

Investigating Reflective Contents and Tools Utilized for the Preparation of Critically Reflective English Language Teachers in the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT): The Case of Three Universities of Ethiopia

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to investigate the types of reflective contents and tools utilized to prepare critical English language teachers in the PGDT program of Dilla, Haramaya and Hawassa Universities of Ethiopia. The study was a mixed method research in its approach and employed questionnaire, semi-structured face-to-face interview and classroom and field observation for data collection. One hundred twenty six randomly selected student-teachers took part in the questionnaire and purposively selected twelve student-teachers, five teacher educators and three coordinators took part in the face-to-face interview. Field and classroom observations were done in two universities-Dilla and Haramaya universities. Both quantitative and qualitative analytical procedures (descriptive statistics-frequency and percentage, and narrations) have been used for data analysis. The findings of the study showed that student-teachers had not found opportunity to practice reflection through different learning contents. It was also identified that though reflective tools such as action research, microteaching, case study and portfolio were used in the program, they were not applied for the purpose of reflection as such. These findings show that there is a defect in the implementation of reflective contents (analyzing teaching and learning experiences, reading critical texts, analyzing assumptions, examining teaching methods), and tools proposed in the different literature. Thus, lack of emphasis on contents that delve student-teachers into critical thinking, and absence of regular use of specific reflective tools seem to have generated student-teachers' inability to be reflective teachers.

Keywords: Critical; Postgraduate diploma in teaching; Reflective content; Reflective tools; Student teacher

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1. Introduction

Ethiopia has been implementing a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) program to prepare secondary school teachers for past nine years. The program was launched in 2011 G.C in summer modality after the previous program known as Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) program was found to be ineffective to produce reflective and competent teachers (MoE, 2003; MoE, 2009; Awayehu, 2016; Mekonnen, 2008). This means the teacher education system overhaul program (TESO) was not able to solve problems such as inadequate teachers' subject matter competence, improper and insufficient implementation of active learning methods, inadequate emphasis and insufficient implementation of practicum (MoE, 2009). In other words, the gaps between the 'best' policy desires and the actual school classroom practices went even wider and wider. Furthermore, lack of pedagogical and social feasibility, lack of coherence among program elements, and simultaneous restructuring that cannot be dovetailed are indicated as the weak part of the TESO program.

For this reason, in 2015, the Ministry of Education (MoE) expanded PGDT program by launching its regular or winter program. The objective of the program was to prepare a critically reflective practitioner who is competent enough in both subject area and pedagogic knowledge (MoE, 2009). The premise was that if student-teachers who completed their undergraduate study program in subject area program (for example, English language and Literature) are admitted into PGDT program, (previously it was BA or B.Ed. holders who were admitted to the program), then they can safely be trained in such a way that they become critically reflective teachers, i.e., teachers who have effective theoretical knowledge as well as skills of teaching and researching on their practices (MoE, 2009). In other words, after completing the PGDT program, the trainees are expected to have sufficient pedagogical, psychological and sociological knowledge in addition to subject area knowledge (Gemechu, Shishigu, Michael, Atnafu, and Ayalew, 2017). Therefore, courses such as Subject Area Teaching Methodology, School and Society, Secondary School Curriculum and Instruction, Teaching in Multicultural Settings, and Teachers as Reflective Practitioners are included in the curriculum.

In the PGDT program, many tasks have been planned to ensure the emphasis given to reflective practice. Firstly, the process of reflection has been entertained in the contents of all courses in the program. Secondly, practicum activities are framed in three phases: observation, guided teaching and independent teaching practice where student-teachers are expected to practice reflection. Moreover, such activities like conducting group training sessions, and undertaking continuous assessment which include a range of assessment tools such as tests, assignment, portfolio, practical demonstration, presentation, micro-teaching, peer-teaching, written examinations, etc. are proposed in the curriculum to support student-teachers learning through reflection (MoE, 2009). Finally, different tasks which encourage problem solving skills and the use of physical resources are described as the learning contents of the program.

However, there are different indicators which show the discrepancy between the expected outcome and the real achievement. For example, researchers such as Gebremedhin (2013) and Seifu (2016) found out that PGDT graduate teachers (both regular and summer) could not include their personal opinion on the theory and approaches they use in the classroom, search for justification to the method they use, analyze contradiction between theories, evaluate students background, school context, and their own teaching style, and point out alternative ways to present classroom lessons. Others also reported that PGDT student-teachers were on the low level of reflection in spite of the reform made to the program, and less interested in the teaching profession (Kejela and Etea, 2017; Areaya, 2017; Mekonnen, 2017). Moreover, these studies concluded that PGDT program could not achieve its objective of preparing effective, competent and reflective practitioners. Thus, it is possible to suspect that there may be problems with the implementation of the curriculum of the PGDT program, or else the curriculum framework may have practical applicability problems.

This indicates that there is a need for another study that focuses on identifying the root cause/s of the problem. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the central problem that is holding back

student-teachers from becoming critically reflective practitioners by inquiring into the types of contents and tools employed to promote critical reflection in the PGDT program. Very specifically, an attempt is made to find out what different reflective contents and tools teacher educators utilize to promote reflective thinking as proposed by some teacher education scholars (such as Brookfield, 2017; Farrell, 2013; Loughran, 2005; Richards and Farrell, 2005; Schon, 1983).

Therefore, this article addresses the following two interconnected questions: (1) What types of reflective contents are utilized to prepare critical reflective teachers in the PGDT program? (2) What types of reflective tools are devised to enhance student-teachers' ability to reflect in the PGDT program?

Contents and tools for reflection: Reflective practice is becoming a significant aspect of teacher education programs globally. It has been helpful for student-teachers who lack practical experience because they cannot examine and test beliefs and principles against what is being learned theoretically. Therefore, to narrow the gap between theory and practice and to discover knowledge, it is embedded in practice (Richards and Lockhart, 2007). It has also had a major impact on virtually all areas of a teacher's life, from teacher education programs for novice teachers to professional development programs for experienced teachers. More specifically, in the field of second language teacher education, reflective practice is central to teachers' development because it helps teachers to analyze and evaluate what is happening in their classes so that they can not only improve the quality of their teaching but also provide better opportunities for their students to teach (Farrell, 2015). Among the ways that may promote reflective practice for English language teachers, using varieties of learning contents from different perspectives, and applying specific reflective tools that help student-teachers participate in meaningful learning activities can be listed. This section seeks to investigate and discuss some literature on how reflective contents and tools can promote reflective practice in teacher education program.

Contents for reflection: Although we can have several ways to promote reflective thinking, types of reflective content presented in the teacher preparation program have greater value to impact student-teachers critical thinking skills. By *reflective content*, we mean the various components and strategies devised to promote reflection in teacher education program (Valli, 2003 in Calderhead and Gates, 2004). The content of the reflections for the student-teachers may vary according to the conditions under which the reflection occurred. The literature shows that one of these components or strategies used to promote reflection can be individual foundations or methods courses whose instructors choose to implement reflection, or theoretical perspectives in which authors argue for some type of inquiry orientation in the preparation of teachers (Brookfield, 2017; Richards and Lockhart, 2007; Russell and Munby, 2005). In addition, Russell and Munby's (2005) study shows that some teachers may want to reflect on their personal responses to both teaching and learning to teach; others still can reflect on the others' beliefs, perceptions and views about teaching and learning processes. From this, it can be understood that beginning teachers have to have relevant conditions to focus on different aspects of their work when they reflect within different structures. Thus, preparing critically thoughtful teachers who consider carefully the consequences of their work involves creating opportunities to learn the skills and attitudes found in different learning contents required for reflective practice. Accordingly, the following topics are assumed to promote critical reflective practice in teacher education program.

Analytical perspectives to the students' feelings: Feelings can be defined as learners' perception (either negative or positive) which can be generated from that learners' contact with new learning situations or contents. From new learning situations, learners can develop negative perception like uncertainty, self-doubt, frustration and fatigue. It is these kinds of feelings that can foster learning if they are consciously handled during or after classroom lessons. Russell and Munby (2005) believe that the provision of time and space for the expression of feelings is necessary as learners move from beginning practitioners to new levels of analysts.

Similarly, Brookfield (2017) states creating opportunity for student-teachers to reflect on their feelings helps even their teachers to know how their teaching process is going on. He meticulously explained that when we start to see our classrooms and our teaching through students' eyes, we become aware of the complex and sometimes contradictory perceptions students have of the same event. Russell and Munby (2005) also have captured that existence and significance of feelings in the reflection of the beginning teachers was obvious. Therefore, teachers need to explore those feelings before other types of reflection can occur. From this, we obviously understand that opportunities for the expression and validation of feelings are an important component of teacher education. Consequently, it is possible to argue that student-teachers have to get opportunity to inquire into their own feelings as a content for the promotion of reflection in the teacher education program.

Analytical perspective to the theories of learning or teaching: Among critical lenses developed by Brookfield (2017), theory is one of them. It is the lens through which we can view our practices. In a chapter in *Becoming Critically Reflective Teacher*, Brookfield (2017) examined how reading educational theory, philosophy, and research can provide new and provocative ways of seeing our actions and the meanings students take from our work. Reading different literature is suggested by the same author to grasp different possibilities for practice and to understand better what we already do and think. In addition, Brookfield (2017) believes theory is eminently practical and is something we all produce, an inevitability of sentient existence. Whether it is a codified educational theory or our everyday understanding of our practice, theory has the ability to guide our beliefs and classroom actions. Therefore, reading a theoretical analysis enables us to stand back and see our accumulated knowledge and practice again, and it enables us to recognize ourselves. By allowing student-teachers to read different literatures, we can promote reflection in the teacher education program.

Analytical perspective to education and curricula: The nature of the program and its curriculum has great impact in influencing teachers' and learners' beliefs towards it. That means an institutional culture of teaching-learning and contents included in the curriculum impinge on learners' interest to pursue the program and display desirable skills. Richards and Lockhart (2007), for example, illustrate that any language teaching program reflects both the culture of the institution (i.e., ways of thinking and of doing things that are valued in the institution), as well as collective decisions and beliefs of individual teachers. As they explained further by quoting Butler and Bartlett (1986), some teachers may have beliefs like decentralized curriculum planning, a needs-based curriculum, a range of teaching methodologies, learner-based classrooms, autonomous learning, authentic materials, and multiculturalism. This uncovers that the curriculum at any level can be developed on wrong or right principles. Therefore, student-teachers have to make educational and curriculum issues a content of the discussion to analyze who designed it, on what founding principle it is developed, what kind of contents are included, and what problems it has.

Analytical perspectives to language teaching profession: People have no similar views about the profession of language teaching. That means language teaching was not considered as a profession having unique characteristics, as requiring specialized skills and training, as being a lifelong and valued career choice, and as offering a high level of job satisfaction (Richards and Lockhart, 2007). However, more recently, researchers have come up with reports that language teaching is a profession and that teachers engaged in it are professionals (Richards, Tung, & Ng, 1991). This does not mean everybody views language learning and teaching similarly. Richards and Lockhart (2007) remark teachers and students may bring with them different expectations concerning not only what the learning process is in general but also what will be learned in a particular course, and how it will be learned. These beliefs may be based on their training, their teaching experience or may go back to their own experience as language learners or teachers. Therefore, the assumptions that underlie the beliefs of both teachers and learners must be analyzed and arranged to promote reflection.

Tools for reflection: There are several contents to be explored by reflective teachers and there are also many different tools utilized to gather information to facilitate reflection. In this section, what are referred to as *reflective tools* are the ways used to gather information to facilitate reflection.

Brookfield (2017), Celce-Murcia (2001), Loughran (2005), and Richards and Lockhart (2007) suggest a number of tools devised to be used to gather information that can promote reflection in teacher education program. These scholars have developed and used different tools that help instructors and learners to investigate their classroom teaching/learning activities. Among the reflective tools that they propose for reflective teaching/learning, some are discussed below.

Learning journal: A learning journal is one of the reflective tools language teachers use to promote reflective skills in student-teachers' learning. A learning journal is an ongoing written account of observations, reflections, and other thoughts about teaching, usually in the form of a notebook, book, or electronic mode which serves as a source of discussion, reflection or evaluation (Loughran, 2005). The journal may be used as a record of incidents, problems, and insights that occurred during lessons; it may be an account of a class that the teacher would like to review or return to later; or it may be a source of information that can be shared with others. For example, student-teachers can include in their writing of journal a record of a teacher's thoughts, actions, desires, joys, frustrations, and questions that can be critically reflected on later. This has two advantages for language learners. It offers learners opportunity to think back about their work and helps them to practice writing skills. Subsequently, learning journals can be used as a way to explore the origins and implications of a teacher's beliefs about language teaching by documenting classroom practices and as a way to learn the language itself (Farrell, 2013; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Troubleshooting period: Troubleshooting period can be defined as a part of class time devoted to an open-ended and open-agenda period in a public manner (Brookfield, 2017). This is a time that is expressly devoted to matters of process rather than content. According Freire (1993), students have to know that this period is preserved for talking about how the course is going and how it could be improved. In this case, learners discuss on the themes and reactions expressed in learning journals. This usually happens in conversation form that ensues on students' problems with a particular task or assignment (Brookfield, 2017).

Learning portfolio: Learning portfolio is a cumulative record of student-teachers' experiences as a learner in a particular course. In using portfolio, Brookfield (2017) asks student-teachers to document, in any way they think is appropriate and supportable, what and how they are learning. Loughran and Hamilton (2016: 163) also indicate that "the contents and the organization of the portfolio also vary depending on the purpose". They provide illustration such as excerpts from course work assignments, teaching philosophies, examples of lesson plans and assessments, student work, reflective statements, narratives, and/or best work for showcase purposes. Therefore, from these literature point of view, we can conclude that implementing learning portfolio in its regular base can facilitate student-teachers' learning through critical thinking.

Learning audit: Learning audit is one of several critical reflective tools that instructors use to help learners actively be engaged in daily lessons. It originated from learners' complaints that they are learning nothing, making no progress, getting nowhere. Therefore, in order to satisfy these complaints, instructors can use the learning audit which might usually be completed on a term or annual basis. For example, Brookfield (2006: 39) says "In the learning audit students are asked to respond to three questions at the end of the last class of the week: What do I know now that I didn't know this time last week? What can I do now that I couldn't do this time last week? What could I teach others to know or do that I couldn't teach them last week?"

On the other hand, Loughran (2005) explains that part of developing self-knowledge as a teacher is coming to see what and how they (teachers themselves) are learning about teaching. Similarly, Maxwell (2014) states that learning audit helps to discover ourselves or it is the way we get to know ourselves. In our context, student-teachers would be asked to reply to questions expressly designed to probe how they were affected because of learning with the purpose of discovering their knowledge level and gap. This implies that by means of learning audit student-teachers are helped to identify the skills, knowledge, and insights they have developed in the recent past. The expected result is, therefore, promoting critical learning stance in student-teachers' professional learning.

Role model profile: A role model is someone we appreciate because of their greater contribution and influence to the world around us. Maxwell (2014) believes that exposure to the greater role models is one of the things he found most inspiring. This means one can learn so much from someone who we select as our role model and be inspired to pursue their visions.

In the teacher education context, the role model profile helps student-teachers to become aware of their assumptions by talking about colleagues they admire and why they admire them (Brookfield, 2006). Brookfield maintains that we frequently choose people with qualities and abilities we would like to emulate, and people who excel in the kind of things we wish we could do as role models. Our choice of role models and our descriptions of who they are and what they do alert us to understand the assumptions that undergird our own work. This can be taken as a crucial process that helps us to motivate and develop our student-teachers reflective perspective.

Videotaping: Videotaping is a way of getting to see ourselves as others see us. A videotaped record of a class allows us to pick up a variety of gestural and verbal twitch. For example, Zeichner and Liston (1987) illustrated student-teachers can observe themselves looking at the floor, fiddling with assorted body parts, making eye contact sporadically and only with certain people, leaving sentences uncompleted, promising to talk about a number of themes and addressing only one, speaking with frequent hesitations, pauses, and stumbling, and so on. We may not be aware of these behaviors, but they are behaviors that are distracting or confusing us. Thus, using videotaping as reflective tools helps student-teachers to reflect on the practice they performed unknowingly during classroom presentation.

Critical conversation: In the reflective practice approach to language teaching, there is an opportunity for student-teachers to raise specific educational issues or problems and jointly analyze the underlying principles and implications of the issue. Loughran (2005) suggests seminar group discussion as tool for reflection to promote these skills in student-teachers learning. Others call this critical reflection which is fully realized only when others are involved (Freire, 1970, 1993). Freire states that the best chance any learners have to learn critical reflection is through conversation with peers. This means when our peers listen to our stories and then reflect to us what they see and hear in the stories, we are often presented with a version of ourselves and our actions that come as a surprise. Loughran (2005) and Brookfield (2017) argue that to help language student-teachers become more reflective about education, the atmosphere within seminars must be open and relaxed. Challenging students to reflect upon their experiences and ideas must be done with sensitivity and respect for the individuals (Loughran, 2005).

2. Research Methods

2.1. Study Sites

This study was conducted at three selected higher learning institutions of Ethiopia; namely, Dilla, Haramaya, and Hawassa Universities. These sites were selected based on the opportunity (relationship with some staff, collaborative work experience, and sharing conferences and seminars) the researchers had to find the institutions around them over a relatively short period of time. The criteria are also supported by Holliday (2007). For example, Dilla and Hawassa Universities were the places where the researchers have been working collaboratively with English language staff on some issues like curriculum review for undergraduate and graduate programs while Haramaya University was selected because it was where the researchers were living for work and study purpose.

2.2. Research Design

Being facilitated by the views of pragmatic-mixed method-paradigm, the data of the study include whatever emerged as important to describe and explain the use of reflective contents and tools in the English language PGDT program. As a result, parallel mixed design was employed to guide the organizational structure and implementation process of the study. Parallel mixed designs refer to mixed method projects where the phases of the study (both quantitative and qualitative) occur in a

parallel manner, either simultaneously or with some time lapse (Creswell, 2003). This design is also important to address related aspects of the same basic research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Within this design the researcher seeks to merge or combine or integrate the findings of quantitative method with qualitative method at result or discussion stages of the study. Based on this design philosophy, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from different data sources i.e. student-teachers, teacher-educators, and program coordinators. Thus, in this study, two research designs such as cross-sectional survey and ethnographic design were employed.

2.3. Sampling Techniques

The population of the study was all the prospective trainees enrolled in Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT) in three universities in the year 2017/18 in the regular program. The study employed a multilevel mixed-method sampling technique as the study was conducted at three different institutions and participants of the PGDT. The study considered only the regular modality of the 2018 academic year to have general pictures of the program in the implementation of reflective practice.

The participants involved in the quantitative part of this study were student-teachers of English language PGDT program of the three universities. To choose a sample, the researchers had to obtain and evaluate carefully lists of the population of the three universities from which a sample can be drawn (sampling frame). The information gathered for this purpose showed that the size of the population of English language student-teachers on duty in the 2017/2018 academic year was 72 (Haramaya University), 78 (Hawassa University) , and 45 (Dilla University), with the total population of 195. But, the actual number of the population was 52 (Haramaya University), 67 (Hawassa University), and 45 (Dilla University), with a total of 164, and the sample size was determined by using Yamane's formula, i.e. $n = N / 1 + (N) (0.05)^2$ (Israel, 1992). Then, 143 student-teachers were selected through disproportionate stratified random sampling techniques in which samples from Haramaya university=46, Hawassa university=57 and Dilla university=40 were selected to fill out the questionnaires. In the study, the issue of gender was not considered because the focus of the study was only to identify the types of reflective contents and tools utilized to prepare reflective teachers in the PGDT program.

In addition, purposive sampling technique of the non-probability sampling method was used to select participants for the qualitative part of the study. With this regard, intensity sampling technique, which involves selecting very informative cases that represent a phenomenon of interest, was used (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The best cases among the population of the study were selected based on their roles, responsibility, the course offered, and affiliation to the home department as suggested by Patton (2015). As a result, a total of 20 participants (12 student-teachers, 5 teacher educators, and 3 coordinators) were selected for the interview.

2.4. Instruments of Data Collection

As the study followed mixed-methods approach, different data collection methods such as questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and observation were employed. Instruments such as checklist, close-ended written questions, and interview protocols and audio tape recorder were utilized. The questionnaire was administered to a sample of 143 student-teachers, (and from which 126 questionnaires were put to analysis) and the interview was administered to 20 participants including student-teachers (from the same population for the quantitative part of the study), teacher educators and program coordinators. A non-participant observation was made at two universities where the researchers stayed for a longer time for this study. The observation mainly focused on 8 classroom (Haramaya University) and 5 institutional settings (both Haramaya and Dilla University). All data collected through the interview and observation were documented in the researchers' diary and recorded on a tape recorder.

2.5. Methods of Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative analytical procedures have been used for the analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, and Chi-square test statistics have been employed to determine the significant difference among the frequencies of the responses (see Pallant, 2007). The data collected through semi-structured interview using tape recorder was transcribed from participants' native languages (Amharic & Afaan Oromoo) into English. Narrative analysis approach was used to summarize data collected through interview and observation field notes. Saldana's (2013) coding system was employed to identify the topic included in the interview excerpt. The major topics searched in the data were *reflective contents* and *tools* and some other sub-topics were categorized under the major topics. For ethical purpose, the names of the participants are coded (for example, *Ist1; June 18*, where *Ist1* represents instructor number one, interviewed in June 2018). Finally, the interpretation was made based on the propositional statements or themes developed from the topics coded. The purpose was to learn how participants felt, experienced, and practiced the concept of reflective practice during their professional training. The results of both qualitative and quantitative data were combined in the discussion section for a better understanding of the findings.

3. Results

In this section, the results obtained from the analysis made regarding the use of different reflective contents and tools for the preparation of reflective teachers in the PGDT program of the three universities are presented. The results are presented in two sub-sections. The first section presents findings regarding reflective contents such as reference material read, lessons on learning and teaching experiences, analysis of teaching methods and learning theories, and assumption underlying them. The second section presents findings about reflective tools such as portfolio, learning journal, seminar group discussion, videotaping, case study, microteaching, action research, and critical incident questionnaire as device to promote reflective skills in the program. The results are presented below.

3.1. Content for Reflection

The main points identified from this analysis are *reference material read*, *content selected in the class*, and *level of reflection acquired*. For the second point, five possible contents for reflection were organized and rated on five-point Likert type scales which ranged from 'never' to 'very often'. The contents identified in the items were course contents, classroom lesson presented, posing critical questions, teaching and learning experiences. These items were transformed to one variable (*reflective content*) after the internal reliability of items was tested by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient test (.746). The frequency distribution of each variable and the difference among each response tested by chi-square statistics are presented (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Frequency of respondent perception about reflective content and chi-square test result

No	Variables	Response category	Frequency	Percent	Chi-square	p-value
1	Reference used	Critical books and articles	37	29	85.456	.000
		Handout and module	86	69		
		Others	3	2		
		Total	126	100		
2	Attention was paid for different contents of reflection	Never	-	-	229.556	.000
		Rarely	92	73		
		Sometimes	25	20		
		Regularly	9	7		
		Very often	-	-		
		Total	126	100		

First, we have examined participants' familiarity with critical books and articles which could help them to comprehend the concepts in the reflective practice. The largest number of participants (69%) opted for the response *handout and module* while very few of them opted for the response *critical books and articles*. There is significant difference among the expected and observed frequencies at $X^2(Df = 2, N = 126) = 85.456, p < 0.05$. This shows student-teachers were more familiar with handout and modules than critical books and article. Therefore, we can say lack of reading critical texts might have contributed to student-teachers' inability to use reflective practice in teaching and learning process.

Secondly, participants' opinion about the amount of attention given for the use of varieties of reflective contents to practice reflection in the classroom was examined. From the analysis of the result, it is noticed that the largest number of participants reported rare attention was paid for variety of reflective contents while only very few reported sometimes different contents were used for reflection purpose (Table 1, item 2). Notice that the difference among the response categories is statistically significant at $X^2(Df=4) = 229.556, P < 0.05$. This means reflective contents such as classroom lessons, critical questions, teaching and learning experiences, and teachers' and students' beliefs were rarely used for the purpose of teaching critical reflective skills. This leads us to say the participants of the study lack exposure to a culture of reflective learning through which different learning contents could be applied. This could also be another factor that might have contributed to student-teachers' less reflectivity.

Finally, student-teachers' knowledge of levels of reflection and their opinion about which level they found relatively easy to practice were examined (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Frequency of respondents' perception about levels of reflection and chi-square test result

No	Variables	Response category	Frequency	Percent	Chi-square	P-value
1	Did you learn the levels of reflection in your classes?	Yes, we did	104	83	56.903	.000
		No, we didn't	22	17		
		Total	126	100		
2	Which level(s) did you find easy for practice?	Descriptive	111	88	268.857	.000
		Comparative	4	3		
		Critical	11	9		
		Total	126	100		

The result of frequency analysis (Table 2, item 1) suggested that the largest number (104/83%) of participants confirmed they have learned levels of reflection in the class. Only very few (22/17%) participants denied the teaching of levels of reflection in the class. Chi-square test value, $X^2(Df=2) = 56.903, P < 0.05$ proved there is significant difference between the frequency of the responses.

The result also shows most participants perceived descriptive level of reflection was easy to practice while very few rated critical and comparative levels (Table 2, item 2). The difference among the frequencies of the response is statistically significant. Thus, it appears that although student-teachers had learned levels of reflection in the classroom, they might have not been immersed in the deepest learning of the concept.

Further analysis from qualitative data has been made to substantiate the quantitative findings discussed above. Program coordinators' responses show that authentic contents were made available for student-teachers to learn reflective practice. For example, one of the program coordinators reported:

In order to make student-teachers and instructors examine assumptions critically, our institution arranges open discussion at all levels. All opinions, ideas, and views must be collected and credited. Student-teachers can make the topic of curriculum and policy issues the topic of the discussion in the classroom and outside the class (Coord2; May 2018).

However, student-teachers provided different response for the same question. For them, although they accepted the inclusion of reflective contents in the curriculum, they did not get opportunity to practice them. For example, one of student-teachers stated:

In the class room, we sometimes discuss about what should be included in a school curriculum. However, it was only just talking that we could criticize or evaluate the curriculum that we are going to use at secondary schools. There was no time at all to talk about those issues in the class. For instance, some courses invite us to develop a portfolio but teachers do not follow that. They follow their own ways of teaching (St11; June 2018).

Similarly, teacher educators were asked to comment the type of contents they used to help student-teachers learn how to reflect. Most of them commented that they have used teaching contents from module as guided in the syllabus. They used activities, topics and exercise listed in the course module for the purpose of reflection. This is clearly stated in the following excerpt:

As a teacher, I have no different strategy for myself. We teach as the module prepared by MoE. As for me, what I do for student-teachers is helping them to practice what they have learned, and they also go to school to observe school setting and present in class. Then, I evaluate how they deliver what they observed in the class. My target is on their pedagogic knowledge; that is why I invite them to present in the class (Istr1; June 2018).

In the same way, the classroom observation made at one of the study sites revealed that most of classroom activities were covered by teacher talk time and student-teachers in the classroom follow the presentations passively. During the observation, the researchers discovered that the classroom activities were not provided with competing paradigms that could help student-teachers identify different perspectives and locate their own identities. This implicates that the classroom lesson teaching method was not grounded on the traditions of reflective practice: posing-problem to arise everyone interested to talk, seeing things in different lenses, and using different approaches of teaching.

All the above results indicate that only theories of reflective practice were taught in the PGDT program. For instance, program coordinators believed enough contents were provided in the course with room left for teacher educators to prepare their own. In contrary, instructors perceived there was restriction, and it is impossible to go beyond what is specified in the module. On the other hand, student-teachers complained their instructors could not apply what they have talked in the classroom. From this point, it is possible to notice that less attention was given for the concept of reflection during classroom lessons and supervision at field. Thus, these findings imply that the notion of reflective practice was suspended in the rhetoric of mission statement and curriculum framework.

3.2. Reflective Tools

This section presents three key results such as type(s) of reflective tools used in the program, the most frequently used tool(s), and strategy employed to help student-teachers develop the tools. The result for each response is presented below (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. Multiple responses result of participants opinion about reflective tools used

Reflective tools	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Learning journal	12	14.6
Portfolio	49	59.8
Case study	15	18.3
Microteaching	33	40.2
Seminar group discussion	7	8.5
Learning audit	4	4.9
Video taping	0	0
Action research	47	57.3
Other	3	3.7

According to the result discussed in Table 3, reflective tools such as portfolio, action research, microteaching, case study, and learning journal were selected by larger number of respondents. This means, very large number of respondents opted for first portfolio, next action research, followed by microteaching. On the other hand, very few respondents opted for reflective tools such as case study and learning journal. As this result shows, the portfolio, action research, and microteaching were the reflective tools most familiar to the participants of the study.

Further analysis was also made to identify the reflective tool(s) most frequently used throughout the year (Table 4). From the total participants of the study, about 60% confirmed that microteaching was used throughout the year and 37% selected portfolio as frequently used reflective tool, next to microteaching. The other tools such as learning journal, seminar group discussion, videotaping, and action research were rated by 12, 11, 4, and 1 respondents, respectively. This indicates that microteaching and portfolio were the frequently used reflective tools in the program (See the detail in Table 4).

Table 4. Multiple responses results of participants' opinion about the tools frequently used

Reflective tools	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Learning journal	12	10
Portfolio	47	37
Microteaching	74	59
Seminar group discussion	11	9
Video taping	4	5
Case study	34	29
Action Research	1	0.7
Other	3	2

Further analysis was also made to look for the strategy used to help student-teachers to develop the tools mentioned above (Table 5).

Table 5. Frequency of respondent opinion about strategy used to develop reflective tools

Variable	Response categories	Frequency	Percent	Chi-square	Asymp. Sig.
The strategies used to develop reflective tools	Guiding questions in sequencing order	11	9	167.270	.000
	Model tools provided	16	13		
	General guideline provided	94	75		
	Nothing is given as model or guidelines	5	3.0		
	Total	126	100.0		

Among four options presented in Table 5, only *general guideline* (ordering to write without technical support) was selected by the largest number (75%) of the respondents. The other strategies such as *guiding/leading questions*, and *model tools* were chosen by very few (16/13%) respondents. This shows, although reflective tools like portfolio, microteaching, and case study were reported as the frequently used reflective tools, student-teachers did not get special help such as model tools written by others/their instructors. The difference among the response category is statistically significant (see Table 5, column 6). Probably, the lack of strategic support to develop reflective tools made student-teachers ineffective in reflective teaching.

Further analysis (interview and observation) was conducted to cross check the relevance of quantitative result. According to the program coordinators, different reflective tools were allowed and instructors can use their own reflective tools to help student-teachers *analyze and examine different contents, assumptions and experiences of instructors and student-teachers in the program*. For example, one program coordinator reported:

There is guideline to use different tools in this program. In addition, instructors can develop and use their own tools if they want. For example, practicum, action research and portfolio are the basic tools expected to be used. However, there may be variation according to teachers and the course they teach that some may use these tools and others may not use them (Coor2; May 2018).

However, another coordinator reported that large class size affected the implementation of the curriculum as planned. This was also checked during field and class observation that student-teachers of different programs come together to take common course in one class. In the observed type of classroom, it was impossible to use reflective tools that require time to develop and practice them.

This also coincides with teacher educators' response that there is guideline to use action research, portfolio, and others. However, student-teachers could not work properly on the tools they were allowed to use. For example, one of the instructors said:

The tool I used in my class to elicit student-teachers ability to reflect was portfolio. As I started my first class, I told my students that they should compile portfolio. At the end of the semester, I asked them to present their works in the class and told them to collect comments both from me and their peers. Their engagement was not bad but most of them presented almost similar material that might have been copied from each other (Inst5; June 2018).

Similarly, student-teachers agreed with their instructors that portfolio, microteaching, and case studies were employed in the class. However, the comment from one of student-teachers indicates there is problem with implementation of the tools. He reported:

The tools our teachers used to help us learn how to teach were case study presented in the course module which only was used by one of our instructors (classroom English). In addition, we were told to use portfolio during practicum but I cannot say that was writing portfolio because simply we filled checklist. We have also conducted action research during our practicum at schools which is going to be submitted for our completion of the program. I did not see what you call journal writing, videotaping, and seminar group discussion (St3; May 2018).

In the classroom observations, we have observed very large number of student-teachers in one class. For example, in the observed class, student-teachers of four sections merged in one class. This is related with instructors' interest to cover all the courses within the given time. However, classroom over crowdedness and instructors' pace on the lesson could limit student-teachers active participation. This indicates that the classroom situation in PGDT program did not allow both teacher-educators and student-teachers to effectively use reflective tools. This scenario tells us that ineffective use of time was another constraint that challenged the promotion of reflective skills in the PGDT program.

In general, these results suggested very few reflective tools have been recognized in the program. These tools were also not used for purpose of reflection. For example, instead of writing their perception and feelings, student-teachers filled checklist to write portfolio and they conducted mini research but not reflected on it. The reason observed was shortage of time. The instability happened in some higher education institutions during the time might have distorted the schedule of the program, and instructors were forced to cover course contents within two weeks. Thus, it appears that reflective tools that are mentioned in the curriculum were roughly implemented by the participants of the study.

4. Discussions

The main goal of this study was to identify the amount of emphasis given to the variety of contents and types of reflective tools used to promote reflective practice in the PGDT program. The first major finding addressed in this study was that very low emphasis was given to various contents to help promote reflection. This was evident in the participants' response that they have very little experience of reading critical books and other authentic topics to further their professional knowledge, but the participants put most of their emphasis on using handouts and modules prepared to frame the contents of the program. This contradicts with what teacher education scholars suggest about how to help

student-teachers become critically reflective teachers (Brookfield, 2017; Freire, 1970; Loughran, 2005; Loughran & Hamilton, 2016). All these scholars have warned that limiting learners to prescribed contents (like module and handout) can limit learning to memorization and shallow thinking. Most interestingly, Brookfield (2017) clearly states that reading different literatures on teaching and learning theories provide student-teachers with knowledge about the realities in school context, people's different perception, how to challenge privilege and marginalization, and understand and disrupt prevailing common-sense notions of education. This was rarely noticed in the current study area of the PGDT program.

The other finding indicated in the study was that there was a poor tendency to select content for reflection. This means contents used in the classrooms were not aimed at developing student-teachers' reflective capacity. The study also disclosed that there were very rare opportunities for student-teachers to analyze their own learning experience and learn from their instructors' teaching experience in the classroom. For example, in the interview, student-teachers reported that instructors rush to complete the course rather than completely concentrate on the concepts in the course. The interesting thing that teacher-educators reported was that higher education students protest because of their dissatisfaction with the ruling government that has influenced higher education institution during the time, student-teachers lack of interest, and shortage of time to apply all activities and principles set in the course. This might be a good reason. However, Day (1999) argued that making more rapid approach to teaching and learning process and the evaluation of one's practice is extremely difficult to achieve proposed objectives. In this case, the targeted reflective skills for student-teachers requires much more time to practice reflection on contextualized activities which can help learners examine their own and others beliefs about teaching-learning processes.

Secondly, in the study, it has been reported that reflective tools such as portfolio, action research, case study, and microteaching were relatively known and used compared to other reflective tools. This might be helpful to teach/learn reflection. Loughran and Hamilton (2016) encourage the use of at least one or two types of reflective tools at a time. However, as it can be noticed from the findings, these tools were loosely used to immerse student-teachers into critical reflection. Brookfield (2017) stresses on this finding saying that reflective tools have to be used to help student-teachers practice reflection through writing, presenting, dialoguing with each other, and individually reflect on their own strength and limitations. Nonetheless, the findings of the study showed that reflective tools were rarely used for reflective purpose. That means, though there was evidence that some reflective tools such as action research, portfolio, case study, and microteaching were used in the program, there was lack of profound focus to develop reflective capacity of student-teachers. Therefore, without paying profound attention for the reflective tools at least one or two, effective reflective practice is not assumed (Hinchey, 2004). This stems from the view that meaningful reflective practice must be systematically structured by teacher educators through dialogue, guided and nurtured, and developed in a manner that enhances a positive approach to reflection (Hinchey, 2004; Jay, 2003; Dewey, 1933). In general, the evidences from this study imply that, in the PGDT program, little exposure to read important critical texts, lack of authentic content for reflection, and the absence or misuse of reflective tools have negatively affected student-teachers to miss some basic reflective skills. This is also clearly stated in Loughran (2005) who claims that unless systematic selection of contents and effective use of tools for reflection are applied, it is impossible to expect reflective practitioners.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to discover how much emphasis was given for varieties of reflective contents and what type of reflective tools utilized to prepare critically reflective English language teachers in the PGDT program of Dilla, Haramaya, and Hawassa universities of Ethiopia. The results of the study have shown that, although the curriculum encourages the utilization of different contents for reflection, there was lack of precise commitment to implement the contents framed in the curriculum. It is also revealed that there was lack of using critical reference books that could have

taught the student-teachers about how to reflect. On the other hand, some reflective tools such as action research, portfolio, and case study were well-known by both teacher educators and student-teachers, and these tools were employed in the program to evaluate student-teachers' learning. However, the study showed that these tools were simply used as a meager learning requirement, but not to promote the notion of reflective practice in the program. This seems that the teaching-learning process in the PGDT program focused little on reflective practice-oriented teaching methods. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that failing to use appropriate contents such as reading critical reference texts, reflecting on teacher educators' and student-teachers' teaching and learning experiences, and examining different beliefs about teaching and learning through specific reflective tools might have made student-teachers to become less familiar with the practice of reflective teaching and learning.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings presented in this paper, several actions are needed from policymakers, teacher education institutions, teacher educators and student-teachers. First, the government should clearly state learning culture that allows both teacher educators and student-teachers to talk, write and express their feelings about educational setting and anything related to teaching learning process. In addition, teacher education institutions should encourage student-teachers to dig out assumptions embedded in teaching methodologies, foster collaborative learning both between student-teachers and teacher educators, allow free time and place for reflective practice, and provide model activities for student-teachers to practice reflection. Moreover, teacher educators should be committed to promote reflective skills in the student-teachers by using different reflective tools appropriate to student-teachers class or lesson. Furthermore, there should be commitment from the side of student-teachers to follow up learning procedures devised in the curriculum framework, teacher education institutions and their teacher-educators. Finally, it is proposed that further research should be undertaken to examine the effect of using reflective contents and tools to enhance student-teachers' ability to reflect on different aspects of English language teaching profession.

7. References

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