

A critical analysis of student teachers' intervention in language education: A Study based on Diploma students' action research reports

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Abstract

Contemporary studies in education prove action research to hold an important part in Higher Learning Institutions in particular. No one could undermine the role that action research plays in education where participants learn by identifying a problem and do something to try to solve it. In this study, the researcher critically analyzes Diploma students' intervention in language education during teaching practice often times carried out as one of the requirements for the completion of their studies. Convenient sampling was used to choose action reports of students from the combinations related to languages education. Selected action research reports were conducted by five different groups who carried their internship in various parts of the country. These corpora were analyzed basing on the aim of the study. Discussion and analysis was framed on Susman' Action Research Model. It has been found that all the five groups had good action research topics which could help them improve learners' language proficiency. They identified well research problems concerning English language teaching and learning. However, they failed to show clearly what they did to help learners improve English language proficiency yet it should be their primary contribution to solving the existing problem they had stated themselves. It was recommended that interns would leave school for internship well prepared and equipped with enough knowledge and skills about action research so that they can grapple with the problem they can identify there.

Key: Action research, intervention, teaching practice, diploma, student teachers

Introduction

Action research is a form of enquiry that enables practitioners in every job and walk of life to investigate and evaluate their work. Practitioners ask themselves questions like "What am I doing? Do I need to improve anything? If so, what? How do I improve it?"(McNiff, 2011). Undergraduate year two students who are trained to be lower secondary education teachers normally carry out teaching practices of three to six months. They generally finish their classroom subjects in semester one, whose exams are done in January, and leave for internship as required. During this internship, student teachers are required to concomitantly carry out teaching and learning activities and action research. At the end of the exercise, they are supposed to produce an action research report showing what they did all along their teaching practice including their intervention to solving a problem they might have identified at the place. Thus, they produce their accounts of practice to show: (1) how they tried to improve what they are doing, which involves first thinking about and learning how to do it better; and (2) how they try to influence others to do the same thing (McNiff, 2011). However, having drawn on my experiences during the supervision period of this activity, I realized that action research reports need be critically analyzed in a bid to maintain what goes well and improve where there might be some gaps. As such, this study explores the students' action research reports to analyze their intervention in language education. The researcher considers action research as a process in which participants learn by doing, by examining their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research (Ferrance, 2000), a form of inquiry that enables practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work (McNiff & Whitehead, 2006: 7, cited in Chou, 2010), the systematic,

reflective study of one's actions, and the effects of these actions, in a workplace context and a path to expertise whose goals include but are not limited to improvement of professional practice through continual learning and progressive problem solving; a deep understanding of practice and the development of a well specified theory of action and an improvement in the community in which one's practice is embedded through participatory research (Riel, 2010).

Problem Statement

Every research project starts with an idea; something that the researcher is interested in knowing more about or is worried about; something that is perceived as a problem or as a knowledge gap that needs to be filled (Hewitt, 2009). Action research is not exception since referred to as "practitioner inquiry", "reflective analysis" or "evidence-based practice"; and its most important component such as action and reflection lead to practice enhancement (Maggie, 2005). While action research is seen as a process of concurrently investigating problems and taking action to solve them (Otara, 2014), University teachers are always complaining that their students are disappointing them during internship and action research supervision exercise. They say that students' action research reports have a lot of gaps especially the intervention section whereby interns do not actually know what to do with the section if not excluded or left out totally. Similarly, students themselves reveal that they have difficulties as regard action research writing. Drawing on my own experience, when I went to supervise in internship in 2015, May 2016 and May 2017, I realized that interns were really confused and had a recurrent problem of action research report specifically intervention section. Most of those I worked with still had a number of difficulties regarding what to include in action research, their intervention specifically. While they had learnt it before they went to teaching practices known as internship, they still had theoretical and practical problems as how action research report is shaped. Elsewhere, some students pretexted that most of the difficulties they had about the action research reports are closely linked with little training on it, i.e. they contended that they hadn't well studied how action research report is written before they went for teaching practice. Having experienced the situation as one of the teachers of language at tertiary level, I thought of conducting a study to explore the matter at hand and suggest some remedies to address the issue. Thus, I was mostly triggered by my interns who had some tendencies to copy their fellow graduates' research regardless of the nature while an action research should reflect what they had done to improve or address the problem observed on their teaching practice field; thus to fulfill a twin commitment of learning by doing (O'Brein, 2001), studying a system concurrently and actively collaborate with members of the system in changing it towards a desirable direction.

Study objectives

University teachers should take part in research not as participants but as researchers whose role in the application of classroom research findings aims to improving teaching (Doyle & Rosemartin cited in Sibomana (2016) and participatory research general rational is to allow for methodological changes resulting in positive developments to the lives of the research participants (Gibson et al., 2017). In this vein, this study aims to critically analyze undergraduate students' action research reports. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the objectives that follow:

- To critically analyze the student-teachers' intervention in language education during their teaching practices;
- To identify the gaps in Diploma students' action research reports;
- To suggest ways students' difficulties in action research report writing can be addressed.

Study questions

Ordinarily, while action research studies a problematic situation in an ongoing systematic and recursive way to take action to change that situation while providing an opportunity to integrate theory and practice in teaching (Otara, 2014); there is a gap observed between theory and practice in teaching and learning process (Sibomana, 2016). In this regard, this study seeks to explore the questions that follow:

1. What is the intervention of student-teachers in language education during their teaching practice?

2. Are there any gaps in Diploma students' action research reports?
3. How should student- teachers' intervention during teaching practices be well reported?

From these research questions stems an assumption that some Diploma students' action research reports reveal that interns leave the school for teaching practices still having some difficulties as regard the rationale behind action research.

Significance of the study

Research originates from dissatisfaction with what we know and/or have today and the need for more in order to improve the current conditions as regard the gap between theory and practice (Sibomana, 2016). In line with this idea, an analysis of undergraduate action research reports can have some positive impact in the education ground. Put another way, this study is significant in that the university will know whether its students do the right practical work they are assigned and trained to. The study results will be relevant to teachers responsible for the subjects related to teaching practices or school attachment specifically to cope with learners' difficulties and improve where things are done effectively. In the same vein, students will benefit from it by learning from others' weaknesses and probably improve their teaching practice particularly action research as "A learning-by-doing that can help each student discover the good and weak points of each teaching methodology" (Likitrattanaporn, 2017).

Scope

The study involves undergraduate students' action research reports for the academic years 2016-2017. All students' reports were not involved. Rather, for the reason that the study investigated the contribution of interns in language education, the researcher focused on reports that dealt with English Education. The aim was to analyze their intervention in language education as students who were trained to be secondary teachers. The choice for these reports was done with some good reasons. The researcher has had some experiences since the academic year 2014 as one of the internship supervisors. He drew on this experience all along the four years and as the problem was still stagnant so far, he thought to carry out a corpus based analysis. The study was conducted within a period of six months i.e. from June to November 2017 hoping that it could serve as a good material for the forthcoming teaching practices planned normally from February to June of the new academic year. Thus, this scope is suggested in hope that the study results would be beneficial for the coming years teaching practices or school attachment exercise as action research creates new knowledge based on enquiries conducted within specific practical contexts for practitioner's continuing professional development (Valsa, 2005:20).

Theoretical framework

Generally, the term action refers to doing something with the intent of improving a situation or solving an existing problem. Action involves translating theories into practice. The practitioner or doer of the action plans what to be done, implements it and then evaluates whether what has been done has some effects. Action research implies that one finds out what might be the cause of a problem and looks for possible ways to try to solve it. It is an action based on finding out the existing problem and thinking of possible remedies to grapple with it. Students participating in undergraduate research positively increased their understanding, confidence, and awareness of research (Russell, Hancock, and McCullough cited in Elise C. Lewis (2017). Research put it that action research is a dual aim activity that is, action to bring about change in some community or program and research to increase understanding on the part of the researcher or the client, or both. This involves a reflection as Rhalmi cited in Likitrattanaporn (2017) asserts that reflective teaching is a kind of action research which helps teachers become aware of what is happening in the classroom by identifying common problems, hypothesizing about possible causes and solutions, and applying an action plan. In action research the outcomes are change and learning for those who take action. As any study should be framed on a theory that cement the researcher's views, in the present study the researcher deemed it to be anchored on the action research model adapted from Susman 1983) as shown on the diagram below:

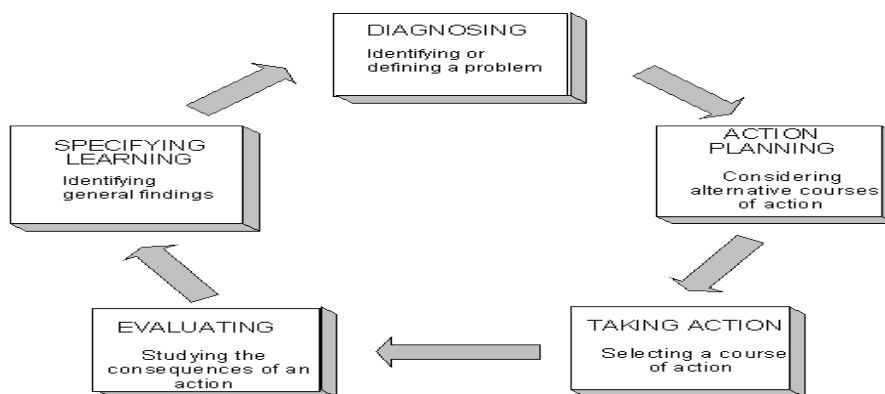


Figure 1. Action Research Model (adapted from Susman, 1983)

Intervention holds an important room in the action research process. Valsa (2005:15) believes that carrying out action research is all about developing the act of knowing through observation, listening, analyzing questioning and being involved in constructing one's knowledge. The new knowledge and experiences inform the researcher's future direction and influences the action. These words with no doubt illustrate action research process as drawn in the diagram above. Action research involves the researcher's action on a problem observed. Having gauged it, the researcher proceeds by being engaged in analyzing the root causes of the problem, its effects and then search the way the problem can be addressed in the best possible way. All this is simply summed up as problem identification and envision success, develop a plan of action to play a certain role in solution to the problem, collect data, analyze them and then draw conclusion or report the results. The whole process involves plan and implement one's intervention to the problem. Action research is conducted in school and classroom settings by teachers on their children in their care. Quoted in Darío Luis et al. (2017:49), Dikilitas defines teacher-research as a form of research conducted by classroom teachers to investigate an issue they identify and reach some conclusions for themselves that can be constantly revised, improved and changed. As student- teachers, interns can be put in this category as they teach while conducting action research on a problem identified on the field. As to why action research is carried out, it is to take action and effect educational positive change in the specific school environment. Action research uses qualitative methods to describe what is happening and to understand the effects of some educational intervention (Mills, 2003). Valsa (2005) uses the term action research and participatory action research interchangeably to refer to a method of research that can combine a framework for public, reflective inquiry while Elliot (1991) and McNiff (2013) postulated that action research offers a way for academics and scholars to work with individuals or communities such as learners or communities of practice, to investigate issues together to find a solution-oriented approach. This might often be the "teacher-as-researcher" research approach. The premise for the action research method is that researchers study with the subject(s), rather than research on or outside the subject(s) as a hierarchy or "expert" (Cousin, 2008).

Literature Review

Research conducted on action research converges to the same view that it involves a process. Cited in Young et al.(2010), Elliot reported that "Action research is a process through which teachers collaborate in evaluating their practice jointly; raise awareness of their personal theory; articulate a shared conception of values; try out new strategies to render the values expressed in their practice more consistent with educational values they espouse; record their work in a form which is readily available to and understandable by other teachers; and thus develop a shared theory of teaching by research practice." According to Ferrance (2000), action research is a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research. He provides an example of action research for a school such as to examine their state test scores to identify areas that need improvement, and then determine a plan of action to improve student performance. Hence, action research requires that researchers play a certain part to address the existing problem or to help a situation improve.

Rather than adhering to a more open definition of action research, such as the “identification of strategies of planned action which are implemented, and then systematically submitted to observation, reflection and change” (Kemmis, 1981), action research requires participatory action in that participants should become co-researchers and agents of change through participation (Soile Juujärvi & Virpi Lund, 2013, 2015) and participatory action research is something that tries to combine participation and action. Participation means that research is not done on people but with them, whereas action refers to concrete problem-solving. Inherently, I can contend that what university students do is participatory action research in that they participate and act to help improve or address the existing problem on the field of teaching practice. Further, their action research is not done on but with their participants- such as secondary schools students, teachers and/ or school leaders, and parents in some cases.

To put it simply, action research is an inquiry that involves the practitioner’s part as a researcher on a problem on the one hand and as a role player in the searching for a solution or improvement to the existing problem on the other hand. This concurs with Maggie (2005) that action research can be described as any research into practice undertaken by those involved in that practice, with an aim to change and improve it. It is therefore, a process of enquiry by one as a practitioner into the effectiveness of their own teaching and their students’ learning. He put it that “Action research is about both ‘action’ and ‘research’ and the links between the two. It is quite possible to take action without research or to do research without taking action, but the unique combination of the two is what distinguishes action research from other forms of enquiry”. Although all this literature on action research discusses what action research means, processes and strategies involved in it, little is discussed as regard the intervention of practitioners. The researcher wishes that a study that analyses the practitioners’ intervention through their action research reports can be a good contribution of studies on the ground of learning-by-doing which, in the view of Likittrattanaporn (2017) helps student-teachers analyze the students’ potential and change the input to be more suitable for their classes and confirm that when one discovers a problem, he/she will find their own appropriate and effective way to solve it.

Methodology

This study is designed in qualitative corpora analysis research framed on the view that qualitative research integrates the methods and techniques of observing, documenting, analyzing, and interpreting characteristics, patterns, attributes, and meanings of human phenomena under study (Gillis & Jackson qtd in Cathy (2012). Qualitative research aims firstly to interpret and document an entire phenomenon from an individual’s viewpoint or frame of reference (Leininger, 1985; Mason, 2006). In addition, the reason for the study to use the descriptive design lies in its appropriateness to obtain information concerning the diploma student-teachers’ contribution in English language education. The study involves action research reports for the previous academic years particularly 2016/2017. Considering the aim of the study, purposive and convenience sampling was used accordingly and only the corpora about language teaching and learning were selected. A convenient sampling is the terminology used in research to describe a sample in which elements are selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher. Convenience samples are sometimes referred to as ‘accidental samples’ for the reason that elements may be drawn into the sample simply because they just happen to be situated, spatially near to where the researcher is gathering information (UNESCO, 2005). Thus, action research reports related to language education were targeted from which a random sample of five reports was determined.

Data presentation and analysis

In practice, action research begins with an imperfectly understood felt concern and a desire to take action - a general idea that some kind of improvement or change is desirable (Robin, 1994). In line with this statement, the present study analyzes university students’ action research reports with particular interest on their “intervention” during their internship. The particular reason to have chosen this area is that the researcher wanted to investigate whether interns know about that particular part which is the core of the report as it reveals what they might have done and the contribution they brought to their schools of internship. Five reports that had room in this study were produced by five groups of student teachers on the

completion of their teaching practice. For each case, the researcher focused on three important points such as the action research topic, stated problem and intervention by student teachers. It follows that the researcher analyzed the intervention case by case as reported in those action researches without any addition or reduction. After presentation, analysis was done paying close attention to Susman's (1983) action research model as it consists of five steps such as (1) diagnosis where a problem is identified or defined; (2) action planning by considering alternative courses of action; (3) taking action whereby the teacher researcher selects a course of action; (4) evaluating by studying the consequences of action and (5) specifying learning where general findings are specified. Taken together, this section discussed the student teachers action research carried out where they conducted teaching practice. It is important to mention that the recurrent abbreviation G.S (Groupe Scolaire) is referred to as a school educating both primary and secondary students.

Student teachers group one

Action research topic: Improving teamwork spirit in senior one at G.S (Groupe Scolaire) Remera in Musanze District.

Identified problem: During observation period, student- teachers realized that students in senior one at G. S Remera do not participate and work in groups appropriately. That's why they carried out action research to promote teamwork spirit among learners at G.S Remera so as to increase their production. Student-teachers insist on the fact that since "two hands make right work" they lent their hand in helping G.S Remera students especially senior ones to enhance teamwork spirit which led to the improvement of their performance in all lessons.

Intervention: The main activities in this action research were preparing learning activities that should require students to participate and work in groups while improving their teamwork spirit. Student teachers reported that they sensitized and taught them the real meaning of group, how fruitful it is, and how it functions. Their report continues to say that they formed groups in each class of senior one. Furthermore, they said they followed up the supervision of how group work spirit fulfilled learning activities in all subjects but found that teamwork spirit was accounted on poor estimation. Besides, their report revealed that there was nowhere to get encouragement because some of their teachers showed less concern about the matter at hands. Interns' action research report revealed that they gave group works, especially to senior one students, to engage them to work and improve their teamwork spirit. Student-teachers also reported that they encouraged their fellow teachers to appropriately give the students opportunities to express themselves during learning and teaching process.

As can be seen in the above situation, action researchers identified a problem at G.S Remera, Musanze District, Northern Province about how students in senior one did not participate and work in groups appropriately and then wanted to contribute to solving the problem by promoting teamwork spirit among learners so as to increase their production. Of course, they used various strategies which is a good thing. However, action research report should clearly report the extent to which the action taken bore fruits in terms of positive change as regard the problem stated. Student researchers in the present situation of improving teamwork spirit in senior one at G.S Remera located in Musanze District in Northern Province (Rwanda) failed to show the result of their action all along their teaching exercises carried out there. The fact that they reported the action done is a contribution but failure to tell how successful it was after self-evaluation is a big gap as regard Susman (1983) action research model whereby evaluation of the action is an important step that could not be undermined.

Student teachers group one

Action research topic: Improving speaking skills in English in Ordinary level through active learning methods at G. S Rugarama, Rugarama Sector in Burera District.

Stated problem: At G.S Rugarama located in Rugarama Sector, Burera District in Northern Province of Rwanda, a good number of teachers of English deliver content to learners without the latter's active

participation. Group discussion brainstorming, debate as well as many other active methods involving learners-centered approach have not taken place at G.S Rugarama. Whoever attempts a learners centered-approach has been considered as lazy or one with insufficient knowledge who wants to rely on learners for him to get the content of the lesson he teaches. More so, teachers, learners and administration have been caring more about results from ordinary level National leaving examinations rather than speaking skills. For them, it does not matter how poorly the learners may be speaking English but rather it matters a lot how one fails for Ordinary Level Leavers National Examination. This has developed the spirit of developing writing skills rather than speaking skills. Again, teachers have been taking debates as a wastage of their time to complete their curriculum for they would take some loads. In the same way, the learners would not consider teachers serious if they engaged them in group discussion or debates since most of their time got consumed in the reading skills about the notes given by the teacher to perform well in OLLNE (Ordinary Level Leavers National Examinations). For the above reasons, speaking skills was undermined and left the place to writing and reading skills. This has been taken as a custom and speaking skills was not given much attention hence poor communication skills.

Intervention: Student teachers reported that having found out the causes and effects of poor performance in English language among ordinary level learners at G.S Rugarama, the student-teachers developed a culture of team work through group discussions, debates as well as many other active pedagogical availed techniques. Motivating learners who attempted to improve their oral communication was used and the student teachers showed learners that a good communicator deals successfully with business and bad communicator sinks in. The school administrators were encouraged by the student teachers to start English language club involving all streams' members. Student teachers also requested the school administration to take learners of ordinary level streams to seminars in schools where speaking skills deeply developed. The student teachers also requested the school administration to remind teachers who might have abandoned supplying students with group works that it was high time they resorted so that learners' speaking skills could get improved. School administrators got reminded that it would be better to organize school debates and lead them at least once a week. Concerning the results of their intervention, their report stated the following:

Having been given tasks in groups, involved and engaged in their learning, learners improved the speaking skills in English language. The seminars also contributed to the rise of speaking skills for learners have shared experiences with their counterparts and they have been morally got prepared before outing into practices. School debates also have sharpened learners about speaking skills in English language.

Actually, the group had well identified a problem as they realized that their performance was greatly affected by active learning methods in English classes that were undermined. They had a good action research topic to improve students' speaking skills through active learning. The student teachers reported that they resorted to group discussions to engage learners and involve them in their learning, thus a learner centeredness environment in language teaching. By encouraging the school administration to start the English club, they made a good point to promote the culture of debates in English clubs to enhance language use in various context hence improvement that they wanted. These student teachers promoted the communicative language teaching whose goal according to Richards (2006) is to teach communicative competence or the knowledge we have of a language that accounts for our ability to produce sentences in a language, a similar perception to Pusuluri (2012) who advocates that communicative language teaching is based on the view of language as a skill, a system, a communication, a social tool to communicate something for some purpose. The group also reported the results of the action they undertook. However, there is a gap in what they reported as result simply that they did not show how they proceeded progressively, step by step until they addressed the problem that had been identified.

Student teachers group three

Action research topic: Improving English communication skills in teaching and learning process in senior two at G.S Rusanze.

Identified problem: Student teachers observed that learners at G.S Rusanze in Musanze District, Northern Province hadn't been practising English for both speaking and writing.

Intervention: In order to solve this problem of students' poor English communication skills, student researchers proceeded by activities that are outlined below:

1. Using relevant didactic materials in teaching and learning process in order to avoid grammar translation method. 2. Using group discussion among the students to increase their listening and speaking skills through conversations. 3. Involve learners in English debate and speaking competition. 4. Using small learners' dictionaries to increase learners' vocabularies. 5. Using story-telling in English, reading texts and dialogue memorization using relevant examples from students' daily life. 6. Rewarding students who performed well in English.

The action research above is concerned with improving English communication skills in teaching and learning process in senior two. The student teachers identified a problem that learners at G.S Rusanze, Musanze District, Northern Province had not been doing English speaking and writing practices. The strategies action researchers used to address the problem include but are not limited to using relevant didactic materials in teaching and learning process in order to avoid grammar translation method, use of group discussion among the students, in order to increase their listening and speaking skills through conversations; involving them in English debate and speaking competition; using small learners' dictionaries to increase learners' vocabularies, story-telling in English (fun spot), reading texts and dialogue memorization basing on students' daily life. Rewarding students who perform well in using English was used as a way of motivating and attracting learners to make efforts.

The above strategies can lead to successful result if well implemented. Debate, group discussion and text memorization are tools to improve learners' speaking skills. Particularly, story-telling is an aural activity that is a very rewarding language learning approach as it allows to present the language in an integrated way by combining all four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing in a meaningful context (Education and culture DG (2010, 2012). However, interns who say here that they used such tools did not show how strategies they used led to a positive result which is a gap as regard action research model. It is important to clearly report the results of any action taken for people to ensure that the same thing can be applied in case it is positive and be rejected when it is not advantageous for the targeted beneficiaries. To put it simply, it should be unfair to employ a tool in solving a problem and fail to tell or report how successful or unsuccessful it might be for others to adopt or reject accordingly. Student teachers intervention in English language education in this case was not carried out successfully. They failed to present the result of their contribution to the problem that had been stated before.

Student teachers group four

Action research topic: Improving students' performance in Entrepreneurship and in English through the use of group work at G.S Nyawera in Kayonza District.

Identified problem: The students at G.S Nyawera, Kayonza District in Eastern province face the difficulties in Entrepreneurship and in English, and currently the problem of low performance, low confidence and too much fear to express themselves in Entrepreneurship and English courses was still there. No new teaching method was used to address the problem. As such, the current action research was expected to improve the performance in Entrepreneurship and in English through the method of Group work.

Intervention:

Several groups of six students were formed for Entrepreneurship and English subject. At the end of the course, each group was given the work to discuss in group for further presentation. The students were

encouraged to assimilate the course by allowing individual student to contribute in their group by writing and presenting the work given. At the beginning of the course the groups were allowed for presentation of the work so that the audience could develop their memory and think. The researchers corrected and guided the students for a better understanding. After teaching session, the researchers took five minutes to review all discussed in groups for better understanding the topic then proceeded with analysis and evaluation of individual students through the expression capacity, tests and exams and finally reviewed and considered the last marks to ascertain the importance of using group work.

Actually, this group included both Entrepreneurship and English student teachers as they were allocated there coming from different combinations. The group was made of three members of which two were from the combination of languages Education and one from Entrepreneurship with Education. Regarding this action research topic, the student-teachers stated well the problem and showed what they did to contribute to the problem solution. First, they formed several groups for discussion and presentation. As long as the discussion went on, researchers corrected and guided the students for better understanding of the course each and then after reviewed what was discussed in groups for better understanding of the topic. Researchers proceeded with analysis and evaluation of individual student through the expression capacity, tests and exams and finally reviewed and considered the last marks to ascertain the importance of using group work. With the above steps, researchers clearly reported what they did to address the problem. However, the report did not show any result or effect of their inputs. As action research is a process to solving a problem, teacher researchers should show clearly the results of their efforts all along their teaching practice. Showing what has been done without proofing how effective it contributes to the problem solution reflects that there is still a gap in what they reported or in what they should have done as they failed to talk about results of efforts they had made. Actually, each step should be leading to the next in terms of cause effect relationship to ensure that learners were helped step by step in accordance with problems and difficulties they had. Thus, student-teachers that carried out this action research failed to show the fruits of their intervention in addressing the problem of language communication skills which, in connection with too much fear and lack of confidence which as the researcher stated in the research problem led to low performance of learners. This action research does not really show whether researchers' intervention contributed to the problem they had stated.

Student teachers group five

Action research topic: Improving students' speaking skills in English through Group discussion at G.S Gacuba II/A, Rubavu District in Western Province

Identified problem: G.S Gacuba II/A has all facilities in teaching and learning English teaching and learning but students' speaking skills still remained on low level. When you compare this with other skills of English such as listening, reading and writing, there was a great difference as for example, when the teacher was teaching some subject in English language, the students did not want English and complained that the teacher should translate into their mother tongue so that they could understand and answer him. The student teacher-researchers advocated that during semester I, 2016 was an evidence where among senior two D learners, only two tried to answer in English.

Intervention: No intervention was mentioned

Student- teachers in the above case detected a crucial problem as regard English language learning. Besides being a medium of instruction in Rwandan Education system from upper primary to tertiary level, it is also a subject to be taught there. Now that students were in Senior two, it was supposed that they had been trained in English and learnt that subject in their previous studies but still had that problem of using English in English classes. However, the researchers failed to contribute to the problem solution as their report did not mention any contribution in terms of intervention to solving the problem while their report should base on what they had done all along their teaching practices. As their action research topic reveals, what they should have done is to improve students' speaking skills in English through group discussion at G.S. Gacuba

II/A. While Denskus (2008) believes that the best action researchers are probably those who stay away from publishing their research and do meaningful interventions with a community instead, the student teachers in the present case are not as they neither reported that they formed the groups during their teaching practices. Nor did they include in their report their intervention towards solving the existing problem at that time. Thus, they had a good action research topic but did not act to solve in part or in a whole the problem stated.

Summary and conclusion

The action research reports analyzed were selected basing on the aim of the study. These action researches were conducted by five different groups who carried their internship in various parts of the country namely in Burera and Musanze Districts in Northern Province, Rubavu District in Western Province and Kayonza District in Eastern Province. It has been found that all the five groups had good action research topics which could help them improve learners' language proficiency. They identified well research problems as regard English language teaching and learning. However, they failed to show clearly what they did to help learners improve English language proficiency yet it should be their primary contribution to solving the existing problem they had stated themselves. Even those who attempted to include the section did not show clearly the result of what they did all along their teaching. Some action research reports included the section "intervention" but could not reveal how well they intervened and or how their efforts made bore fruits by the steps they went through from their first day to the last of their teaching practices. Thus, **while** the main role of action research is to facilitate practitioners to study aspects of practice whether it is in the context of introducing an innovative idea or in assessing and reflecting on the effectiveness of existing practice with the view of improving practice (Valsa, 2005), University student-teachers should not go beyond this belief as they are required to bring a contrition to the school community where they carry teaching practice. While O'Brien (2001) postulated that action research is a participatory research and contextual action, a "learning by doing" where researchers identify a problem and do something to resolve it, the findings in this study revealed that student-teachers' intervention in language education during their teaching practices is still low. This being a gap that need be filled, student-teachers are recommended to review action research report writing particularly the section "intervention" and know what to do in that section. Elsewhere, the study was conducted basing on a small sample of one school in University of Rwanda. This is a limitation as the researcher cannot pretend the situation to be general in other schools or colleges. Based on the findings in this study, the researcher would recommend a follow up to this research to investigate into students 'intervention in their fields of teaching practice to ensure that they have tried or try to do something to solve the problem they had identified there; or if they learnt by doing. Such a study can base on a more significant sample and mainly on observation as a research tool to serve as a complement to the present for the university to ensure that its student- teachers do or don't do what they are really required to do on the field of practice. As Otara (2014) suggested, "to prepare student teachers for their internships, it is critical to understand the issues and challenges they face during their student teaching". This study complements his view by recommending that before interns go to teaching practice activities, action research subject should be revisited to ensure that they are well equipped with enough skills that will enable them to identify a problem on the field and try to contribute to addressing it effectively.

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