

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Exploring EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs and practices on writing skills: The case of Wollo University**

**Birhan Adimasie Yelay**

TEFL/TESOL/ELT at Wollo University, Ethiopia.

Received 26 August, 2020; Accepted 20 October, 2020

**The main objective of this study is to explore EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs and practices in writing skills. The qualitative approach was employed. The participants of the study were three English language teachers who were teaching basic writing skills. Two data collecting instruments were used to carry out this study. Namely, classroom observation and semi-structured interview. Classroom observation was performed in three of the classes using video recordings and observation checklist, and to validate, semi-structured interview was employed with three of the instructors who were observed. As the results showed, EFL writing instructors' pedagogical content knowledge is almost inconsistent with the classroom practices. Based on the findings, it was suggested that English language teachers should focus on practice, and should teach their students practically. Students should improve their interest and performance.**

**Key words:** Teaching pedagogy, believes, practices.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is a unique domain of teacher knowledge which is critical to understand what effective teachers need to know (Magnusson et al., 1999). Teachers need PCK in order to organize the content of their lessons, to develop comprehensible representations of the topics they teach, and to understand the possible difficulties that their students may encounter in a specific topic (Van Driel et al., 2001). Pedagogical content knowledge might also serve as a conceptual framework for establishing more effective teacher education programs (Carlsen, 1999; Van Driel

et al., 2001).

Shulman (1987) assigned a special place for PCK since it is the unique knowledge for teachers in order to deliver a successful teaching. He stated that PCK identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners and presented for instruction. The key elements of pedagogical content knowledge are: one, knowledge of representations of

E-mail: [yelaybirhan2004@gmail.com](mailto:yelaybirhan2004@gmail.com).

Author(s) agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

subject matter (content knowledge); two, understanding of students' conceptions of the subject and the learning and teaching implications that are associated with the specific subject matter; and three, general pedagogical knowledge (or teaching strategies). To complete what he called *the knowledge base for teaching of courses* (Schulman, 1987). Of course, curriculum knowledge, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of the purposes of education were also taken as parts of it.

Regarding teaching writing pedagogy, however, Grant (1997), one of the few researchers who attempts to define language teacher knowledge, writes that teachers "need to be competent orally/aurally in different situations" and that "teachers need to be competent in writing" (Grant, 1997: 38). On a weekly basis, teachers write tests, handouts, and comments that often blend into the background of a lesson. This written input is crucial to second language learners as it serves as a model for their own production (Krashen, 1985). Teachers need to be precise in their writing since the written artifacts are produced for the purposes of student learning and evaluation. Thus, it should be highly emphasized especially in higher education institutions.

Writing is learnt, not taught, and the teacher's role is to be non-directive and facilitating, providing writers with the space to make their own meanings through an encouraging, positive, and cooperative environment with minimal interference. Because writing is a developmental process, teachers are encouraged not to impose their views, give models, or suggest responses to topics beforehand. On the contrary, they are urged to stimulate the writer's thinking through pre-writing tasks, such as journal-writing and analogies (Elbow, 1998), and to respond to the ideas that the writer produces. This, then, is writing as self-discovery.

Studying English language teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, believes and classroom practices can increase teachers' awareness of what he or she believes is being reflected in his or her own performance in the classroom (Farrell, 2007). This paper studied EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, believes and practices through an investigative case study with EFL teachers of L2 writing (explicit paragraph writing). Because essentially it sees writing as a problem-solving activity: how writers practice teaching writing as a problem and bring intellectual resources to solving it.

### Statement of the problem

Teaching techniques and approaches to teaching L2 writing to academically bound university students are based on key assumptions/pedagogical competences about learning to write in an L2 (Hinkel, 2004). One, learning to write in an L2 is fundamentally different from learning to write in an L1. Likewise, teaching L2 is also fundamentally different from teaching L1. Since L1

learners already have highly developed (native) language proficiency in English whereas most L2 students must dedicate years to learning it as a second language. Two, research has established that applying the writing and composition pedagogy for native speakers (NSs) to teaching L2 writing to non-native speakers (NNSs)-even over the course of several years does not lead to sufficient improvements in L2 writing to enable NNS students to produce academic-level text requisite in the academy in/as English-speaking countries (Silva, 1993).

As to the aforementioned authors, it is a verifiable and established fact that NNS students cannot easily understand academic writings and need to develop academic writing skills with a special teaching pedagogy, but EFL teachers in Ethiopia do not always have a clear picture of the types of writing, approaches/techniques of teaching writing and written discourse expected of students once they achieve their short-term goals of entering degree programs. In case, in particular, students rarely need to be proficient narrators of personal experiences and good writers of personal stories. In fact what they need is to become relatively good at displaying academic knowledge within the formats expected in academic discourse and text. More importantly, NNS students' academic survival often depends on their ability to construct written prose of at least passable quality in the context of academic discourse expectations.

Nevertheless, in our context, students have not any capacity for writing effective text composition because an extensive study by Warden (2000) found that "implementing a multiple-stage process" of draft revising in writing pedagogy represents a mismatch with the reality of "social, cultural, and historical trends" (p. 607) in non-Western countries where the emphasis is placed on vocabulary and grammar accuracy rather than revising one's writing for meaning and content, the case is also true in Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, some studies were done; for instance more specifically Awol (1999), Geremew (1999) and Zelalem and Emily (2017) have shown that acquiring the writing skill seems to be laborious and demanding for many Ethiopian students, and they do not fulfill the required writing performances, abilities and academic achievements. Due to this, the learners have low writing ability in relation to what is expected. Of course, writing is a form of academic torture and for many educators, teaching writing is a kind of professional agony because it is usually considered as a boring task and a lonely job. It is believed that teachers are not totally free from the problems because their teaching approaches /mechanisms have a direct contribution/reflection for students' effectiveness/ineffectiveness.

However, the aforementioned local researches focused on students' writing requirements and their performances, academic achievements and activities and their poor performances, but they did not see why it was so, what

are the teachers' beliefs on teaching writing, what about the consistency of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and the practices. Of course, in my eight years work experience in teaching writing at Wollo University, I have observed that everything was found in a text, but students' effectiveness in writing was not that much and I asked why so? Therefore, I believe it is a need to see the teachers' subject matter knowledge, beliefs and practices in teaching writing because the approach of teachers teaching can determine students' learning effectiveness. As a result, the researcher was inspired to explore EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs and practices in teaching L2 writing skills to check what is happening in the Ethiopian teaching writing skills.

## Objectives of the study

### General objective

The main focus of this study is to explore EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs and practices on teaching writing skills, the case of Wollo University.

### Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are listed as follows:

- (1) To see how EFL teachers implement the pedagogical content knowledge in teaching writing skills.
- (2) To assess the teachers' beliefs on the practices of pedagogical content knowledge in teaching writing skills.

## Research questions

The study will answer the following research questions:

- (1) How do EFL teachers implement the pedagogical content knowledge on teaching writing skills?
- (2) How do EFL teachers believe on the practices of pedagogical content knowledge in their actual classes?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

One of the main steps in conducting a research is to collect data that enable the researcher to reach suggested solutions for the problems identified. This part presents the research design, the participants of the study (two veteran and one novice teachers) and data gathering instruments and data collection procedures and methods of analysis.

### Research design

The selected research problem allows the researcher solely to use the qualitative approach because one, it allows to get the inner

experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables' (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Two, a case study qualitative approach research allows the researcher to understand a particular phenomenon *in depth* (pedagogy, beliefs-practice consistency) within its natural environment of manifestation (Olafson et al., 2015). Besides, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that the qualitative data which are collected using like document analysis, focus group discussion, observation and interviews enable refining and explain the given data clearly.

Qualitative research begins with peoples' knowledge, assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems addressing the meanings/competences of individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2013). Thus, the final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and its contribution to the literature.

In addition, qualitative research allows the study of the phenomenon through direct interaction with the research participants in the natural settings, that is, by visiting their work place and 'allowing them to tell the stories, realities by what we expect to find or what we have read in the literature' (Creswell, 2013: 48). Therefore, as the nature of the research is principally qualitative, figures or numbers are not necessary, so both quantitative and mixed methods were not used for this study.

### Participants of the study

To investigate this study, the researcher purposively used three English language instructors (two experienced and one novice) who were involved in teaching basic writing skills in three different classes (plant science, biotechnology and civics and ethics department) for both classroom observation and interview in order to get tangible evidence for the study. The reasons are one, the researcher wants to see the difference between veteran and novice teachers in teaching pedagogy and two, these are the only ones who have reached in a writing section during that movement, and this was the lesson what the researcher needs to investigate.

Thus, the researcher tried to explore EFL teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, their beliefs on the pedagogical implementation and the practices in the actual classes and the hindrance of the implementation through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audio-visual material), and reports a case description (Creswell, 2013).

Therefore, the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, their beliefs and experiences of teaching, the effectiveness of the lesson in the actual classes as well as the factors affecting the practices were identified, interpreted and analyzed from field notes, interviews and video recordings.

### Data gathering instruments

According to Patton (1990: 244), multiple sources of information are sought and used because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective. Therefore, two kinds of instruments were employed to collect data: classroom observation and interview focusing on L2 writing instructors' pedagogical content knowledge and practices.

Researching and examining tangible evidence requires intensive involvement of the researcher and researched (Valerie and Magdalena, 2008). This study employed classroom observation as a major data gathering tool and interviews as supporting tool to get a direct insight into real practices concerning the exploration of the EFL instructors' pedagogical content knowledge, beliefs and

practices in teaching writing at Wollo University. Thus, the two major principal tools (classroom observation and interviews) were used as follows.

### **Classroom observation**

Observation is one of the techniques used to collect the required data. It is a very good way of watching and listening to an interaction as it takes place (Kumar, 2005). To conduct an observation, first, the researcher adapted an observation checklist from Shulman's (1986) original conceptualization of teacher pedagogical content knowledge. Accordingly, three observations were conducted in each class over two-week periods; each observation lasted approximately forty minutes. For each observation, I had the role of a non-participant observer, recording in narrative form details of the instructors' instructional roles or pedagogical content knowledge to see how much it is consistent with the practices. To ensure reliability and validity, data from classroom observations and interviews were triangulated. Therefore, both the video recordings and recording from observation check lists were taken to enable the researcher gather the required data.

### **Semi-structured interview**

Semi-structured interview offers a compromise between the two extremes: although there was a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts, the format was open-ended and the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate in the issues raised in an exploratory manner. In other words, the interviewer provided guidance and direction, but was also keen to follow up interesting developments and to let the interviewees elaborate on certain issues (Zoltan, 2007).

Therefore, four semi-structured interview questions were prepared which have detailed sub questions for three of sample English language writing instructors; of course, the interview questions are relatively different from the observation guidelines, but intrinsically related (Appendix B). The reason why it was so is that the researcher wants to see the participants detailed insights with relatively different issues, but for one purpose. To this end, the researcher employed purposive sampling to select three (3) English language instructors teaching in the sample classes for interview.

### **Data collection procedures and method of analysis**

The data of this research study were collected from March 2019 G.C to May 2019 G.C based on the following procedures. The first data collection instrument, observation, was conducted in each of the three sections with the help of video recordings and observation checklist to check the consistency of stated instructors' pedagogical content knowledge and practices as well as instructors' believes in the actual classes. As far as interview is concerned, the researcher interviewed three (out of twenty five) writing instructors who were teaching in the sample classes.

To analyze the collected data, a thematic crossover analysis was used since it is essential to present the data from the classroom observation and interviews. As Onwuegbuzie et al. (2010) crossover analysis enables researcher to go back and forth many times and present an analysis of data gathered through different tools separately. Therefore, the researcher used the following procedures to organize, analyze and interpret the collected data. First, the results obtained from classroom observation were analyzed and interpreted together with the related responses gathered through interview (Appendix A). Responses which were

not related in concept in each of the two instruments were discussed, analyzed and interpreted thematically. Therefore, it is clear that the results were discussed comparatively, meaning triangulated.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Here, deals with the results, interpretation and discussion of the data obtained from classroom observation and interviews. As sated earlier, the purpose of the study was to investigate the EFL instructors' pedagogical content knowledge and practices and instructors' believes in paragraph writing skills.

### **The practice of teaching writing**

To check whether the pedagogical content knowledge has a correspondence with the practices in the actual classes in writing lessons or not, an observation was made using video recordings and observation checklist in three writing lessons. However, the observation result indicates that teachers do not properly implement the stated pedagogical content knowledge in the actual classes because it has been observed that they are teaching the paragraph writing theoretically, and the practical ones are not seen yet. Having this, the researcher have seen that the relative difference between veteran and novice teachers on teaching methodology were observed-meaning the veteran teachers have shown a relative better performance in teaching than the novice one. Of course, the following practical example obtained from the observation can show us how the practice was.

T1: what is a paragraph?

Ss: a collection of different sentences (with one mouth)

T1: that is great, a paragraph is a collection of related and meaningful sentences, and has merely one central idea.

T1: continued, what about structure of a paragraph? Do you know?

Ss: keep silent

T1: the teacher continued; you do not know? A paragraph has three basic elements/ structures.

These are: a topic sentence, supportive sentences and the concluding sentence.

(Taken from the novice one, May 2019)

Similarly, the data from interviewees showed all (3) of them do not worry about the pedagogy of teaching writing. As a result, instructors were not seen to exert their maximum efforts to make their writing lessons effective; instead, they were teaching writing theoretically from the beginning to the end. However, they did not deny that practicing writing in the classroom if not important for students.

*For instance, one of the interviewed instructors said that: in brief and precise speaking, teaching writing is perhaps the most enjoyable task in life. It for example, helps the teacher to back him/herself up to bring like the real practice of students in the classroom. However, it is sometimes too hard to enjoy writing and composition as well in a classroom with students of low quality and standard. It is for two basic reasons. Firstly, students are not with high position to write whenever they are asked to do so. It is therefore, the hindering point to examine students in writing as interest the initial step to productiveness. Second, there was no time and opportunity to ask every student to write rehearses points manly. Therefore, owing to the bit schedule, everything cannot be examined and enjoyed writing up on to (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

Three of the selected classrooms were observed and instructors were interviewed to see what types of mechanism they used. It was observed that instructors were using lecturing method to teach writing, and as a result students were seen to take notes seriously. On the other hand, the interviewed instructors claimed that they used different methods. For instance, one of the interviewed instructors said the following ideas.

*Student centered mechanism was used. This mechanism is supported by preceding clarification, exposition and detail about the point which should be covered in classroom. Therefore, after the points were clearly and orally addressed to students, they were rewarded the opportunity to show me their understanding practically. For example, every basic point about paragraph writing is told theoretically, and then they write a paragraph keeping points they learned in mind (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

However, this idea is contradicting with the observation result found because students have not got any opportunity to practice the paragraph writing practices. Instead, he taught merely the theoretical ones like other disciplines and students were going to do so. On the other side, the humanistic teaching of written composition began to emphasize that the writing process with a reduced emphasis on theory and rhetorical structure, vocabulary, and grammar should be implemented (Hairston, 1982). Thus, here, it is possible to conclude that instructors do not really think whether their pedagogical content knowledge is fully consistent with the practice with the actual classes or not. Besides, he strongly confirmed that teaching writing takes a long step and seeks an earth breaking motivation too. Thus, he does not believe his content is fully persistent.

The other instructor however has different ideology as checked from what have been observed and from what was interviewed since he thought that students are

matured enough and thus they do not know what to be guided on what they practice although the result of observation shows another thing.

*He said, as far as my experience is concerned, I could not think enjoyment would be the part of plan, for I do not have pre-mediated teaching pedagogy; I am dealing with matured students with lot of experiences, so all I can do is to surprise myself and students. My response to teaching writing won't be different. To this end, I am not pedagogically oriented, so there is no way for me to see whether consistency with my actual practice to teaching is parallel or not (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

Therefore, the researcher can possibly conclude that having poor performance of students in paragraph writing/composition might be related with the presence of instructors' lack of consistence pedagogical content knowledge and practices in the actual classes.

Moreover, the researcher tried to see whether the instructors are clearly notifying the objectives of their lessons or not, and their mechanisms of teaching writing to be best learners of writing. In three of the observed classes however, no one never talked about the lesson, the objective of the lesson rather they tried to teach from what they have stopped before. In the interview session, these instructors were asked their objective of the lessons, the difficulty of the lesson, and their best mechanisms to encourage students. The second teacher for instance said that:

T2: good morning students. Where did you stop yesterday?

S1: we have learned what a paragraph is?

T2: good, is there anyone who can memorize me please?

S2: yes, a paragraph is a collection of sentences.

T2: what about the structures of a paragraph?

Ss: there are three; these are topic sentence, supportive sentences and the concluding one (with one mouth).

T2: what about their functions?

Ss: keep silent.

T2: Do not keep salient please. I told you yesterday. Anyways, let me continue (the teacher said). Today we are going to learn about the basic characteristics of a good paragraph. Can you tell me?

S3: unity.

T2: great, is there anyone who can add?

S4: coherence.

T2: good; there are many characteristics of a good paragraph.

(Taken form one of the veteran teacher, May 2019).

This clearly showed that the practice of teaching writing is found in the vacuum. Instructors were teaching with their ways; students interests were not considered even were not seen. Instructors were following what is stated in the

handout. In this regard, one of the interviewed instructors said the following speech.

*When I saw you coming to see my lesson, I had to deal with conceptual framework of how to compose paragraph: figuring out what paragraph really is, so I had layers of objectives achieves of what paragraph really is, including defining what a paragraph is, determining elements of a paragraph and characterizing what paragraph would be like ideally. I cannot speak of difficulty level of lesson, for I am an instructor, so students might be held responsible for knowing how learning is going on their minds. To speak on mechanisms, I could not say there is one best way of doing mechanisms to encourage students to write, for my mechanism could always be of thump limited to specific lesson when we compare complexity of writing how it would be learned, so students should be responsible for moving their mind trained for continuous practices (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

As can be seen from the aforementioned ideas however, an instructor covered many lessons in a single period, and taught a paragraph development/ writing like other disciplines for example, *history, geography* so that students have not got any opportunity to practice a paragraph composition in the classroom. This shows that we instructors are missing how to teach writing. The other instructor on the other hand claimed that:

*The objective of my lesson in teaching writing is making students good writers. It has, of course, different steps, but it will at least narrow the gap between their interests. In doing this so, I feel some problems. For example, one, students interest to write is truly weak; two, the schedule what I have is bit; three, I sometimes feel tired when I come across weak interest from students (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

As can be seen from these explanations therefore, he knows his objective of the lesson, but he did not clearly show to students, for his students' performance and interests are poor. Anyways we can understand that the practice of writing composition is not really practiced because of different reasons.

To see the variety and the consistence, the researcher observed the third class with different, but related questions for example, regarding the ultimate goals of teaching writing, but I got him that he was teaching them theoretically, and the goal of their teaching were not clearly stated and defined.

T3: what did you learn yesterday?

Ss: we have learned the first chapter, sentence error.

T3: ok, today we are going to cover the second chapter, it is not that much vast, it consists of definition,

characteristics, basic types and development methods.

Ss: ok teacher.

T3: let us start from the definition; is there any one to say?

Ss: silent

T3: no problem; a paragraph is....., what about the characteristics?

Ss: keep silent, but laughing.

T3: is there any problem, continued.

Ss: taking lecture notes seriously.

T3: what are the basic paragraph types?

(Taken from the second veteran teacher, May 2019).

Similarly, the researcher observed the third classroom and found relatively different lesson since it was observed that one chapter was completed within a single period; of course, the aforementioned dialogue can show us how it could be. Here, the researcher observed that this veteran teacher did not perform better in teaching writing than the novice one. Therefore, it is possible to say that sometimes, individual difference matters to be a good teacher than the experience. For the purpose of clarification, the aforementioned observed instructor was interviewed and said as follows:

*To make students proficient enough in their overall writing skills, I taught as follows. As we know, writing does not need to have resources for it to be practiced rather students' experience, devotion and dedications are presented. The ultimate goal of teaching writing is getting students acquainted to writing tasks. I have many of lessons for this as a result. The first one is, the fact that students will be tied up with writing in their future life. Secondly, the objective of teaching writing by itself is highly related to making students good enough in writing their own text so that let them to write their own history or experience is enough (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

However, the fallacies observed and understood here is that both the teachers and students seem clear enough on theory, but off the topics in practices since as the aforementioned dialogue indicated that the instructor completed one chapter in a single period without checking the students understanding of the lesson or not. Thus, to teach the lesson effectively and address the goal of teaching a specific lesson, the pedagogical content knowledge and practices must be consistent and readable unless the practice of writing might not be proved.

### **Teachers' belief on teaching writing**

For crosschecking purpose, the researcher interviewed the teachers, and tried to identify their views on teaching writing. One of the interviewed instructors gave the following information; of course, the researcher found that

even the rest ones have no different ideas.

*In briefly speaking, I believe, the practice of teaching academic writing in our case is poor, but it is not my problem rather students are not happy to write any text as a result of their weak English performance. However, I usually ordered them to try writing to break the bad bridge they had have. As I clearly stated it here above, the first step in teaching writing is creating a good beginning between the teacher and the students. Therefore, I first, try to make everyone happy with the lesson and ask him/ her to write individually, but they have not any interest to do so (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019)*

The researcher observed that the problem is also connected with instructors themselves. Currently however, the field of EFL has started to admit the essential of exploring the cognitive and affective dimensions of how language teachers' thoughts, judgments, and decisions affect the nature of language instruction (Richards and Nunan, 1990; Johnson, 1992). Examining teachers' believes is great value in that it gives us insight into how language teachers make instructional decisions, choose instructional materials and choose certain instructional practices in line with students' interest. Nevertheless, the reality is far away from these since instructors do not have any care on their students interest, even their performances and way of creativity to make students effective in writing is found to be lost.

The other one on the other hand said that it is not his serious business to worry on his students' ability, interest and creativity rather his worry is to do what is expected of him, and he believed that all of the things are in the hands of students themselves. An instructor is expected to show the direction how students are going to dig out. Better to see what he said.

*I think it would utterly be inappropriate for me to ask these types of questions to answer because it is not my serious business to inter in the minds of individuals and to judge their attitudes. The way I took with my students seems to be predictable, for I believe in their independent learning while I always stick to my lectures, so if they feel like they are weak, they would come and ask me any help. Of course, I sometimes use cooperative learning as technique for particular purpose (Instructors' responses on semi structured interview, May 2019).*

However, whatever level of motivation students bring to the classroom will be transformed and depended on their teachers, for better or worse depends on by what happens in the classroom. Understanding students' contributions is essential for effective teaching and learning because they are likely to affect the teaching learning process. The significance of investigating language learning perceptions has been connected to

one, students' use of language learning strategy (Oxford, 1990), two learners' anxiety (Horwitz, 1990) and three, autonomous learning and teachers way of teaching and creativity (Cottrell, 1999). Barkhuizen (1998) made similar comments by stating that students are almost never asked overtly and systematically about their learning experiences. This is highly connected to teachers' perceptions about their students' role in language learning. Such believe influences students' perceptions in language learning and this may effect in poor language command.

Generally, it is possible to understand and conclude that lack of interest and experience of students, lack of motivation and pedagogical content knowledge and skills of instructors, the presence of tit schedule, students and instructor's awareness problems, and the nature of the curriculum itself are the major problems which make the practices of academic paragraph writing poor in our country.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the findings of this study, the researcher found that the instructors' pedagogical content knowledge about writing did not correspond to their actual classroom practices. There are different types of problems facing instructors in implementing the pedagogical content knowledge in practicing paragraph writing. This is because of instructors' lack of commitment on implementing the pedagogical content knowledge in practicing writing since instructors believed that much is expected from students. Of course, as the instructors claimed, students' lack of interest and lack of capacity and the problem related to having poor curriculum and teaching material were found to be the hindering factors for the inconsistency of the implementation of PCK in practice.

Pedagogical content knowledge needs to be consistent with practices due to its significance in developing effective language learning. Thus, English language instructors should be practical oriented, and should teach their students practically. Besides, students should be involved in practicing writing actively, and the teaching material should be modified into practical oriented ways so that the concerned bodies including the ministry of education should take the responsibility.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

## REFERENCES

- Awol E (1999). Conception of Language Teaching and Learning and Classroom Decision Making: a case study of high school English teachers in Ethiopia. AAU. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.

- Barkhuizen GP (1998). Discovering Learners' Perception of ESL Classroom. *Teaching Learning Activities in South African Context: TESOL Quarterly* 32:1.
- Carlsen WS (1999). Domains of teacher knowledge. In: J. Gess-Newsome and N.G. Lederman (Eds.), *Examining pedagogical content knowledge: The construct and its implications for science education*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp. 133-144.
- Corbin J, Strauss A (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage publications.
- Cottrell S (1999). *Methodology for Researching Meta - Cognitive knowledge/Learner Belief*.
- Creswell JW (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd edition). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin NK, Lincoln Y (2000). *Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research*. English as a second or foreign language, 2nd Edition. New York: Newbury House/Harper and Row.
- Farrell TSC (2007). *Reflective language teaching - from research to practice*. New York: Continuum.
- Geremew L (1999). *A Study of Requirements in writing for Academic Purpose at AAU*.
- Grant L (1997). Testing the language proficiency of bilingual teachers: Arizona's Spanish proficiency test. *Language Testing* 14(1):23-46.
- Hairston M (1982). The winds of change: Thomas Kuhn and the revolution in the teaching of writing. *College Composition and Communication* 33(1):76-88.
- Hinkel E (2004). *Teaching academic ESL writing: practical techniques in vocabulary and grammar*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Horwitz C (1990). Total quality management: an approach for education. *Educational Management and Administration* 18(2):55-58.
- Johnson (1992). The Relationship between Teachers' Belief and Practice during Literacy Instruction for Non-native Speakers of English *Journal of Reading Behavior* 24(1):83-108.
- Krashen S (1985). *The Input Hypothesis*: London: Longman.
- Kumar R (2005). *A Step by Step Guide for Beginners*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, Limited.
- Magnusson S, Krajcik J, Borko H (1999). Nature, sources, and development of pedagogical content knowledge for science teaching. In: J. Gess-Newsome and NG Lederman (Eds.), *Examining pedagogical content knowledge: The construct and its implications for science education*. Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers pp. 95-132.
- Olafson L, Grandy C, Owens M (2015). Qualitative approaches to studying teachers' beliefs. In: H. Fives and M.G. Gill (Eds.), *International handbook of research on teachers' beliefs*. New York, NY: Routledge pp. 128-149.
- Onwuegbuzie AJ, Bustamante RM, Nelson JA (2010). Mixed research as a tool for developing quantitative instruments. *Journal of mixed methods research* 4(1):56-78.
- Oxford R (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. NY: Newbury House.
- Patton MQ (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Richards JC, Nunan D (1990). *Second Language Teacher Education* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silva T (1993). Toward an understanding of the distinct nature of L2 writing: the ESL research and its implications. *Tesol Q.* 27(4):657e675.
- Shulman LS (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher* 15(2):4-14.
- Shulman LS (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review* 57(1):1-22.
- Valerie H, Magdalena K (2008). The Challenges of researching language teachers: what research manuals don't tell you? *Language teacher research* 12(4):495-475.
- Van Driel JH, Veal WR, Janssen FJ (2001). Pedagogical content knowledge: an integrative component within the knowledge base for teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 8(17):979-986.
- Warden C (2000). EFL business writing behaviors in differing feedback environments. *Language Learning* 50(4):573-616.
- Zelalem B, Emily J (2017). EFL Instructors' Beliefs and Practices of Formative Assessment in Teaching Writing. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 9(1):42. DOI: 10.17507/jltr.0901.06.
- Zoltan M (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## APPENDIXES

### Appendix A: Classroom observation

The observation checklist adapted from Shulman's (1986) original conceptualization of teacher pedagogical content knowledge

No.	Activities	Yes	No
1	The teacher/instructor helps students enjoys the lesson, understand its objectives, the ultimate goals of the lesson, understand the concept of the subject matter (the writing skills) theoretically		
2	The teacher/instructor brings activities/ideas appropriate for learners of different culture and interest		
3	The instructor/teacher prepares prerequisites for students' understanding of a target lesson in this specific skill using different pedagogical perspectives		
4	The teacher/instructor integrates the content knowledge (the knowledge of paragraph composition skills) of a specific subject and the pedagogical knowledge for teaching that particular subject in the actual classes		
5	The teacher/instructor lets them to scaffold students' reasoning processes (e.g. changing the theory in to practice, practicing paragraph writing in the class, communicating with writing, constructing arguments with writing composition, etc).		

### Appendix B: Instructor's semi-structured Interview

Dear Instructor,

The purpose of this interview is to gather information for research purpose about your pedagogical content knowledge and practices on explicit paragraph composition. Therefore, please answer these questions based on your experience of teaching writing.

Guiding questions

1. Do you enjoy teaching writing?
  - ❖ What do you enjoy about teaching writing, paragraph composition in particular?
  - ❖ What type of teaching mechanism/ teaching pedagogy do you use?
  - ❖ Do you think that your pedagogical content knowledge consistent with the practices in the actual classes? Why? Why not?
2. What is the objective of your lesson?
  - ❖ What do you find the lesson difficult when teaching the writing composition?
  - ❖ What do you think the best mechanism to encourage writing composition?
3. What is the ultimate goal of teaching writing skills, paragraph writing in particular?
  - ❖ Why you do so? Why not others?
  - ❖ What types of activities/ tasks/ materials do you use? Why?
4. What do you believe both instructors and students should do while teaching/learning paragraph writing skills/composition?
  - ❖ How do you work with students if you feel that they are weak?
  - ❖ What about your special teaching mechanism/ grouping?