implementation though they had a relatively higher satisfaction with the planning for its theoretical adoption of different courses which may enable the learners to have various job opportunities.

The participants' dissatisfaction with the curriculum document is mainly due to the block mode course organization for they believed it gets both instructors and students overloaded and, therefore, block them so that they may not have appropriate or sufficient time for the successful implementation of the program, particularly in line with appropriate work load for students' learning, one of its major principles, which may, in turn, affect the rest of the principles, such as competence-based education and student-centeredness. And, the participants were found to have low level of satisfaction with the implementation of the program.

Several conceptual and contextual challenges were found to be responsible for the participants' discontent with the implementation. It is found that students are obliged to join the English language and literature department without their own choices. The students' fear of failure due to low English language background and the negative views they hold on the teaching profession resulted from the low salary or income that teachers earn and results in their low economic and social status were found to be the underlying challenges responsible for the students' low interest to join the department. The students' low English language background is also found to have a relation with their lack of quality English language instruction in their previous schools and lack of exposure to the language inside and outside their schools.

The low quality of continuous assessment in particular and assessment in general is found to be another challenge due to misconceptions in the administration of the sampled universities. That is, the sampled universities tend to focus on their students' academic performance rather than to help them achieve the expected competences of the program. This implies instructors lack academic or professional freedom to teach and assess their students' academic performance based on the way they teach according to the objectives of the courses they deliver in particular and the general goal of the program in particular. That is, the performance-oriented, but not goal-oriented assessment is found to favor students to sit for easy exams which, in turn, have misled the students to make low commitment to their academic performance and to make irrational way of evaluation and judgments on the quality of their instructors' teaching.

Finally, the instructors low commitment to help their students to achieve the expected competences of the program is found to be a serious challenge due to the following five major reasons: their students' low level of interest which is closely and largely related to low background in the language which, according to the participants, led instructors to use Amharic language to explain to or communicate with the students and the students' unsatisfactory performance and competence in line with the expected goals of the program; lack of English language instructional resources, such as mainly laboratory with sufficient audio-visual materials; instructors' lack of freedom to make goal/objective-oriented assessment due to unnecessary interference from the institutions; inappropriate follow up by department heads or their way of evaluating and rewarding the instructors' efficiency mainly based on their submission to departmental rules and regulations irrespective of their relevance to the objectives of the program; and the students' grade-oriented (based on their score in exams) or irrational evaluation of the instructors' efficiency.

## 5. Recommendations

The major problems mentioned above in relation to the participants views regarding the planning and implementation of the undergraduate English language and literature program have several pedagogical and policy implications for reform. In the first place, the curriculum document should be revised by the stakeholders to ensure its congruence with the major principles (competence-based education, student-centeredness and appropriate workload for students' learning) of modular instruction of the country's higher education institutions. Particularly, those basic courses which were meant to be delivered in block manner should be made whole-semester courses. That is, the students should learn the courses with having adequate time for preparation (one of its major principles, which may, in turn, affect the rest of the principles, such as competence-based education and student-centeredness.) and get timely and appropriate feedback accordingly.

As long as the English language is a medium of instruction mainly at secondary and tertiary education levels of our country is unquestionable, working to improve the quality of ELT in lower grades through training qualified and competent English language teachers and fulfilling the necessary material resources to help students have a good English language background before they join the higher education institutions is a big responsibility to be discharged by the stakeholders.

Other factors remain unchanged, students' low English language background and their low interest to study English language as their field of study has an implication for language policy makers to think about a nation-wide English language exposure by increasing its role from being foreign /classroom language to being second/outside classroom language. That is, it is advisable to make English at least a lingua franca of the country where students can have a very good exposure to the language in and outside classroom.

The negative perception by students in particular and the Ethiopian community in general towards the teaching profession is found to be related mainly with the low incentive or salary that teachers are paid as compared to their great commitment they pay which the profession demands. It is known that the government at different times has tried to increase the salary of teachers at different levels. However, most argue that the salary increment by the Ethiopian government has rarely taken into account the teachers' commitment and the market instability at the time of salary increment. Most teachers even argue that the past lowest salary with market stability is better than the recent highest salary increment with market instability.

As such, starting from awareness creation about the value of the teaching profession, the government should think of improving the economic status or the living condition of teachers at different educational levels in line with their commitment and the status of market stability of the country. Today's scientists, scholars, professors, doctors, engineers, researchers and the like are the fruits of the flowers that were planted by teachers of yesterday, and that of tomorrow will certainly be the fruits of the flowers that are planted by teachers of today. So, the more we give a reasonable value to and invest on the teaching profession, the more and the better we will be fruitful.

The government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular should not oblige the higher education institutions to reduce students' attrition rate and increase the number of graduates through the preparation of easy assessment mechanisms at the expense of the institutions' support to the attainment of goals and expected competences by learners over a period of time and ensure the quality of education. To this effect, it is strongly advisable for the universities to facilitate adequate English language resources and language laboratories with the required audio-visual materials, and they should provide the instructors with continuous professional development training of both short and long-term.

Similarly, universities' managements in general and English language and literature department heads in particular should stop unnecessary interferences and should let instructors exercise their academic freedom through teaching and evaluating their students based on the goals or objectives of the program and their expertise in their area of teaching. This will enable the instructors to have a strong courage and sense of ownership towards their teaching. This is because teachers are implementers in [any educational] innovation, [and] the greater the responsibility for decision-making passed on to the implementers, the better the implementation will be effective (Kennedy, 1988). The stakeholders should also make a critical follow up and evaluate instructors' efficiency based on their actual commitment and make the necessary rewards, such as academic promotion together with striving to create this mentality in the minds of the students so that they feel responsible for their own learning and perform accordingly.

It is also strongly advisable that the instructors' great sacrifice to exercise their academic freedom through "critically

questioning, analyzing and evaluating any underlying assumption, policy and change rather than continuing with the unquestioned routine procedures” (Schon, 1983) and their commitment to help their students’ and the students’ commitment to take responsibility for their own learning is a key for the instructors’ and the students’ teaching and learning, respectively more than anything else regardless of the conceptual and contextual factors mentioned so far.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education in general and the higher education institutions in particular should facilitate some inspirational opportunities to attract students of good English language background so that they will make the language among their preferences of study. During students’ placement to the department, it is advisable for universities to clearly set criteria, such as placement test, in the curriculum document to identify the students’ English language background and implement it accordingly with placing the students to the department with their own interest. Since students’ motivation is one of the main factors affecting English language learning (Gardner, 1985), instead of trying to fill in the department with students of little or no desire, it is strongly advisable for the universities administration to think of other possible mechanisms to produce learners who have a reasonably adequate background, awareness about the significances of English language and a tendency to study the language as their field of study. Otherwise, it seems that our intention is to ensure the mere existence of the department with less due emphasis to the learners’ own interest which might be linked to their own life goal.

In parallel with improving the students’ English language background through improving the quality of English language teaching at both primary and secondary schools and widening the students’ exposure to the language outside classroom, the 3 years duration for studying English language and literature program at university should be extended at least to 4 years. This will help the students to have adequate time by getting them to have at least a one-year preparation to compensate their low English language background before they begin their actual study. The Ministry of Education should provide different awareness raising trainings to the management bodies and others of the higher education institutions so that they will have the right perception towards the department and will discharge their shares accordingly. This is because students’ incompetence in English is one of the major factors behind their academic dismissal from the higher education institutions (e.g., Kumar, 2013), a little ignorance of and undermining the role of English language may mean paying a lot to diminish the quality of education.

It is highly appreciable that our government has been trying to expand the coverage of higher education through increasing the number of universities. However, it is strongly advisable for the government in general and for the Ministry of Education in particular to make sure both the availability and accessibility of the basic human and material resources in the higher education institutions before they begin to teach any field or program of study. This would help them to keep the coverage of the education in line with keeping its quality.

Further, using Amharic language, which seems reasonable for the instructors due to their students’ lack of background in the language, should not be encouraged for three major reasons: in the first place, it is paradoxical enough to use any other language in a situation where using English as a medium of instruction is a principle even at secondary schools; secondly, it is still paradoxical to use any other language for English majoring students who are expected to use it as their target language than any other non-English majoring/department students; and thirdly, it is unfair for the instructors to use Amharic or any language in a classroom where students are from different language background. This is even against the idea of inclusive education which, among others, should take into account the learners’ linguistic background inside and outside classroom environment and let students engage themselves in their learning.

The stakeholders, such as the government, the education policy makers, the English language education policy makers of the country at all levels in general and those who design the English language and literature curriculum document of the higher education institutions in particular, management bodies at different levels of the institutions, teachers, students and other academicians should play their respective roles in the process of solving the aforementioned problems in connection with the planning and implementation of the curriculum document. Similarly, there should be further discussion between or among the stakeholders to clearly understand the aforementioned problems, solve them and ensure effective implementation of the nationally harmonized English language and literature program.

Finally, further studies should be conducted to find out the effects of conceptual and contextual factors in the implementation of the program, especially in those other than the ‘third generation’(a group of public universities established as a third round following the two groups, namely first generation and second generation ) universities from which samples were taken for the current study.

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