

# Analyzing the Current English Language Teaching Materials in Line with the Academic and Professional Needs and Interests of Diploma Theology Students

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## Research Article

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# Abstract

The study aims to analyze the current English language teaching/learning materials in line with the academic and professional needs and interests of diploma theology students in some selected seminaries and theological colleges of Oromia. The study is a descriptive survey that makes use of a mixed-method approach. The data were collected using a questionnaire, interview, and content analysis. The participants of the study were second and third-year diploma theology students, former theology students, theology instructors, and EFL teachers in the seminaries and colleges. All the students were chosen using comprehensive sampling technique, and ten former theology students who were working as priests and evangelists using the snowball technique to fill out the questionnaire. EFL teachers and theology instructors were chosen for the interview. Additionally, the contents of three units of the current English language teaching materials' were evaluated using the checklist. The study revealed that both students and EFL teachers perceived the teaching materials less assisting the students in their academic and professional contexts. Regarding problems that theology students had in using the English language were the background of the students, the inappropriateness of the teaching materials, the environment in which they grew up, and the ways they were selected for attending the program, which was not academic based but spirituality based. Based on the results of the contents analysis, the contents of the teaching materials hardly meet the needs and interests of diploma theology students. Finally, the researcher developed a sample unit (teaching/learning material) that can be used as a model.

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Today, English language plays a great role in the scientific, political, religious, cultural and business areas in many countries in the world. Although it is considered as a foreign language in Ethiopia, it is widely used for academic and non academic purposes. It is undeniable that the growths of communicating internationally and introducing the free market economic system in Ethiopia have attracted a lot of foreign investors to the country (Tadele M. & Haileleul Z., 2015).

However, the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia (MoE)(2002) states the following points regarding the status of English language in the country is considered below standard as follows:

The low mastery of the English language at all levels of the educational system is a glaring weakness. In order to correct this situation, special attention will be given to the training of teachers. Native speakers of English will, with the aid of language laboratories and other teaching aids, teach students enrolled in teacher training colleges. Short upgrading courses will also be offered to those currently teaching the subject. Efforts will be made to improve the English language skills of the student, through improving the existing teaching-learning materials and develop and distributing additional reading materials.(p.113)

There are various reasons that hinder the improvement of English language proficiency in Ethiopian context. Improving or updating teaching materials based on learners needs which can contribute a lot for

the mastery of English language is not commonly practised. That means if the teaching materials are not designed frequently based on the learners needs, it will be very difficult for them to compute in this dynamic world due to the fast inventions and expansions of new technologies.

The other reason is English is being taught as a foreign language in Ethiopia. It has been given only in the classroom for many years without the interaction of the native speakers. As a result, many Ethiopian students' English language proficiencies are below standard. With this regard, Yohannes, (2015) states about learners' English proficiency in Ethiopia as follows:

English in Ethiopia is a medium of instruction from secondary school through higher education, but the learners' proficiency remains poor and the effectiveness of English language teaching remains questionable, despite the efforts undertaken by the Ethiopian Government and concerned institutions. Teachers at schools and employers in industries have been complaining about the low level English language competence of students and graduates (p.12).

One of the reasons behind is that the absence of the native speakers' interaction outside of the class and exposure they have to use the language. Concerning the lack of exposure and shortage of time to master the language, Miette Thoma, the the chief editor of "The Reporter (Addis Ababa)," states that though using learners' native language might be a preferred way of introducing the Ethiopian culture and developing their confidence and letting parents take part in the school life for their kids and assisting the teaching environments to serve the society, one day in the future it is true that the English language is very challenging to be mastered as a foreign language since there is no sufficient time for learners outside of the classroom setting. The chances that they have to learn it out of classroom time may be through interacting and performing with different social classes. In fact, people in Ethiopia consider English only as a language of classroom, although people use it for different purposes in their daily activities. For instance, as Teka, (2009) states that most huge business firms, banks, insurance companies, Ethiopian Airlines, and others use English as a working language.

However, according to Deepika et al (2014), English language need analysis is the current issue, and very few studies have been conducted on this area in Ethiopia. Although certain learners' need assesment studies have been investigated at different universities and colleges in Ethiopia with the aim of assessing the learners' needs of ESP to meet their particular language needs, very few effective results have been observed. Therefore, it is a timely issue to study this situation since there are a lot of criticisms by managers, instructors, and other concerned bodies about the learners English language communicative skills in the country as a whole, and trainees in different colleges specifically (Deepika et al 2014). In the era of globalization, ESP which is designed based on learners' needs and interests is unquestionable. This is to survive and to compete with the dynamic world like the fast growth of information technology, world economic structures, expansion of different religious educations, and flow of people from country to country with different cultural and language backgrounds. Thus, ESP would be a better solution to meet individuals' needs than teaching general English.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Resane (2016), teaching theology students needs both assertion and language technical application expertises. Theology is similar to any social science in that it needs the use of academic expressions. Theology learners should have the knowledge of 'theology-specific meaning of its technical words'. "A technical term is a word which, when used in a particular subject, has a specific meaning" (Le Roux 1993, p 164). Since many countries have been using English language dominantly as a medium of communication, it is important to know ESP theology learners' needs when designing the teaching materials. In this regard, Nunan (1989) argues that teachers' knowledge and skills can be passed on to learners when teachers know students' needs and perceptions in terms of how they learn, process and engage with the content.

However, the current researcher has observed a lot of problems as he is a partimer in the seminary. The problems were students low level of English proficiency, low or rarely use of English language in the class and outside of the class, and the materials lacked of theological related terminologies. He has also observed that when priests, pastors and evangelists fail to preach the Bible in English language, and translate the English preaching into local languages. In the same way, one of the reasons for learners' weak communicative skills might be due to the mismatch between learners' interests and needs, and the current contents of English language teaching materials. In the same way, as Tilahun (2003) stated in his thesis, English language teaching materials which Meserete Kristos College in Addis Ababa has used for both Advanced Diploma and Degree program theology students were prepared and used by Addis Ababa University (AAU) for the learners of different academic fields. The teaching materials have been designed for College of Teachers' Education or for other disciplines, which are totally different from the aims of theology in case of the skills needed and its objectives.

According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), the contents or the topics of teaching material should be prepared in line with the needs of the learners. In the same way, Richards (2001) claims that the steps used to gather the information about students' needs which is called needs analysis should be done before designing the course. However, the evidence obtained from the subject instructors, including the current researcher, English language teaching materials which have been used in the seminary were not designed by assessing the students needs and interests.

That is why Sally (2007) states that authentic materials help learners link the gap between the classroom and the outside world. In order to design this type of material, identifying students' needs and their goals is the first thing that has to be done. In addition, according to Sarjit and Alaa (2010), English is needed in a developing country for specific purposes, and courses need to be designed based on the needs of ESP learners. Therefore, before the teaching materials are designed, it is very important to gather learners' needs. However, if there is no learners' participation in designing teaching materials, there are also no learners' motivation and positive attitudes toward the language.

Similarly, in order to train these missionaries, priests or evangelists who are always ready for preaching Christ's Gospel, theological references which are written in English language are highly demanded, and ESP teaching materials which are designed based on their needs help and pave the way for them for these purposes. Therefore, what motivated the current researcher is to assess the extent to which the current English common courses which are being given for these theology students successfully prepare and build up them for preaching and reading theological publications, listening to lectures on biblical themes, discussing and debating opposing theological viewpoints and writing scholarly articles in order to achieve the mission of Jesus Christ and EECMY, which is international missionaries' services. Therefore, Terfa Jarso Seminary is also one of the seminaries which has been given the same mission. So, the main objective of this study is to assess the English language teaching materials which are being used by the diploma theology students whether or not help theology students for their academic and professional needs and interests.

Learners' language needs are, therefore, one of the components that should be considered during course design. Thus, Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.53) argue that "any language course should be based on needs analysis". Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.121) state that "needs analysis is the process of establishing what and how of a course". In addition, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) add that a failure to begin an ESP course design process without carrying a systematic study is claimed to result in a course that is not relevant to the students' language needs hence hinder the teaching or learning process. Therefore, all the above listed problems motivated the researcher to assess and identify the learners' needs and to design the courses of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) that can fit their needs and interests and enhance their language learning opportunities in case of diploma theology students in Mettu, Terfa Jarso Seminary. Thus, this research seeks to address the following central research questions:

1. What are the theology students and EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the skills included in the current ELT materials?
2. What problems do Theology college students anticipate to face after they graduate in using the English language within their particular professional areas?

## **Materials And Methods**

### **Research Design**

This study was designed to assess diploma theology students' ESP needs. Therefore, a descriptive survey was used, and interpretive analysis of the results was applied because it helped the researcher to obtain a valid and reliable data for the study more significant representations of accurate information and to gain more insights of the issues on the research questions and its objectives in a natural way (Denzin &Lincon, 2000).

Thus, mixed research methods were used for collecting and analyzing data which were obtained from respondents. In mixed research methods, the researcher accepts quantitative and qualitative approaches as they have important roles to do research. According to Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), a mixed method approach fits with research of needs analysis as a range of data collection methods are appropriate when a needs analysis is conducted. Finally, since the study relies typically on students' self reported feelings, personal needs, and teachers' experiences about ESP in the classroom, a descriptive survey research design was used.

## **Study Context**

Nekemte Christian Education College is found in South West Ethiopia, Oromia Regional State, in West Wellega, Nekemte Town. Terfa Jarso is found in Ilu Aba Bor , Oromia, Ethiopia. Both of them were established by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekene Yesus to train ministers in theological education at diploma level.

## **Population of the Study**

The population of the study was first and second year diploma theology students, EFL teachers, theology instructors in Nekemte Christian Education College and former theology students. The number of first year students was 14, and the number of second year students was 12. Again, five (5) former theology students who are now on duties were considered as the population of the study. Totally, 31 1<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> year and former theology students were the study's population for questionnaire. In the same way, the numbers of EFL teachers who have been teaching in Nekemte Christian Education College were two. And, a number of subject teachers who teach theological courses were 10.

## **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

In order to choose the sample students for questionnaire and sample EFL teachers for interview, the researcher used comprehensive sampling technique. This was done because the nature of comprehensive sampling technique when the population of the study is small in number and easily manageable, all samples will be chosen. That means all 26 students were chosen using comprehensive sampling technique, and five former theology students who were working as priests and evangelists were chosen using snowball technique to fill out the questionnaire for this pilot study. Both EFL teachers were taken as they were, and two theology instructors were chosen purposefully out of ten for interview. Totally, four teachers or instructors were interviewed.

The researcher had different reasons why he chose the above subjects. For instance, first year students were taking the courses so that they could respond to the questionnaires easily. In the same way, second year students had already taken the courses, and they had got better understanding about the importance

of English language courses for their academic studies since they were familiar with them. EFL teachers had different experiences and awareness of ESP learners' needs. Therefore, these respondents could contribute a few ideas for this study. Theology instructors were also very important respondents for they knew the needs of theology students for both academic and occupational purposes. Finally, the former seminary students had some experiences since they were already experts in this area, and could get a good awareness about the needs of theology students for occupational purposes. As a result, the researcher expected all of them to give clear and valid information for this study.

## Data Collection Tools

The researcher used questionnaire , interview and content analysis of the current English language teaching materials.They were used as data gathering tools.

## Questionnaire

According to Morrison (2007) and Richards (2003) , questionnaires are frequently applied tools in collecting necessary information in needs analysis since they are simple to prepare, and can be easy to utilize with in many populations, and to get the information which can be quickly tabulated and analyzed. Since the participants of the study were first and second year diploma theology students and the former theology students who are now serving in different local churches, sufficient and relevant information was obtained.

It plays a vital role in giving precise and consistence information for the researcher. Therefore, the main instrument that the researcher used to collect the necessary data were a questionnaire administered to 26 Nekemte Christian Education College students and five the former theology students. Wiersma (1995), as cited by Scott (2001) states that the questionnaire for data collection compared to interviews, the questionnaire is more relaxing and it examines the teachers' approaches more accurately.

The researcher slightly adapted and applied the questionnaire which was used by Chatsungnoen (2015) for his thesis. The researcher checked the validity and reliability of the questionnaire by using pilot testing. The questionnaires also helped to answer some research questions like the theology students English language skills needs for their academic and professional, theology students needs for biblical and theological purposes, and whether or not the students satisfied with the current English teaching materials.

## Interview

To get detailed information about the learners' needs of ESP and what they expect about language learning, the interview questions should be built on questionnaire questions (Christensen, 2010; K. Richards, 2009). The intention of the interview was to get deep and detail information from the

respondents on English language skills needed for academic and professional needs and interests of diploma theology students. In this line, the researcher recorded the responses of both EFL teachers and theology instructors during interview for later transcription.

The interview questions had structured and unstructured forms. Structured interview was almost the same with questionnaire, and it did not give chance for both the interviewer and interviewees to explain more ideas. However, its advantage is comparability of answers among the sample. On the other side, unstructured interview permits a great chance of flexibility for interviewer and interviewees. Unstructured interview is mainly suitable when a research focuses on the detailed meaning of a given event, and when the focus is on individual history and the way in which an event was developed (Dornyi, 2007). Another point is that the researcher arranged the interview schedule by informing to the all interviewees before hand to feel free and relax them. This process had great contributions for its reliability.

All the interview questions were prepared to obtain the valid and reliable information in line with the needs analysis form since they were evaluated during the study. Therefore, the following information was included in the interview questions: the learners' English language information; needs of learners from the course and the environmental situation. The interview also helped the researcher to answer question related to the perceptions of theology instructors and EFL teachers have on the current English language teaching materials and the extent to which theology students need ESP for theological and biblical purposes. It also assisted him to answer the problems that anticipate to face theology college students in using the English language in their particular field of studies.

## **Content Analysis**

Content analysis can be defined as an organized research process in which written information can be analyzed using consistent way that permits assessors to make deductions about that information (Weber, 1990; GAO, 1996). Accordingly, the researcher analyzed the current English teaching materials of diploma theology students at Terfa Jarso Seminary. The seminary is currently using two English language teaching materials as common courses. These courses are Basic English I and Basic English II. In this line, the sample unit the unit was identified in this study, all its recording units were, evaluated by two different coders. Next, the evaluation was done using the prepared checklists. Finally, the analysis and narration took place by the researcher.

## **Methods of Data Analysis**

The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze the data. In descriptive survey method, mixed research methods were utilized. That means both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were applied.

# Ethical Consideration

When conducting any scientific research, ethical issues should be considered. Informed consent was obtained from all research participants, and all of them had to get the important information about the research, like its process and use, as well as the risks, advantages and uncertainties (McKay, 2006). In addition, according to Duff (2008), the researcher reported the findings truthfully, precisely and responsibly. To care for the respondents' security, privacy and anonymity, the researcher should take great responsibility (Babbie, 2014). Thus, in this study the researcher asked their willingness and got permission before conducting the study. He informed them the purposes and the reason why he conducted the study. He also would never publicize any information relating to the participants' privacy without their permission.

## Findings of the Study

### Perception of Theology Students, Instructors and EFL Teachers Concerning Contents of the ELT Materials

The results obtained from Mettu Terfa Jarso Seminary and Nekemte Christian Education College using students' questionnaire about theology students' needs and interests addressed research question number two. The question was, "What are the theology students and EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the skills included in the current ELT materials?" the results are presented as follows:

**Table 1: Perception of theology students on the current ELT materials**

No. of Items		Mean	Std. Deviation	N of res'nts
1	The materials assist you to recognize and learn the fundamental concepts of English theological thinking.	2.7826	.95139	23
2	The materials help you to use English as a tool for missionary purposes in order to present biblical truth, consult believers, and interact within church settings.	2.8696	1.01374	23
3	The modules help you to understand theological articles, Bibles and books written in English.	2.6522	.88465	23
4	The teaching materials are concerned with the principles of CLT.	2.9130	1.08347	23
5	The modules are compatible to your needs and interests.	2.8696	.91970	23

The above table shows that theology students needs and interests concerning the current teaching materials whether or not assist them to recognize and learn the fundamental concepts of English theological thinking, and helping them to use English as a tool for missionary purposes in order to

present biblical truth, consult believers, and interact within church settings, the respondents responded that they disagreed with the items. In the same way, helping them to understand theological articles, Bibles and books written in English as well as the teaching materials are concerned with the principles of CLT and are compatible to their needs and interests of the students; the respondents perceived the materials did not assist them to meet their academic and professional needs and interests.

Similarly, the responses were given by the informants, EFL instructors and theology instructors during interview about the types of contents needed in the ESP or in the field of theology, for students both current and future careers. For instance, the first informant's responses were summarized as follows:

As to me, the types of contents have to come out of the students themselves. Let us teach what they need and if you make need assessment based on own observation, it is not enough. Initiation of curriculum development should be from need analysis, and need analysis is what you are doing now. This need analysis, focuses on teachers' perception, the way teachers look into. This is not again a problem. Testing the lack of students and a gap and collecting data based on their wants and necessities after these are done, it is good to design a material. This issue is related to seminary, evangelism and doctrine. Therefore, the material to be designed has to include the general language and the theological doctrine or issues related to theology. If you only focus on the reading or speaking or only on theological or doctrine, how do you communicate with others in the world? They suffer when communicating with other people in the community. Meaning, their religion affiliation and balancing with what we call social competency and their target competency is important because these guys communicate with everybody. For instance, when one visits a bank...etc, communication is not only surrounded by campus. Therefore, balancing these two issues is essential parts of human life. In one case about communication issue in society, in other case what they can really use after graduation for their carrier, and their carrier is also not only limited to church level. Other carrier is reflected when they live in the society. Thus, these two major things are essential.

Based on the above questionnaire and interview results, one can say that the students perceived the materials as it did not assist them in their academic and professional contexts. However, concerning the contents of English language that are needed in the field of theology, the responses which were obtained from EFL instructors and theology instructors during interview stressed that great attention should be given for both general English and theological related English which the current ELT materials did not consider theological related English.

### **Problems that face Theology Students in using the English Language Skills**

The results which were obtained from the interview made with EFL instructors and Theology instructors aimed to answer the research question number 4, "What problems do theological college students, anticipate to face after they graduate, in using the English language within their particular profession areas?". The responses were summarized as follows:

The first informant was asked to answer the question which says, 'In which language skills do your students have problems?' and he answered as follows:

From my experience, the students whom I taught do have gaps in almost all skills. For instance, in listening, if English were their mother tongue and their vernacular language, they could understand it. If you expose them to the downloading materials such as spiritual preaching and teachings, they can learn listening skills. After listening, let them memorize, rehearse some parts of the preaching and let them preach it as they are building block. They have also problems in vocabulary. If they are not rich in vocabularies, they can not communicate as they have shortage of words to use. If you give them audio materials by downloading from internet, preaching from youtubes they could not understand, and they have problems in listening natural English. They can understand my tone if I speak slowly like foreign language teacher but they could not understand if it is in a natural way. At the same time, if you tell them the truth about your life experiences, and the evangelical life experience, very few of them will talk well about it. They do not want to make errors, and at the same time the majority of them off from school for long period of time. They come back to school after 15 or 20 years. I could not talk about writing because it is a difficult task. Writing at college and university level is not writing a sentence, or not writing a simple paragraph. It requires matured analysis and synthesizing and then evaluating. There are also their background, tiredness, competence and their academia are not considered because it is a spiritual. Someone who scores 1.00 point or 2.00 points might be there that having no caliber, but anointed with Holy Spirit, and can teach, preach and do all spirituality matters.

Here, the informant stressed that the problems theology students have in English language skills related to all skills; the informant stressed that the problems of vocabulary, writing, listening and speaking as the major problems. Again, he addressed that the other problem that hinders the students not to be successful in their academic and professional areas is the ways they grew up which does not allow them not to communicate in English. He also stressed that the ways they were chosen in order to join to different seminaries is not based on their academic ability but it is based on spirituality matters.

In short, based on the above verbatim, one can conclude that diploma theology students who are currently taking English courses have problems almost in all English skills, especially, in writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary. Here, there was contradiction between students' responses during questionnaire and instructors' responses during interview on the issue of vocabulary skills. The students put vocabulary skills and sub-skills as they were rarely needed. However, the instructors stressed that vocabulary skills and sub-skills were one of the skills that theology students needed most. All these problems were due to their background as they were out of school for long period of time, the inappropriateness of the teaching materials, environments in which they grew up, the ways they were selected for attending this program which was not academic based but spirituality based, and their reading habits were also very poor. Consequently, the challenges that might face them in their future professional areas would be failing to communicate in English with native and non-native English speakers, different services related to missionaries, churches and Gospel related were some of the felt challenges.

## Discussion Of The Findings

In this study, the questionnaire was designed to answer the first research question which says, "What are the theology students and EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the skills included in the current ELT materials?" was addressed by the interview. They perceived the skills in the current teaching materials as they did not satisfy and did not meet theology students needs and interests in both academic and professional contexts. Both EFL teachers and theology instructors stressed during interview that great attention should be given for both general English and theological related English that the current ELT materials did not consider the issues of theological English at all. That is why Crystal (1969, p.148) emphasizes the fact that "as a source of linguistic effect, religious language is very evident within literature, where a deliberate, evocative use may be made of its terminology and phraseology; or in humor, where one may readily cause laughter by discussing a nonreligious topic, such as a cricket match, in the tone of voice, grammar, and vocabulary associated with religious language use". However, as a general, individuals might say that in English language, religious English contains a place that is far from peripheral, and on the other hand, that linguistic expression plays a vital role in religious expressions and practice (Crystal, 1969). Chen (2014) also states that English for Specific Purposes emerged in the 1960s in response to the drawbacks of general English in satisfying the students' needs.

The next research question was number 2 which says, "What problems do theology college students, anticipate to face after they graduate, in using the English language within their particular profession areas?" This issue was discussed above in detail, and the researcher used interview question to answer it. One of the theology instructors informed that theology students might have problems almost in all English skills, especially in writing, listening speaking and vocabulary because of their background as they were out off school for a long period of time, the inappropriateness of the teaching materials and the environment in they grew up. This issue was supported by Jameel (2012). He states that before designing teaching materials, the learners' interest and levels should be considered. When the teaching materials and learners' needs and levels mismatch, there will be discouragement that causes failure. Similarly, the way they were selected for the program is not academic based, but they were selected based on spirituality matters. Their reading habits which were very poor also one of the identified problems. The informant stressed that even after they join to the seminary, they did not want to use library to read and improve their reading skills. These problems lead them to some challenges, in future, like failing to communicate in English with native and non-native English speakers, and failing to provide different services related to missionaries and churches.

## Conclusion And Recommendation

### Conclusions

Based on the major findings, the following conclusions were made. The majority of the students responded during questionnaire that they perceived the teaching materials as they did not assist them in their academic and professional contexts. Besides, the result of interview revealed that the EFL teachers

perceived the teaching materials as they did not meet the students needs and interests since the contents of the materials did not have any relation with theological related English. The findings of interview revealed that the students' background which means the environment in which they grew up, the inappropriateness of the teaching materials, and the ways they were selected for attending the program which was not academic based but spirituality based were some of the identified problems. Thus, challenges that might face them in their current and future careers were identified as failing to communicate in English, failing to being serve as missionaries, failing to translate their mother tongue to English and vice versa.

## Recommendations

Finally, based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were drawn.

1. Pierce (2018) states that English in theological settings must be related to the language which we commonly use in our day-to-day activities. This indicates that technical words which are commonly observed in theological English should be balanced with what people use in both contexts of the social daily activities and in theological contexts. Pierson (2003), also states that for every group of theology students, designing EBT course is considered as mandatory, and it might concentrate widely on theological expressions and grammatical structures used in the Gospel which is written in English. It is also needed for reading skills to understand course textbooks. The spoken skills consist that not only assist learners comprehend speech delivered in English but also assist the students to be taught and to work together with English native speakers and instructors. Additionally, Nuttall (1982) shows that the skills-strategies approach to course design is associated to tasks in ESP in order to develop some abilities, skills and strategies in learners. This approach plans to assist learners in enhancing their skills and the strategies not only while the ESP course, but after it. Thus, the researcher recommended that the designed tasks and activities in ESP teaching materials in theological context should balance and consider both general English and theological English.

2. The study indicated that the identified problems might lead them not to give different church related services appropriately. Concerning to this, Alimorad (2012) states that it is an obligation to consider inappropriateness between students' background, students' prior knowledge and the level of materials during designing teaching materials since these lead them to failure. Thus, it is recommended that to reduce the problems related to theology students, the seminary or theological college should select the trainees based on their academic performance rather than choosing them based on their spirituality matters since theological colleges are considered as academic contexts.

## Declarations

### Availability of data and materials

All the data and materials are free and open access. Everybody can use it easily.

## Competing interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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## Authors' contributions

Wakgari Deressa wrote the main manuscript as a whole. Both Dr. Yohannes Tefera and Dr. Adege Alemu have been playing the roles of advisors.

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