

Research Article

Ethiopian Early Grade English Teachers' Preparedness to Teach Basic Reading Skills

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Ethiopian children in early grades were found to be significantly nonreaders after 2–3 years of schooling regardless of linguistic variation. This is mainly attributed to the way children are taught basic literacy skills, which is attributed to teacher preparation and training. This research aimed to examine Ethiopian early grade teachers' preparedness to teach basic reading skills. Five schools were randomly selected out of 44 public primary schools in the research site. Among 40 teachers of English in the selected schools, 32 teachers were willing to take knowledge assessment test and fill in the questionnaire. Two of knowledge test papers and two pieces of questionnaire were rejected because the responses were incomplete. The data were gathered from ($n = 30$) randomly selected primary schools English teachers by using a questionnaire and knowledge assessment test. Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 25.0). Descriptive statistics were calculated for the responses to knowledge test and questionnaire. Pearson's correlation was calculated for the relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach basic reading after categorical data were transformed into scale. The results have shown that primary school English teacher preparation designated only certain lecture sessions of coursework and few of activities of practicum to teaching early reading. The average knowledge assessment test score of teachers was 43.4%; 21 (70%) of the teachers achieved below 50% while 9 (30%) of them achieved 50% and above. There is a statistically significant relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to help Ethiopian children learn to read. It can be concluded from the results that teacher preparation both in its courses and practicum activities did not place due emphasis on teaching teachers to teach basic reading skills. Participant English teachers also had knowledge gap about early reading instruction. Thus, participant English teachers were not adequately prepared to teach early grade reading. Teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading have a strong positive relationship.

1. Introduction

Following the expansion of modern education in the twentieth century, Ethiopia's imperial regime was concerned with assigning enough teachers to the schools. Attempts had been made to see different options of obtaining teachers such as importing expatriate teachers from countries that had a good diplomatic relation with Ethiopia at that time (e.g., France, USA, and Great Britain) and the Coptic Church of Egypt [1]. Ethiopia's education system has undergone different reforms to its policies, programs, and strategies [1].

During Derg regime, the socialist regime that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991, completing grade 12 was the only requirement to join teacher preparation program. The worse, certain candidates were allowed to teach without any pedagogical preparation to address acute shortage of teachers [2]. Primary teacher preparation programs started to receive those who failed to join higher learning institutions to study other disciplines; as a result, instructional quality and the profession's reputation have deteriorated [1, 2].

After the downfall of Derg regime, a new education policy was formulated and upgraded teacher preparation institutes to diploma-level colleges and also added certain new

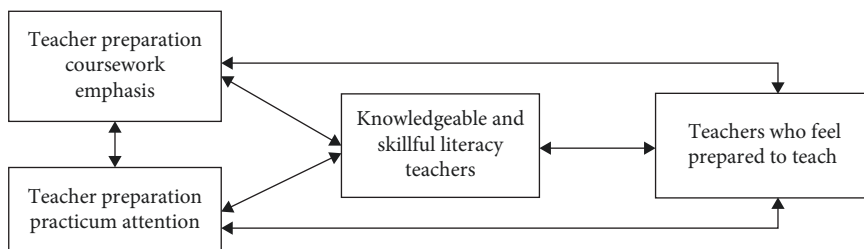


FIGURE 1: The interaction of variables to make literacy teachers feel prepared.

colleges. A part of Education Sector Development was the teacher development program which contained the activities related to English Language Improvement Program (ELIP), teacher preparation methodology, knowledge, skills, and attitudes of those involved [3].

Societal change requires adequate attention paid to providing citizens of a country with quality education, particularly primary education. This is because primary education lays the base for citizens' success in further education and their involvement in a range of issues [4]. Among other things that contribute to ensuring quality education, qualified teacher takes the central place. Without a qualified teacher, the other inputs are unlikely to make a difference [5]. An effective teaching comes from teacher proficiency, which in turn is the result of an effective teacher preparation [6].

As teachers' ability to teach can influence pupils' English proficiency, preparing teachers to teach English becomes important [7]. Teachers have been trained to teach English as a course and use it as a language of instruction. Presently, teaching English as a subject begins from preprimary in all regions of the country, but using it as a language of instruction starts at varying grades across regional states of Ethiopia [8].

However, low performance in terms of using English for communication is observable even among those who graduated from colleges and universities. For a long time, many have shown concerns about the low quality of education in Ethiopia, and some others have been advising of the consequences of an inefficient education system on overall nation-building process. Students' inability to make the most of their lessons is partly attributed to inadequate reading ability [9, 10].

Studies have also reported that reading difficulties that secondary school students encounter are the effects of ineffective instruction in the early grades [11]. Insufficient teacher preparation and development is also considered to result in early grades English teachers' deficient understanding of the purpose, approaches, and procedures of early grade reading instruction [12].

A qualified teacher can never be substituted by any one of a well-designed curriculum, nicely furnished classrooms, abundantly available resources or technologies, or well-prepared materials. Teachers in the Ethiopian school system are reportedly responsible to have a share in low level of English language use in the country. Access to quality education cannot be guaranteed unless issues related to teacher preparation and professional development are managed well with due attention to subject and pedagogical knowledge, and language ability [13].

It is reported in studies that learning English can be influenced by different factors such as technological advances (e.g., [14]). However, the place of a qualified teacher can be filled by nothing else. Thus, it is sensible that "while there may be some 'materials-proof' teachers, there are no 'teacher-proof' materials" [15]. It has been recommended in the study conducted in Ethiopia and elsewhere that both pre-service and on-job early grade English teachers need to be trained on how to teach the basic reading skills and develop models. It was also recommended increasing the time needed for training teachers on teaching basic reading skills and ways of helping children to read and write. It has also been suggested that the curriculum should be reorganized and teacher training should place due emphasis on demonstration and practicing teaching of the components of reading [16].

Different studies have been conducted (e.g., [13, 17, 18]) and have put their focus on the importance of qualified teachers to ensure quality education. For instance, Abebe and Woldehanna [13] show that the way teachers are prepared has either positive or negative effects on the quality of education. They also put that well-prepared and experienced teachers positively influence students' academic achievement. "The strength of any educational system depends largely on the quality and commitment of its teachers and this depends on the quality of teacher preparation" ([17], p. 1103).

Though Ethiopia has achieved a record of success in improving the level of attention given to education sector and introduced research-based educational ideas such as practicum (field experiences), action research, continuous assessment, and reflective teaching into teacher preparation students' literacy learning progress is falling and remains the issue of research, public discourse, professional debate, etc. [19]. Particularly, Semela [1] reported that quality of Ethiopian education at all levels is falling, and it is especially shocking at primary education. Teachers in most of the schools have gone through ineffective teacher preparation and lack the required subject content and pedagogical knowledge and abilities to teach.

Other relevant studies conducted in Ethiopia have been reviewed. The larger portion of studies done in the area of reading instruction considered issues such as teaching reading at different levels, learners' reading ability, strategy use, the use of age appropriate readers, and factors that affect teaching reading in early grades. Among which is teachers' deficiency in knowledge and practice. Bachore [20] looked into the status, roles, and challenges of teaching reading and found out that there was a serious English proficiency

problem among English language teachers, teachers of natural sciences, and students of primary and secondary schools.

Moreover, Mijena [12] investigated practices and impeding factors facing teaching English to young learners and came up with the findings that teachers use children's mother tongue to teach English and had deficient understanding and limited knowledge of the purpose, procedures, and approaches of teaching English to young learners. This was because teachers did not go through proper teacher preparation courses and professional development schemes on how to help young learners learn to read. Enyew and Yigzaw [21] looked into teachers' practice of scaffolding in teaching English reading and grade four students' reading achievement. This study disclosed low student score, low infusion of teaching strategies in reading lessons, and poor assessment of reading skills. As it has been reported by Semela [1], a significant number of Ethiopian schools, especially primary schools are staffed with teachers who lack subject matter knowledge and skills for teaching.

Belilew [22] also looked into the practice of teaching early reading comprehension with grade two English teachers in Ethiopian primary schools using mixed methods approach and found out that teachers failed to teach early reading according to the theories and principles. It was found out that teachers are inadequately trained in phonological awareness, phonics instruction, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary.

However, none of the scarce studies conducted in Ethiopia have considered the emphasis placed on preparing English teachers to teach the basic reading skills. Thus, in Ethiopia, scarce studies were carried out on issues related to early grades English language reading skills but with no attention to teacher preparedness with focus on coursework, practicum, and knowledge assessment on teaching basic reading skills.

Previous studies and documents reviewed have shown that the problems-related teachers' lack of understanding and skills of early grade reading instruction are basically related to the way teachers are selected, prepared, and developed professionally [1, 3]. Consequently, different literacy learning assessment results show low literacy skills acquisition achievement that children are not learning the knowledge and abilities in accordance with the minimum learning competencies. For instance, Early Grade Reading Assessment [23] and National Learning Assessment (NLA) done in 2000, 2004, and 2007 [24] have revealed disgracing results.

To the best knowledge of the authors of this research, the studies conducted in Ethiopia so far have not paid enough attention to preparedness of early grades English teachers to teach basic reading skills. Thus, this study was intended to investigate early grades English teachers' preparedness to teach basic reading skills.

1.1. Objectives of the Study. Specifically, this paper strived to:

- (1) examine the level of emphasis placed on teaching basic reading skills,
- (2) investigate the extent to which English teachers felt prepared to teach basic reading,

- (3) assess the level of English teachers' knowledge of teaching basic reading skills, and
- (4) discover the relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading

2. Review of Related Literature

This section presents an essential review of literature on preparing teachers to teach early grade reading: coursework emphasis, practicum attention, teacher educators and mentor teachers' supports, and teachers' feelings of preparedness.

2.1. Preparing Teachers to Teach Early Grade Reading. An effective instruction necessitates a profound knowledge of the content knowledge and a wide-ranging knowledge of how students acquire a particular skill. It also necessitates the pedagogical content knowledge—how to deliver a given area of knowledge. Particular to reading instruction, an effective instruction includes the knowledge of what students learn, the way students learn to read, techniques to assess the progress students make over time, and to improve instruction with a range of strategies to choose from based on assessment data. Therefore, the content of teacher preparation programs ought to be well-versed with a profound knowledge of what is appropriate, how it is appropriate, and why it is appropriate [25].

Preservice early grades teachers reported little to moderate emphasis on the critical components of reading during their preparation coursework, but on average more emphasis was on the critical components during student teaching practice. Most of the prospective teachers of English prepared to teach the critical components of reading while they answered on average only 57% of knowledge test items of the reading components [26]. Cunningham et al. [27] concluded that attention should be turned to improving early grade teacher preparation and development with a clear direction that reading instruction of early grade teachers may proceed.

2.1.1. Coursework. The courses of prospective teacher preparation and continuous development ought to be organized to help teachers of students in different categories such as those with learning difficulties to use psychometrically appropriate progressive follow-up devices to assess critical reading skills to find out what students need to learn, leading to practical pedagogical remedial measures and place students on their achievement progress qualitatively described over time [28].

Attempts have been made by various studies conducted so far to examine the contribution of teachers' knowledge of linguistic bases of early reading to effective early reading instruction. Particularly, some researches have attempted to understand the extent to which teachers truly know about the linguistic bases of early grade reading. The other studies have questioned if teachers' knowledge in this area can be boosted as a result of a given professional development packages. Some more researches have also investigated whether an increase in teachers' linguistic knowledge results

in an improved explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, or other code-related aspects of reading. Moreover, a few other studies have attempted to test whether greater knowledge of teachers in linguistic bases of early reading has a more positive impact on students' reading achievement than less knowledge of teachers in the area [29].

It has been shown in many research works that early grade reading teachers have a limited knowledge of linguistic bases of reading. Also, an increasing body of knowledge produced in the area has indicated that teachers' linguistic awareness can be raised (e.g., Bos, Mather, Dickson, Podhajski, & Chard, 2001; Abbott, et al., 2002; Moats, 1994) in Carlisle et al.'s [29] study.

2.1.2. Practicum. Participants of a survey criticized insufficient teacher preparation as the most insistent challenge that teachers encounter, with a particular remark on absence of genuine practical experiences [30]. There is consensus among researchers that quality field experiences have an important part in learning to teach reading. Reviews of the works related to preparing for the teaching of reading normally support the effectiveness of practical experiences in enabling prospective teachers to link theory and practice [31].

Student teaching is characteristically essential component of teacher preparation program. During practice teaching, prospective teacher substitutes the mentor for a while, gradually attaining more teaching responsibilities from week to week. At this time, prospective teachers exercise the skills of teaching, learn to prepare and use curricular tasks, and create rapport with students of differing abilities and backgrounds. The primary student teaching also allows preservice teachers the opportunities for personal and professional development at different grade levels of schools, self-assess, and reflect on their teaching capabilities and skills [32]. Practical teaching is thought of as hard and worrisome work among prospective teachers as component of teacher preparation programs [32, 33].

Prospective teachers use their own experiences to learn, understand, and manage classrooms. They also get the opportunity to develop their own professional teacher identities over time, as they draw on their own experiences as learners to navigate, understand, and manage classroom situations. Thus, practical teaching involves prospective teachers themselves engage in knowledge construction; so that they may be required to adjust their thinking and classroom behavior [34].

2.1.3. Teacher Educator's Support. Teacher educators regularly encounter challenges when they help prospective teachers connect newly learned knowledge in the coursework to the practice of teaching during practical experiences. Field-based teacher preparation that stresses on practicum seems to have the most positive effects. Prospective teachers receive ongoing support, guidance, and feedback as the process is exactly supervised, relevant, and field-based [31, 35, 36].

According to Bailey [37], the supervisor is required to assist the prospective language teachers to relate the knowledge gained in training courses to the classroom settings they are

placed to practice teaching. The supervisor guides them to create connections between the research bases and theories they learnt in the coursework and the dynamics of classroom instruction. Moreover, the supervisor gives the practical pedagogical guides and provides feedback that encourages reflection and socialization of prospective language teachers into the professional discourse of community of practice.

2.1.4. Mentor's Support. Student teachers who are in schools for teaching practice need a lot of support as it has been indicated in the conclusions drawn from a large body of research in general education and certain initial studies in English Language Teaching (ELT). The important kind of support on teaching skills and emotion often come from a personnel closer to the school system, particularly from the mentor (cooperating teacher) because the student teachers spend most of their school time of teaching practice with mentors than the supervisors [38]. The mentor is the most available for advice and support student teachers need during teaching practice, so that he/she is the person of the most influence [39].

Prospective teachers' teaching styles are greatly influenced during teaching practice as they have direct contact with the mentor. As a result, it is now considered essential that the prospective teachers be assigned with the mentors. The findings of the survey indicated that these prospective teachers considered the support and cooperation from their experienced mentor teachers to be most important during their practice teaching [38].

2.1.5. Feelings of Preparedness. Presently, there is a deficiency of studies on whether or not prospective teachers' perceptions of preparedness lead to actual preparedness in the classroom. Since several studies reveal correlations between feelings of preparedness and an increased sense of teaching efficacy, it is worth-while to investigate teachers' felt preparedness after their student teaching experience [40–42]. Therefore, one of the purposes of this paper is to explore English teachers' felt preparedness to teach reading skills in Ethiopia.

2.2. Research Questions

- (1) How much emphasis did aspects of college teacher preparation place on teaching basic reading skills?
- (2) To what extent did English teachers feel prepared to teach basic reading skills?
- (3) How knowledgeable are English teachers about teaching basic reading skills?
- (4) Is there statistically significant relationship among coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading?

3. Research Design and Methods

This paper aimed to investigate English teachers' perceptions of preparedness to teach basic reading skills. Descriptive

research design was chosen for this study. To collect data needed a questionnaire of 42 items was adapted from Salinger et al. [43]. To make the questionnaire fit the context and purpose of this paper, certain items were discarded and some others have been rephrased. The 42 items of the questionnaire were placed into teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach early grade reading, 14 items each. Moreover, 40 multiple choice items knowledge assessment test was also adapted from [44–47].

To this end, five public primary schools with 40 English teachers of whom 32 English teachers took knowledge assessment test and filled a questionnaire. Two test papers and pieces of questionnaire were discarded because of incomplete page and incomplete responses, respectively, so that ($n = 30$) English teachers were actual participants of this study. The data collected from knowledge assessment test and questionnaires were analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0). The percentage of teachers' responses to questionnaire and knowledge test was calculated (descriptive statistics).

3.1. Participants. Among 44 sparsely distributed primary schools in Hawassa City Administration, five schools (~11%) were randomly selected for absence of organized statistical data of English teachers. Out of 40 English teachers in these five schools, 32 English teachers took knowledge assessment test and filled a questionnaire. Thirty English language teachers in randomly selected primary schools in Hawassa City Administration in the academic year of 2021/22 were the participants of this study because a pair of test papers and questionnaire was discarded for incomplete responses. Among participant English teachers, 12 (40%) were male and 18 (60%) were females. In terms of qualification, 17 (56.7%) were diploma holders, and 13 (43.3%) had bachelor degree; none of the participant teachers was at certificate level. Moreover, 27 (90%) of the participant teachers were in the age range of 25–30 years. When their teaching experience is considered, 14 (46.7%) of the teachers had 6–10 years long teaching experience.

3.2. Sampling Techniques. There are 44 primary schools in Hawassa City Administration. These schools are sparsely distributed in different sections of the city. Moreover, organized statistical data of teachers by subject was not available at the Education Department by the time data were collected for this paper, so the researchers were forced to randomly select five schools (~11%) of the schools. These five schools had 40 English teachers. Out of 40 teachers, 32 teachers were willing to take knowledge assessment test and fill the questionnaire. However, two test papers and two pieces of questionnaire were discarded for incomplete responses. So 30 English teachers from five selected randomly public primary schools were actual participants of this study.

3.3. Questionnaire. A questionnaire of four parts was employed to collect data from English teachers on how teacher education program paid attention to preparing English teachers to teach the foundational reading skills and how adequately

prepared English teachers felt to teach the components of early grade reading. The first part sought participants' demographic information; the second part focused on teacher preparation coursework emphasis on teaching basic reading skills; the third was on teacher preparation practicum attention paid to teaching basic reading skills, and the fourth part enabled to collect data on primary school English teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach early grade reading. The questionnaire was adapted from Salinger et al. [43]. The questionnaire on coursework, practicum (field experiences), and felt preparedness each consisted of 14 items of four scales. Three items that were thought to be more technical and less practiced by Ethiopian early grade English teachers were omitted following two teacher educators' comments. Some of the items were rewritten to suit the local literacy instruction context. The questionnaire was tested with a sample of 10 English teachers a month before it was administered to collect data for this study.

3.4. Knowledge Assessment Test. Test items which have been used in other studies [44–47] were adapted. The items were used to assess English teachers' knowledge of five critical components of early grade reading instruction. The test items were adapted to the local context and administered to assess how knowledgeable the English teachers are on early reading instruction. The knowledge assessment test consisted of 40 multiple-choice items on early grade reading instruction.

3.5. Validity and Reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of knowledge test of 40 items was .782 which is in an acceptable range. To check knowledge test validity, two instructors of English at Hawassa College of Teacher Education were consulted and constructive comments were obtained. The questionnaire had a section for each of coursework, field experiences (practicum), and feeling of preparedness. The coursework emphasis section of a questionnaire was of alpha coefficient .921; the practicum attention section had alpha coefficient of .944, and a section for teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading had of alpha coefficient .902, which is excellent.

3.6. Data Analysis. After all the necessary data were gathered, the data were cleared, sorted, and made ready for analysis. The mean scores of teachers' responses to questionnaire and knowledge assessment test were calculated. The data for teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' feelings of preparedness were transformed from categorical measure into scale through compute variable technique to meet the assumption. Then Pearson's correlations among coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading were analyzed.

3.7. Ethical Consideration. In this study, ethical issues have been given due attention. The letter of cooperation from Addis Ababa University was presented to Head, Education Department of Hawassa City Administration, and the study site. The authorized head referred to and requested the principals of the study schools to cooperate the researchers. Then schools have been communicated through letter of cooperation.

The participant teachers were provided with clear and adequate explanation about the purpose of this research and confidentiality of what they provided.

3.8. Procedure. Attempts have been made to access the statistics of English teachers in the primary schools of the study site through a letter of cooperation from Addis Ababa University. However, the up-to-date number of English teachers was not available. The administrative bodies at different levels of the city administration education department were communicated and explanations were given. To contact English language teachers, the school principals and heads of English department were communicated through a letter of cooperation from Addis Ababa University. Then English language teachers took knowledge assessment test and filled out the questionnaire. When all the necessary data were collected, the data were cleared, sorted, and made ready for analysis. Data analysis was done by using data analysis software SPSS Version 25.

3.9. Significance of the Study. Investigating English teachers' preparedness to teach basic reading skills and closely evaluating teacher preparation programs, would lead to an informed decision to revise teacher education curricula, scale up targeted trainings, plan, and implement interventions that help improve the practice of early grade reading instruction. The findings of this may serve as a substantial input that can be considered in early grades English teacher preparation and training. For instance, it may be a source of information that can be used to produce materials that can support an effective early literacy teacher preparation. Policy makers, teacher preparation institutions, and partners may use the findings of this study to improve the level of attention paid to quality teacher preparation and professional development, especially realize curricular alignment between teacher preparation and early grades English education. With such benefits expected from the results of this study, attempts were made to investigate early grades English teachers' preparedness to teach basic reading skills.

3.10. Scope of the Study. The context of this was Ethiopian early grades English teachers with a focus on teachers' preparedness to teach basic reading skills. The participants of this research were early grades English teachers in randomly selected schools of Hawassa City Administration. Specifically, emphasis of teacher preparation coursework and practicum placed on teaching basic reading skills, English teachers' knowledge of teaching early grade reading instruction, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach basic reading skills got the attention of this paper.

3.11. Theoretical Framework. This particular study has been guided by sociocultural learning theory [48, 49]. This particular study has been guided by sociocultural theory (SCT) of learning [48–50]. SCT of learning which dates back to 18th and 19th C claims that learning takes place where there is interdependence between individuals and social processes. Mental functioning of individuals is based on social sources supported by social and psychological planes. Basically, social interaction is taken as the basis of cognitive

development with significant variation across cultures. Learning and behavior are shaped by individual, social, and contextual factors. Here, it is fundamentally believed that learning is social, not only cognitive. Again, learning is socially mediated process, and cultural artifacts, activities, and concepts serve as tools for the mediated learning process. That is, meanings are negotiated in the interactions of individuals, culture, and human activities. The dialogic interaction leads to knowledge construction [48]. So that language is learnt through interaction and also serves as a tool of interaction. English language teacher preparation benefits a lot from Vygotskian SCT of learning.

4. Results

The data gathered through questionnaire: coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' feelings of preparedness and knowledge test scores were analyzed, presented, and discussed as follows.

4.1. Coursework Emphasis on Teaching Early Grade Reading. In this study, participant primary school English teachers were asked to fill out a questionnaire of 14 items about college teacher preparation coursework emphasis on early grade reading instruction. The responses of 30 participant school English teachers have been presented in Table 1.

As it can be learned from Table 1, in response to teacher preparation coursework emphasis placed on teaching strategies (phonemic isolation, phonemic categorization, phonemic identity, phonemic segmenting, phonemic blending, and phonemic manipulation) used to teach phonemic awareness as one of the essential components of teaching early grade reading, the mean score (1.70) of English teachers' responses shows that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on teaching phonemic awareness.

Concerning teaching phonics skills, which is essential to help early grade readers to recognize unfamiliar words, participant primary school English teachers responded that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on teaching phonics skills to recognize unfamiliar words with mean score (1.80) of responses. Likewise, participant teachers were asked as to how much emphasis teacher preparation coursework placed on teaching children to recognize and name letters and teaching phonics systematically with a series of skills and activities. Mean score (1.76) of teachers' responses shows that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on teaching children to recognize and name letters. Teachers' responses also show that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on teaching phonics systematically with a series of skills and activities (mean score 1.63).

Teachers were asked whether teacher preparation coursework placed emphasis on employing a variety of methods for vocabulary instruction. In response, the mean score (1.76) of participant teachers' responses shows the coursework placed moderate emphasis on using different methods to teach words and their meanings. Moreover, an average (2.00) of participant English teachers' responses shows that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis

TABLE 1: Teachers' response on coursework emphasis.

No.	Items	Mean scores
1	Teaching children how to identify, isolate, separate, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken words	1.70
2	Teaching children to use phonics skills to figure out how to pronounce unfamiliar words	1.80
3	Teaching children to monitor how well they understand what they read and correct the problems as they occur	1.50
4	Using a variety of methods to teach children the meaning of words, including direct and indirect instruction, multiple exposures, and repetition	1.76
5	Identifying the words in a text that children do not know and using their background knowledge to help them figure out word meanings	2.00
6	Making instructional decisions based on assessments of children's oral reading fluency	1.73
7	Teaching children a variety of strategies for understanding the text they read, such as using graphic organizers, making predictions, asking questions, and identifying the main ideas	1.83
8	Teaching phonics to children in a systematic way, with a series of skills and activities	1.63
9	Teaching children to recognize letters and name them	1.76
10	Having children repeatedly read the same text aloud to improve their speed, accuracy, and expression	1.63
11	Using textbooks, teacher's guide, and other age appropriate supplementary readers	1.70
12	Assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills	2.03
13	Using a variety of teaching strategies to teach early reading	1.73
14	Preparing teaching aids and creating literacy rich environment with locally available materials	3.10
	Overall mean	1.75

0 = none; 1 = little; 2 = moderate; 3 = considerable.

on identifying unfamiliar words in texts and using learners' prior knowledge to figure out word meanings.

The participant English teachers rated the level of emphasis teacher preparation coursework placed on using different strategies to develop children's reading fluency. For helping children with repeated reading of the same text aloud to improve their speed, accuracy, and expression, the mean score (1.63) of participant English teachers' replies shows that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis. In addition, an average (1.73) of the teachers' responses shows that the college teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on assessing students' reading fluency progress and making instructional decisions based on assessment results.

Another essential component of early grade reading considered was comprehension. One of the issues raised concerning teaching reading comprehension was teaching the students to use a variety of text comprehension strategies. In response to this item, an average (1.83) of the respondents' responses shows teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis. Another important point with regard to teaching reading comprehension in early grades was teaching children to monitor how well they understand what they read and correct the problems as they occur. The mean score (1.50) of the participant English teachers' answers indicates that teacher preparation coursework placed little emphasis on teaching children to monitor their reading comprehension and deal with problems that may occur.

Participant teachers also rated as to how much emphasis of teacher preparation coursework was placed on using various strategies to teaching early grade reading. Mean core (1.73) of the teachers' replies shows moderate emphasis

has been placed on using a variety of teaching strategies to teach early reading. An average score (1.73) of participant teachers' responses indicates that teacher preparation coursework placed moderate emphasis on using student textbook and teacher's guide as part of their preparation for teaching.

Participant English teachers were asked to rate the extent to which teacher preparation coursework placed emphasis on making teaching aids and creating rich literacy environment. Mean score (3.10) of the teachers' responses shows teacher preparation coursework placed considerable emphasis on making teaching aids and creating supportive literacy environment to help children learn to read. This is the highest mean score when compared to the other items while the lowest mean score (1.50) is for the responses to teaching children to monitor their understanding and deal comprehension problems. Generally, teacher preparation coursework placed moderate attention on early grade reading instruction with overall mean score (1.75). That is, teaching early grade reading was covered in certain sessions of language teaching methodology course.

4.2. Practicum Emphasis on Teaching Early Grade Reading.

Teacher preparation requires college-school link to practice what is learnt theoretically in college coursework. This college-school link enables prospective teachers to be familiar with the school environment, the learners, the resources, and their use. What helps to bring this into practice is practicum or field experience. The prospective teachers carry out different learning tasks under the guidance and support of teacher educators from teacher education colleges and mentor teachers from cooperating schools. As to how much attention teacher preparation practicum paid to teaching

TABLE 2: Teachers' response on practicum attention.

No.	Items	Mean scores
1	Teaching children how to identify, isolate, separate, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken words	1.70
2	Teaching children to use phonics skills to figure out how to pronounce unfamiliar words	1.80
3	Teaching children to monitor how well they understand what they read and correct the problems as they occur	1.50
4	Using a variety of methods to teach children the meaning of words, including direct and indirect instruction, multiple exposures, and repetition	1.73
5	Identifying the words in a text that children do not know and using their background knowledge to help them figure out word meanings	1.90
6	Making instructional decisions based on assessments of children's oral reading fluency	1.73
7	Teaching children a variety of strategies for understanding the text they read, such as using graphic organizers, making predictions, asking questions, and identifying the main ideas	1.83
8	Teaching phonics to children in a systematic way, with a series of skills and activities	1.63
9	Teaching children to recognize letters and name them	1.73
10	Having children repeatedly read the same text aloud to improve their speed, accuracy, and expression	1.63
11	Observed, discussed, practiced, and reflected on using textbooks, teacher's guide, and other age appropriate supplementary readers	1.70
12	Participated in, practiced, and reflected on assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills	2.03
13	Observed, discussed, practiced, and reflected on using a variety of teaching strategies to teach early reading	1.70
14	Observed, discussed, practiced, and reflected on preparing teaching aids and creating literacy rich environment with locally available materials	1.96
	Overall mean	1.76

0 = none; 1 = little; 2 = moderate; 3 = considerable.

early grade reading has been raised to English teachers in the selected schools. Table 2 presents their responses.

Table 2 shows English teachers' response on teacher preparation practicum attention to activities related to teaching early grade reading. When teaching phonemic awareness teaching techniques are considered, mean score (1.70) out of three indicates that the teacher preparation practicum paid moderate attention. In relation to figuring out unfamiliar words with the help of phonics skills, the average score (1.80) shows that teacher preparation practicum paid moderate attention to teaching how to use phonics skills to sound out unfamiliar words. Likewise, participant teachers reported that teacher preparation practicum paid little attention to a systematic phonics instruction with a mean score (1.50). Another point raised in relation to teaching phonics was teaching letter recognition. Here, the mean score (1.73) also shows that participant teachers said teaching letter recognition got moderate attention in teacher preparation practicum.

The participant English teachers were also asked to rate the extent to which teacher preparation practicum paid attention to vocabulary instruction strategies. In this regard, the mean score (1.73) indicates that teacher preparation practicum paid moderate attention to using a variety of methods of vocabulary instruction. In addition, the mean score (1.90) of participant teachers responses show that identifying the unfamiliar words in a text and using their background knowledge to help them figure out word meanings got moderate attention in teacher preparation field experiences.

Teaching prospective teachers of early grades the strategies they would employ to help children develop reading fluency was another component of reading considered. In

relation to this, the mean value (1.63) of participant English teachers' response indicate that making children use repeated reading and improving their speed, accuracy, and expression got moderate attention in teacher preparation practicum. Similarly, an average of (1.70) of primary school English teachers' response shows that moderate attention was paid to teaching children using both fiction and textbook reading materials in practical aspects of teacher preparation. In addition, teaching the teachers to make instructional decisions on the basis of assessments of children's oral reading fluency, the mean score (1.73) of participant English teachers' response indicates that moderate attention was given in teacher preparation practicum.

English teachers are trained on teaching reading comprehension strategies. With regard to this, participant English teachers were asked to rate the extent of attention paid to teaching text comprehension strategies in teacher preparation practicum. An average of (1.83) of participant teachers' responses indicates that moderate attention was paid to teaching children a variety of comprehension strategies in teacher preparation practicum. The mean score (1.50) of teachers' response shows that little attention was given to teaching children to monitor their understanding and correct the problems they may encounter in teacher preparation practicum.

Teacher preparation practicum provides opportunities for prospective teachers to observe, discuss, practice, and reflect on using variety of teaching strategies. An average (1.73) of participant English teachers' replies shows that teacher preparation practicum paid moderate attention to using a variety of teaching strategies to teach basic reading skills. Making appropriate teaching aids and creating supportive literacy

TABLE 3: Teachers' response on their feelings of preparedness.

No.	Items	Mean scores
1	Teaching children how to identify, isolate, separate, blend, and manipulate sounds in spoken words	2.23
2	Teaching children to use phonics skills to figure out how to pronounce unfamiliar words	2.00
3	Teaching children to monitor how well they understand what they read and correct the problems as they occur	2.03
4	Using a variety of methods to teach children the meaning of words, including direct and indirect instruction, multiple exposures, and repetition	1.93
5	Identifying the words in a text that children do not know and using their background knowledge to help them figure out word meanings	1.93
6	Making instructional decisions based on assessments of children's oral reading fluency	1.66
7	Teaching children a variety of strategies for understanding the text they read, such as using graphic organizers, making predictions, asking questions, and identifying the main ideas	2.16
8	Teaching phonics to children in a systematic way, with a series of skills and activities	1.63
9	Teaching children to recognize letters and name them	2.13
10	Having children repeatedly read the same text aloud to improve their speed, accuracy, and expression	1.86
11	Using textbooks, teacher's guide, and other age appropriate supplementary readers	1.70
12	Assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills	1.60
13	Using a variety of teaching strategies to teach early reading	1.86
14	Preparing teaching aids and creating literacy rich environment with locally available materials	1.96
	Overall mean	1.90

0 = not at all prepared; 1 = somewhat prepared; 2 = mostly prepared; 3 = adequately prepared.

environment are important things to enhance children's learning to read. In this regard, the mean score (1.96) of participant English teachers replies shows that teacher preparation practicum placed moderate attention on making teaching aids and creating literacy environment to support learning to read. Again, an average (2.03) of the teachers replies indicate that moderate attention was paid to participating in, practicing, and reflecting on assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills. When overall mean score (1.76) is considered, teacher preparation practicum paid moderate attention to using variety of instructional strategies for teaching basic reading skills. That is, English teacher preparation practicum treated early grade reading instruction in a few activities of a course. As compared to others, teachers' responses to teacher preparation practicum attention to teaching basic reading skills indicates that their participation in, practice, and reflection on assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills got the highest mean score (2.03) while teaching children to monitor their understanding and deal with the difficulties as they encounter got the lowest with mean score (1.50). This indicates that teacher preparation practicum paid varying level of attention to issues related to teaching early grade reading.

4.3. Feelings of Preparedness. Table 3 presents teachers' felt preparedness to teach basic reading skills.

Table 3 indicates that English teachers have reported how prepared they felt prepared to teach different skills of reading at varying degrees. Specifically, the mean score (2.23) of participant English teachers' replies indicates that they felt mostly prepared, respectively, to teach children to manipulate sounds in spoken words. English teachers were also asked to rate how they felt prepared to teach phonics.

Particularly, with regard to teaching students to figure out unfamiliar words with the use of phonics skills, an average (2.00) of participant English teachers responses shows that they felt mostly prepared. In addition, participant English teachers felt mostly prepared to teach children to recognize letters and name them with mean score of responses (2.13). Similarly, with mean score (1.63) of participant teachers felt mostly prepared to teach phonics in a systematic way.

As one of the critical components of teaching early grade reading, English teachers were also asked to rate how prepared they felt to teach vocabulary. The mean score (1.93) of participant English teachers' replies indicates that they felt mostly prepared to use a variety of methods of teaching vocabulary. Likewise, the teachers replied to teaching children to identify unfamiliar words in a text and figure out word meanings with the help of their previous knowledge as they felt mostly prepared to teach with mean score of responses (1.93).

Another component of early grade reading that English teachers expressed their felt preparedness was teaching oral reading fluency. In relation to this, an average (1.86) of teachers' replies shows that they felt mostly prepared to make students do repeated reading and improve reading speed, accuracy, and expression. Similarly, teachers responded that they felt mostly prepared to make decisions about reading instruction on the basis of assessment data of oral reading fluency with average score of their responses (1.66).

Participant English teachers also expressed their felt preparedness to teach reading comprehension in early grades. With regard to teaching children to use variety of text comprehension strategies for understanding the text they read, the teachers replied that they felt mostly prepared with mean of their responses (2.16). Moreover, the teachers answered

TABLE 4: Teachers' knowledge assessment test result.

Test scores (100%)				Responses				Mean score
Below 50%		50% and above		Correct		Incorrect		
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
21	70	9	30	14	35	26	65	
Total	30		100%		40		100%	43.4%

TABLE 5: Correlations among teacher preparation coursework, practicum attention, and preparedness.

		Correlations		
		Coursework emphasis	Practicum attention	Teachers' feeling of preparedness
Coursework emphasis	Pearson correlation	1	.685**	.780**
	Sig. (two-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	30	30	30
Practicum attention	Pearson correlation	.685**	1	.807**
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	30	30	30
Teachers' feeling of preparedness	Pearson correlation	.780**	.807**	1
	Sig. (two-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	30	30	30

**Correlation is significant at the $p = .01$ level (two-tailed).

that they felt mostly prepared to teach children to monitor their understanding and correct the difficulties as they encounter with mean score of responses (2.03).

Concerning using textbooks, teacher's guide and other age appropriate supplementary readers to teach early grade reading, the mean score (1.70) of the teachers' replies shows that they felt mostly prepared. An average (1.96) of English teachers' response shows that they felt mostly prepared to make teaching aids and create supporting literacy environment for teaching basic reading skills. In terms of using variety of instructional strategies, the mean score (1.86) of teachers' responses shows that they felt mostly prepared to use variety of early literacy instruction strategies to help children learn to read. With regard to assessment of students' progress of learning to read, 1.60 of participant teachers' responses indicates that they felt mostly prepared. In general, the overall mean score (1.90) out of (3.00) of teachers' responses indicates that early grades English teachers felt mostly prepared to teach basic reading skills. When compared to the other items, participant teachers' preparedness to teaching phonemic awareness is the highest mean score (2.23), whereas a systematic phonics instruction of the lowest with mean score (1.63). It is understood from this that early grades literacy teachers have shown varying degree of readiness to teach different issues in early grade reading instruction.

4.4. Early Grade English Teachers' Knowledge of Reading Instruction. The result of teachers' knowledge assessment on early reading instruction has been presented in Table 4.

Test scores were recorded into two categories below 50% as (1) and greater than or equal to 50% as (2). Similarly, teachers' responses to each of the items were labeled as (1)

correct and (2) as incorrect. Then frequencies were calculated. Accordingly, participant teachers correctly answered only (14) 35% of the questions, whereas they incorrectly answered the remaining (26) 65% of the questions on the teachers' knowledge assessment test. The analysis of teachers' test scores shows that only (9) 30% of early grade English teachers achieved (50%) and above in the knowledge assessment test on early grade reading instruction, while the greater proportion (21) 70% of the teachers achieved less than 50%. The mean score (43.4%) of participant teachers' has shown that early grade English teachers have limited knowledge of early reading instruction.

4.5. Correlations among Coursework, Practicum, and Feelings of Preparedness. As presented in Table 5, there is a significant, positive, and strong relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention to early grade reading instruction and teachers' felt preparedness to teach basic reading skills. For instance, teacher preparation coursework emphasis on teaching basic reading skills is significantly related ($r = .685$; $p = 0.01$) to practicum attention to early grade reading instruction. Coursework emphasis is also related ($r = .780$; $p = 0.01$) to teachers' felt preparedness. Moreover, teacher preparation practicum attention to teaching basic reading skills is significantly related ($r = .807$; $p = 0.01$) to teachers' felt preparedness to teach early reading.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the results of data analysis in Section 4. Teaching phonemic awareness has been taught in certain sessions of a course in teacher preparation coursework, as can be seen in Table 1. Phonemic awareness instruction

strategies have not got a considerable attention of teacher preparation coursework. As the results show, moderate attention has also been paid to a systematic and explicit phonics teaching with a series of skills and activities. The results also indicate that teaching phonics skills in integrated reading instruction got moderate attention in teacher preparation coursework. That is, teaching phonics skills has been treated in few periods of one or two of the courses of the program. These results are in line with the findings of Belilew [22]. The mean scores teachers' responses differed with the highest to making teaching aids and creating supportive literacy environment to help children learn to read while the lowest mean score of teaching children to monitor their understanding and deal with difficulties they may encounter. This difference may be the teachers had practical experiences of making teaching aids and creating supporting literacy environment in the teacher preparation coursework to assist children's learning to read.

College teacher preparation coursework designated certain sessions of a course or two for teaching prospective English teachers to use various strategies vocabulary instruction in early grades. The findings also show that teaching reading fluency has been treated in certain periods of a course on teacher preparation curriculum. The results indicate that teacher preparation coursework allotted certain sessions of a course or two to teaching reading comprehension strategies. The findings in Table 1 also reflect that using variety of teaching strategies to teach early grade reading was given some sessions' coverage in a course or two in teacher preparation coursework. The results confirm the findings of Mijena [12]. The results show that making teaching aids, creating literacy rich environment, and assessing learners' progress of acquiring reading skills were designated certain periods time in a course or two in teacher preparation coursework.

The results presented in Table 2 indicate teacher preparation practicum attention to teaching basic reading skills. Though practicum of teacher preparation paid attention to phonemic awareness instruction as one of the foundational skills of early grade reading instruction, it designated certain activities in a course for teaching phonemic awareness. It is also understood from the results that teaching phonics as one of the foundational early grade reading skills has been treated in some tasks of a practicum course. Teaching vocabulary teaching strategies as part of early grade reading was treated in certain tasks of a teacher preparation practicum.

It can also be learned from the results that the strategies of teaching reading fluency were given moderate attention in teacher preparation practicum. Similarly, the findings show that teaching reading comprehension strategies got moderate attention of teacher preparation practicum. Teacher preparation practicum paid attention to employing a variety of instructional strategies to teach basic reading skills, using textbooks, teacher's guide, and age appropriate supplementary readers, making teaching aids and creating supportive literacy environment and assessing students' progress in acquiring reading skills in few tasks. The results have shown

variation; for example, teachers' responses to participation in, practice, and reflection on assessing children's progress in acquiring reading skills has the highest mean score, whereas teaching children to monitor their understanding and deal with the challenges as they emerge has the lowest mean score in teacher preparation practicum.

The extent to which participant English teachers felt prepared to teach basic reading skills has been shown in Table 3. Although English teachers had understanding of using phonemic awareness instruction strategies with some students, they needed to deepen their understanding. The results indicate that the teachers had an understanding of how to use phonics teaching activities well with certain group of students but still needed to deepen their understanding of the activities. The findings also show that the teachers had an understanding of using various vocabulary instruction strategies well with certain group of students but still needed to deepen their understanding of the activities.

Moreover, participant English teachers had understanding of using various teaching strategies to develop children's reading fluency but they still needed to deepen their understanding of the activities. Different from other strategies of teaching reading comprehension, teaching children to monitor their understanding and deal with the difficulties they may encounter got little attention of teacher preparation coursework and practicum. From the findings, it is learned that the teachers had understanding of using textbooks, teacher's guide, and other age appropriate supplementary readers, making teaching aids and creating rich literacy environment with some students but they still needed to deepen their understanding of the activities. There are differences among results of items shown in Table 3; for example, teachers' responses to teaching children to manipulate sounds in spoken words have the highest mean score, whereas a systematic phonics instruction has the lowest mean score in teachers' felt preparedness.

There is an observable knowledge gap among English teachers about early reading instruction as has been presented in Table 4. When the responses and test scores of participant teachers are compared, majority of teachers who were willing to take knowledge assessment test answered greater number of questions incorrectly and scored below half (50%). It can be understood from these results that significant number of early grades literacy teachers lack knowledge in early grade reading instruction. This result also confirms what has been presented in Semela [1] (p. 28). It is also understood from Table 5 that there is a statistically significant, direct, and strong relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading at p -value 0.01 to mean 1% confidence interval.

6. Conceptual Model

When teachers learn to teach early grade reading in the college teacher preparation coursework and get practical experiences in the practicum, they become knowledgeable and feel well-prepared to teach basic reading skills. That is, when teachers are knowledgeable about what they teach, how to do the teaching, they are confident enough to perform classroom teaching

effectively. Teacher preparation coursework provides trainee teachers with the knowledge of theories, approaches, methods, and procedures which is tested when the prospective teachers are placed in schools for practical learning. As these experiences make the teachers knowledgeable and able to teach, they feel prepared to teach early grade reading (Figure 1).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, certain conclusions have been drawn and recommendations have been forwarded.

7.1. Conclusions. Following the results displayed and discussed, some conclusions have been reached. Teacher preparation coursework placed a moderate emphasis on early grade reading instruction. That is, the teacher preparation coursework addressed teaching basic reading skills in certain sessions of a course. Teacher preparation practicum gave a moderate attention to teaching early grade reading. Teacher preparation practicum considered teaching early grade reading skills only in few of the practicum activities. Participant English teachers felt mostly prepared to teach early grade reading. The teachers felt that they understand how to use the activities with some students but they still needed to deepen their understanding of using the activities. Teacher preparation coursework and practicum gave less attention to planning, teaching, reflecting, and providing feedback on teaching early grade reading. Participant English teachers were not sufficiently trained to use textbook and teacher's guide. Participant English teachers have knowledge and skill gap about early grade reading instruction. There is a statistically significant, direct, and strong relationship among teacher preparation coursework emphasis, practicum attention, and English teachers' felt preparedness to teach early grade reading. This implies that deficiencies in either of the aspects of teacher preparation may result in lower feelings of preparedness and hamper classroom literacy instruction. The mean scores of teachers' responses varied among items considered. This variation implies that teacher preparation coursework and practicum paid varying degree of attention to issues and strategies related to teaching early grade reading. Similarly, participant teachers' responses to feelings of preparedness differed in mean score, and this implies that teachers felt more prepared to teach some early literacy skills than others.

7.2. Recommendations. Based on the conclusions drawn from results and discussion, certain recommendations have been suggested. Teacher preparation coursework should increase time allocated to teaching critical early grade reading skills. Both coursework and practicum of teacher preparation should pay due attention to planning, teaching, reflecting, and providing feedback on teaching early grade reading. Systematic, explicit, and hands-on trainings should be provided for primary school English teachers on early grade reading instruction. Teacher preparation should pay due attention to preparing prospective teachers on using student textbooks and teacher's guide while teaching early grade

reading. Teacher education colleges and Ministry of Education should make sure that teacher preparation and early grades English language education curricula align with one another. Curricular revisions of primary schools and teacher education program should give due consideration to research-based educational innovations. Moreover, primary school teacher preparation programs in Ethiopia should make sure that teacher educators and materials they use are helping prospective early grades literacy teachers to be prepared to teach early grade reading. the concerned administrative structures: Education authorities at different levels and school literacy leadership and supervisors should work in collaboration with academic institutions like teacher education colleges and universities to make sure that primary school literacy teachers are properly selected, trained well before they join the teaching force and those on the job get appropriate gap filling trainings and necessary resources to carry out an effective early grade reading instruction.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this research work will be available upon request.

Additional Points

Study Limitations. This study was conducted in one of big cities in Ethiopia with a limited sample of English teachers in a few selected primary schools. Thus, the generalizability of findings of this study to a wider context and larger population is limited. As this study considered schools in a city in Ethiopia, its findings may not be generalized to contexts of different sociocultural factors and literacy policies. Future studies that cover wider areas, larger sample size, and involve qualitative data would enable to describe the situation better. *Highlights.* What is already known about this topic? Quality of education is equated to quality of teachers which is the result of quality teacher preparation. Well trained and mentored teachers make a difference in helping early grade children succeed in learning to read. No studies in Ethiopia have so far looked into teaching early grade reading in relation to teacher preparedness. What this paper adds. Literacy instruction needs more attention in countries like Ethiopia in terms of improving teacher preparation and classroom practice. Public primary school English teachers' awareness of foundational reading skills and teaching them in integrated reading classrooms should be raised. Further studies need to be conducted at larger scale into the current practice of teacher preparation and professional development. *Implications for Theory, Policy, or Practice.* Theory: There will be better understanding of the importance of linguistic bases of early grade reading; so that there will be evidence-based planning of primary school English teacher preparation curriculum and primary school English syllabus. Policy: Teacher preparation curricula should keep abreast of research bases and innovations. Practice: Both preservice teacher preparation and on-job teacher training schemes should consider explicit, systematic, and hands-on training on literacy instruction strategies. *Ethical Consideration.* In consideration

of research ethics: The education authorities at different levels of Hawassa City Administration were approached through letter of cooperation from Addis Ababa University where the corresponding author is a PhD candidate. With a copy of cooperation letter signed by a concerned authority, the English language teachers were given detailed explanation about the research in the presence of vice director for academic affairs, so that the participant English teachers had enough awareness and agreed to be involved in this study. The participant teachers were assured that they would not be harmed in way because of their participation in this study. Enough care has been taken to keep the information obtained from participant teachers confidentially; the participants' personal information has not been disclosed in this research report in any way. For confidentiality sake, the teachers who took knowledge assessment test and filled out the questionnaire did not write their names and personal addresses on test papers and the questionnaire. Materials reviewed and made part of this work in small quotation and paraphrase have been duly acknowledged. No degrading expression has been used against sexes, races, and other identities.

Ethical Approval

The Graduate Program Committee, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Addis Ababa University, has appraised this study when it passed certain steps of evaluation.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Supplementary Materials

Supplementary 1. The questionnaire was adapted from Salinger et al. [43]. It has four sections: demographic information of participant teachers, the coursework and practicum emphasis on teaching basic reading skills in Ethiopian early grades and English teachers' feeling of preparedness. The coursework, practicum emphasis and feelings of preparedness got 14 items each. The first section requires participant teachers to fill their gender, age, qualification and teaching experience. The second section seeks teachers' response on the college teacher preparation coursework emphasis on teaching basic reading skills in early grades. The third section focuses on level of attention English teacher preparation practicum paid to teaching basic reading skills in early grades of Ethiopia. The fourth section is on early grade English teachers' feelings of preparedness to teach basic reading skills in Ethiopian primary school context. The last three sections of the questionnaire have four scales ranging from one (0) for none to three (3) for Considerable emphasis for coursework and practicum, and one (0) for not at all prepared to three (3) for adequately prepared for teachers' feelings of preparedness.

Supplementary 2. Knowledge assessment test has forty (40) multiple choice items focusing on basic reading skills of early grades and their teaching. Test items which have been used in other studies [44–47] that involved assessment of English teachers' knowledge of five basic components of early grades reading were adapted to the local context and administered to assess how knowledgeable the English teachers are on essential components of reading and their teaching.

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