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## Assessing Factors that Affect the Implementation of Reading Skill in EFL Classes in Grade 9 at Boditi Secondary and Preparatory School, 2019

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### Abstract

The main objective of this study was to find out how students comprehend reading text and how teachers teach reading skill in Boditi secondary and Preparatory school grade nine in focus. It is also to investigate students' English reading ability in the mentioned grade level and to assess the factors that affect teaching reading skill during reading lesson. To conduct the research a descriptive method was used. The data were collected from students through questionnaire and classroom observation, and gathered from teachers' through questionnaire, interview and observation. The findings depicted that inappropriate reading techniques and procedures were used in the mentioned grade level. Teachers were observed while using the traditional way of teaching reading skill which is dominated by reading aloud. There has been little or no time given for silent reading. Phases of reading such as pre-, while and post- reading were not used at all. The miss -understanding practices used in class room by teachers has resulted the wrong implementation up on the students in their reading ability. Finally, the researcher put different recommendations that could bring about a change in the practice of teaching reading and different roles of students in three stages of reading.

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Reading skill; Pre-reading; While Reading and Post-reading

### Introduction

Teaching and learning requires the use of different strategies to meet the demands of the learners and teachers. Smith, F (1978) mentions the basic purpose of education is "to enable learners to adapt themselves in a society, which is full of problems. This implies that not only social life is full of problems but also there are problems and puzzling situations which are normal features of child's everyday life in school as well. With the emergence of modern education in Ethiopia, English language got a significant place in the national curriculum.

As a result, English has been taught as a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary level of education (National Report of Education of Ethiopia, 2001). Following the fulfillment of these good conditions, situations became suitable to do reading in foreign language. This means classroom practice plays a decisive role in the students' success or failure in the learning process. In addition to this, the implantation of the national framework for the Teacher Education system over all (TESO) program is believed to have its own role to improve effectiveness of English language teachers in their teaching. The fact that language learning is mainly mastery of the four language skills, it calls for well designed teaching procedures and techniques to enable

students at different levels to make use of the target language appropriately. In other words, reading provides effective and adequate ways of learning language.

At present, English language improvement centers have recently been established in most colleges and well as in some high schools in Ethiopia.

The existence of the above stated goal in the curriculum could be taken as a potential to go forward in realizing intended objectives in language instruction. Moreover, the practices of these aforementioned programs are also fruitful conditions to foster instructional process in general and to build language teachers efficiency in particular. Even though these are movements and achievements obtained so far, studies indicate that students reading engagement is still low. This may be as a result of the cumulative effect of the post trend in teaching reading and approaches teachers use in teaching reading. (Harmer, 1996).

Reading is a way of communication. It is an interactive process of communication Yun (1984). And it is also a means to comprehend the meaning the writer intends to convey. Therefore, reading comprehension is the process of constructing /decoding/meaning from text. Reading comprehension involves at least two people: the writer and reader. Reading plays crucial roles in promoting learning and serving as an instrument by which students could study subjects in the curriculum.

In addition to this, students' general educational achievement depends mainly on their ability to read Williams, (1984). In other words reading provides effective and adequate ways of learning language. Therefore, teaching reading skill, like other skills needs carefully selected activities, methods and procedures at both higher and lower grades.

To this end, the investigation of factors that affect the application of reading skill during reading lesson indispensably much important in language education. In relation to this, there are many ways to think about reading comprehension and many factors that reading comprehension.

### **Statement of the problem**

The main purpose of this study is to identify activities that need consideration in designing and the application of reading skills to promote students reading engagement. In a second language situation, particularly

in a foreign language situation reading is the most useful and important skill. Moreover, reading in general and reading English in particular is a base to the successful achievement of all other subjects in the Ethiopian education area. However, as far as the researcher has observed reading is challenging for most of students in grade 9 level. For many of these students it is difficult to read and comprehend their text books and obtain the required information. English teachers in the proposed school cannot use different techniques to make their lessons interactive and practical using the procedures and principles of teaching reading lesson according to the teachers' book. Thus, the study attempts to see reading tasks which are believed to develop student's practice of reading in terms of the text book and might give some sort of clue to the causes of the reading problems at secondary school level which could presumably be the lack of well – designed methods and techniques of reading practices.

### **Research questions**

1. What are the techniques and procedures of teaching and learning reading skill in English language as foreign language classes?
2. What are the major causes that hinder teachers, implementation of reading skills in EFL classes?
3. What are the major factors that affect students comprehending ability of reading skill in grade 9 level

### **Objectives of the study**

#### **General objective**

This study tries to examine the implementation of reading lesson and factors that affect on students learning during reading lesson in the case of Boditi secondary school particularly in grade 9.

#### **Specific objectives**

The study has the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate the techniques and procedures of teaching and learning of reading skill in English as Foreign Language classes.
2. To identify the major causes that hinder teacher's implementation of reading skills in EFL classes.
3. To find out the major factors that affect students reading ability in grade 9 levels?

## **Scope of the study**

The area of the study focuses on the implementation of learning and teaching reading skill in English lessons in grade 9 Boditi Secondary school, which is located in SNNPR in Wolaita Zone. Because of time constraint, it is difficult to use more sample schools. Grade nine is the target level for the study because it is the beginning level for secondary school.

It is assumed to be suitable to make frequent classroom observations and to get required collaboration for the study. Moreover, grade nine students are selected because it is a transitional period where students need special support which helps them to familiarize themselves with the next educational environment.

## **Significance of the study**

The importance of this study is to assess the techniques and procedures of teaching and learning reading skill in EFL classes and to point out factors affecting teaching reading. It also helps to bring an overall reading techniques and strategies which help learners and teachers to comprehend activities of reading. Moreover, it clearly shows the implementation of teaching and learning reading skill in English as foreign language classes in secondary level. It also creates awareness to English language teachers on how to teach reading skills during reading lesson and helps students to be engaged in the process of reading and comprehending. Finally, this research may initiate other individuals to conduct detail research on similar issues.

## **Limitations of the study**

Certainly, it would have been preferable to have more subjects and more secondary schools involved in this study. But due to constraints of time, financial and material, the study has been limited to only 60 students and 3 teachers of secondary school. However, these factors could have their own impacts on the study; they didn't bring great changes on the result of the study.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Research design**

For this study descriptive survey research method was used. In order to achieve the intended objectives of the study and to answer the research questions, qualitative and quantitative research designs were used. The

rationale of the researcher to use quantitative method here is to minimize some variable which cannot be controlled by descriptive or qualitative method.

### **Subjects of the study**

The target population of this study was grade 9 students and English teachers of Boditi secondary school who were enrolled in 2019/2020 academic year. This was because the issues of teaching and learning reading directly focus on EFL teachers and students. Furthermore, the implementation of teaching reading in EFL classroom could be improved primarily by English language teachers. As the main objective of the study was to investigate the main factors that affect the implementation of reading skill, 80 grade 9 students and six English teachers in this grade level were participated.

### **Samples and sampling design**

The researcher selected the proposed school purposively because he had worked in this school and he thought that it enables him to stay in the study area to make reliable inquiry. The sampling technique used for this research was random sampling technique. There were 10 classrooms in the school and the number of students in each class was 82. In the focused grade level there were 820 students and 6 English teachers. From these numbers the researcher selected 80 students. Out of total population, 30 were females and 50 were male students were given their responses to the questionnaire. The total population of English teacher respondents in number: two female and four male teachers; all were chosen for this research by using purposive sampling technique. The teachers were chosen because of their interest and willingness to take part in the study, which reflected both sexes and variety of teaching experiences. This sampling technique was employed to select respondents on the bases of their judgments. The researcher selected the samples that only meet his purpose in the current study. The teachers in grade nine were made to fill questionnaires and to participate on semi- structured interview.

### **Data collection instruments**

Since this research is mixed in its nature, questionnaire, interview and classroom observation were used as data gathering instruments. Even though every instrument has its own weak sides, it has also its own strength. The researcher found that using classroom observation is suitable technique to collect the data about teachers'

application of reading skill during reading lesson as well as asking them about to use reading tasks in teaching reading. In addition to classroom observation, questionnaire and interview were also found to be the appropriate instruments to collect data about the teacher's implementation of reading skill.

### **Questionnaire**

Questionnaires were prepared and used to obtain information from the participants. The questionnaires were aimed at gathering data about how often teachers give emphasis on the implementation of reading skill in grade eight English text book, and how the teachers support to consider students learning style in the process of promoting students reading engagement, classroom reading activities, teachers' approaches, students' background knowledge (experience) and needs are included in the reading lesson in general. Furthermore, it assessed factors that hinder teachers' implementation of reading skill during reading lesson and contribute to teachers' effective use of reading tasks. The questionnaires were both close and open ended. First, it was designed for students in English language and then it was translated into Amharic for ease. Finally, the questionnaires were distrusted by the researcher and all of them were returned.

### **Interview**

The semi –structured interview was used to gather information from the participant teachers. The purpose of the interview was to triangulate with the results of questionnaires and classroom observation data. The interview questions were designed to get detailed information on teachers' participation. The interview questions were designed to get the teachers' application of reading skill during reading lesson therefore, it was conducted with only teachers. A total of five of six grade 9 English language teachers from Boditi secondary school were interviewed. Finally, the interviews were Analyzed and interpreted in relation to the objectives of the study.

### **Classroom observation**

The classroom observation was aimed at identifying the factors that affect the application of reading skill that teachers are implementing in teaching reading. The researcher thinks classroom observation is suitable technique to collect the data about teachers' implementation of reading skill rather than asking them

how to apply reading skill in the classroom. Therefore, this instrument is the major data gathering instrument of the study. The researcher was used checklist as an instrument to gather observation data. It was divided into five sections, namely observing classroom arrangement, observing the teachers' activities in the classroom, observing the learners' activities in the classroom, use of instructional materials, and classroom evaluations. The researcher conducted three consecutive classroom observations for each participant teacher for three weeks.

### **Data collection procedures**

The data has been collected from primary and secondary sources. First the questionnaires were prepared and distributed for both selected teachers and students. Then the interview data was conducted only for grade 9 English language teachers. Finally, the researcher observed teaching and learning processes of reading skill in reading lesson from sample teachers using observation check list.

### **Data analysis procedures**

Data analysis means to find meanings from the data and a process by which the investigator can interpret the data. The themes and coding categories in this study emerge from an examination of the data rather than being determined beforehand and imposed on the data. Concurrent triangulation method was used to analyze the gathered data from questionnaires, classroom observation and interview. As the objective of the study is to obtain qualitative and quantitative data that is studying the teaching of reading English; the concurrent triangulation design is the right method to interpret the reasons, factors and efforts of the stated problem. The objective interpretation of the data is insured as the design of the study shows by the triangulation of the instruments of data gathering.

To analyze the data of the study, the researcher has gone through all the information gathered from the completed questionnaires, classroom observation and the interview transcripts attentively. The analysis of the questionnaire data involved the analysis of close –ended questions. The questions were analyzed through the themes and categories prompted by the questions regarding the practice of student-centered teaching reading and its implementation. During the process patterns were identified and divided in to categories. The results of the questionnaires were cross checked with the results of classroom observation results in order to have reliable

data. Thus, the observation data analysis involved the analysis of checklists recorded from the actual instructional process.

During the observation, the researcher carefully assessed each activity of the teachers in their classes to obtain reliable information about the teaching reading lesson and its implementation. Finally, the results of an interview were analyzed to answer the third research question. In analyzing the interview data, the scheme of categories were created to suit the collected data and the concerns of the study. The majority of the data are qualitative but the data from close ended questionnaire is quantitative. As the result, different procedures for

analysis are used to arrive at required results and both quantitative and qualitative methods were used.

**Data presentation and analysis**

As noted earlier in chapter one, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that affects the implementation of reading lesson and seek solution. This chapter, therefore, deals with the presentation and discussion of data in light of the objective. To achieve this objective, close ended questionnaires were distrusted for six grade 9 English teachers of the school and eighty students of grade nine students.

**Table.1** Students’ responses on teachers’ application of reading skill during reading lesson

| No | Items  | Alternatives |       |        |       |           |       |            |       |                 |       |
|----|--|--------------|-------|--------|-------|-----------|-------|------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
|    |  | Never        |       | Rarely |       | Sometimes |       | Frequently |       | Very Frequently |       |
|    |  | N            | %     | N      | %     | N         | %     | N          | %     | N               | %     |
| 1  | The teacher helps students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge | 9            | 11.5  | 50     | 62.5  | 13        | 16.5  | 8          | 10    | -               | -     |
| 2  | The teacher is interested in teaching use reading tasks during reading lesson      | 9            | 11.5  | 49     | 61.25 | 10        | 12.5  | 7          | 8.5   | 5               | 6.25  |
| 3  | The teacher assigns students to do reading activities together.                    | 41           | 51.25 | 19     | 23.75 | 13        | 16.25 | 5          | 6.25  | 2               | 2.5   |
| 4  | The teacher encourages questions and other contributions from students             | 19           | 23.75 | 27     | 33.5  | 19        | 23.5  | 9          | 11.5  | 6               | 7.5   |
| 5  | The teacher gives brief introduction about reading text.                           | 19           | 23.5  | 30     | 37.5  | 10        | 12.5  | 12         | 15    | 9               | 11.5  |
| 6  | Students are asked to discuss on the topic before they read                        | 21           | 26.5  | 18     | 22.5  | 15        | 18.5  | 14         | 17.5  | 12              | 15    |
| 7  | The teacher encourages the students to relate the topics with their experiences.   | 20           | 25    | 30     | 37.5  | 19        | 23.5  | 7          | 8.5   | 4               | 5     |
| 8  | The teacher makes the instruction clear to the students.                           | 9            | 11.5  | 17     | 21.25 | 24        | 30    | 7          | 8.75  | 5               | 6.25  |
| 9  | Difficult words in the text were sorted out and explained                          | 19           | 23.75 | 28     | 35    | 13        | 16.25 | 11         | 13.75 | 9               | 11.25 |
| 10 | Students were given a chance to predict what the reading passage is about          | 16           | 20    | 33     | 41.25 | 16        | 20    | 9          | 11.25 | 6               | 7.5   |

**Table.2** Teachers' responses regarding the use of pre- reading tasks during teaching reading lessons

| No | Questionnaire Items one- four  | Responses in |                   |        |               |
|----|--|--------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
|    |  | Yes          |                   | No     |               |
| 1  | Do you always use reading tasks during reading lesson?   | 0            |                   | 6      |               |
|    |  | 0%           |                   | 100%   |               |
| 2  | If your answer to question No 1 is 'yes' how useful have you found using reading tasks during reading lesson?            | very useful  | moderately useful | useful | highly useful |
|    |  | 2            | 1                 | 3      | 0             |
|    |  | 33.3%        | 16.7              | 50     | 0             |
| 3  | Do you think the procedures suggested in grade 9 English text books for using reading lessons appropriate for the level? | Yes          |                   | No     |               |
|    |  | 4            |                   | 66.7%  |               |
|    |  | 2            |                   | 33.3%  |               |
|    |  | 6            |                   | 100%   |               |
| 4  | If your answer to question No 3 is 'yes' how often do you follow the procedures?<br><br>A. Always                        | 1            |                   | 16.7%  |               |
|    |  | 3            |                   | 50%    |               |
|    |  | 2            |                   | 33.3%  |               |

**Table.3** Researcher’s class room observation check list

| N<br>o | Items  | Teacher one |    |       |    |       |    | Teacher two |    |       |    |       |    | Teacher three |    |       |    |       |    |
|--------|--|-------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|---------------|----|-------|----|-------|----|
|        |  | Day 1       |    | Day 2 |    | Day 3 |    | Day 1       |    | Day 1 |    | Day 3 |    | Day 1         |    | Day 2 |    | Day 3 |    |
|        |  | yes         | no | Yes   | no | yes   | no | yes         | no | yes   | no | yes   | no | yes           | no | yes   | no | yes   | no |
| 1      | The teacher gave brief introduction about the reading text.        |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |               | √  |       | √  |       | √  |
| 2      | Students were made to discuss topic before they read the text.     |             |    |       |    |       |    |             |    |       |    |       |    |               |    |       |    |       |    |
| 3      | The teacher encouraged the students to relate the topic with their |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |               | √  |       | √  |       | √  |
| 4      | The teacher gave clear instruction to the students                 |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |               | √  |       | √  |       | √  |
| 5      | Difficult words in the text were sorted out and                    |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |               | √  |       | √  |       | √  |
| 6      | Students were asked to predict what the reading passage was about. |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |             | √  |       | √  |       | √  |               | √  |       | √  |       | √  |

Semi - Structured interview were also held with those teachers to assess the application of teaching reading. Moreover, classroom observation was used to obtain reliable information about the actual classroom application of reading lesson presentation .This chapter presents and discusses the data collected through these instruments. The questionnaire and observation results were discussed together after one another in order to crosscheck the responses of questionnaires.

**Analysis of the Students’ Questionnaire**

Ten items were included in students’ questionnaire to find out their perceptions on teachers’ application of reading skill during reading lesson. The data have been discussed as follows:

Table 1 Item 1 says, “The teacher helps students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge.” As it can be seen in Table 1, the percentage (62.5%) and (16.7%)

of the respondents were said rarely and sometimes respectively. The percentage (11.5%) and (8.5%) of the respondents were also said never and frequently respectively. Hence, majority of the students responded by saying rarely. This shows that teachers have no awareness to reading skill.

Item 2 says, "The teacher is interested in teaching the reading tasks during reading lesson" in response to this item, 49 (61.25%) of the respondents said rarely and 10 (12.5) said sometimes. The remaining 9(11.5%), 7 (8.5%) and 5 (6.25) rated never, frequently and very frequently respectively. Item 3 states, "The teacher assigns students to do reading activities together." 41(51.25%) and 19 (23.75%) said rarely and never. 13(16.25%) respondents said sometimes, 5(6.25%) said frequently and 2(2.5%) respondents said very frequently.

Item 4 says, "The teacher encourages questions and other contributions for students" In response to this item, 19 (23.5%) of the respondents said never and 27(33.5. %) of the respondents answered rarely. But 19(23.5%) responded sometimes and 9 (11.5%) responded frequently and 6(7.5%) said very frequently. This shows that the contribution of the teachers is not satisfactory.

Similarly, item 5 of Table 1 says "The teacher gives brief introduction about the reading text" in response to the item 8, 19 (23.5%), 30(37.5%) said never and very rarely respectively but, 10(12.5%), 12(15%) and 9 (11.5%) said sometimes, frequently and very frequently respectively. In these both items (item 4 and 5) the majority of the respondents selected never and rarely, therefore, they are different from the above three items. In general the researcher concluded that majority of students didn't try to understand the pre-reading tasks properly.

In item 6, respondents said rarely and 21 (26.5%) respondents said never and 18 (22.5%) said rarely. The remaining, 15 (18.5%), 14 (17.5%) and 12 (15%) of the respondents said sometimes, frequently and very frequently respectively. This implies that majority of the learners showed their agreement on the alternative never.

Item 7 of Table 1 says. "The teacher encourages students to relate the topic with their experience" Accordingly, 30(37.5%) and 20(25%) rated rarely and never as it is mentioned above. Others, 19(23.5%),7 (8.5%) and 4(5%) of the respondents said sometimes, frequently and very frequently respectively.

Item 8 says, "The teacher makes instruction clear to the students" for this item the respondents in number and percent 24(30%) and 17 (21.25%) responded sometimes and frequently respectively. This indicates that the respondents have good understanding of pre-reading tasks during reading lesson.

Item 9 says, "Difficult words in the text were sorted out and explained" In response to this item, 28(35%)and 19(23.75%) of the respondents said never and rarely. But, 13(16.25%), 11(13.75%) and 9(11.25%) respondents showed their agreement on the alternatives sometimes, frequently and very frequently as it has been clearly listed above. This implies that the respondents were unable to get self-confidence on pre-reading tasks during reading lesson because the responses are to some extent different from others.

The last on table 1 item 10 says, "Chances were given for students to predict what the reading passage is about" Accordingly, 33(41.25%) of the respondents said rarely, 16(20%) respondents said sometimes, 16(20%) of the respondents selected never and 9(11.5%) of the respondents said frequently. And only 6(7.5%) of the respondents said very frequently. Majority of the students haven't understood the use of pre-reading tasks during reading lesson. Thus, the result indicates that large number of students was not accustomed with predicting what they are going to learn from the reading text during reading lesson. Therefore, the researcher concluded that in Boditi secondary school the teachers are not applying (using) reading skill during reading lesson properly.

### **Analysis of teachers' Questionnaire**

Questions 1-4 in the teachers' questionnaire were designed in order to investigate whether the teachers use reading tasks during reading lesson. These questions were intended to draw information from the teachers if they use and find it useful in presenting the reading lessons. The table shows the results obtained from the respondents.

As shown in table 2. Above, all of the teachers 6(100%) of them claimed that they did not use reading tasks always during reading lesson for grade 9 students. As to the usefulness of it 1(16.7%) of them reported that it is moderately useful while 2(33.3%) said it is very useful and 3 (50%) of them pointed out that they find using pre-reading tasks during reading lesson is useful. In addition, the teachers' responses to item 3 showed that a

large proportion of the subjects, i.e.4 (66.7) said the reading tasks in grade 9 English text book are appropriate for the level. However, the remaining 1(33.3%) reported that the pre-reading tasks used in grade 9 English text book are not appropriate for the level.

Moreover, the teachers' responses to item 4, which is an extension of item 3, indicated that 1(16.7%) of the teachers always use it while 3(50) of them use it sometimes. The remaining, 2(33.3%) of the teachers follow the procedures rarely. This means as I (the researcher) have /has observed in the actual lesson presentation teachers rarely follow the prescribed procedures of pre-reading tasks during reading lesson.

However, as it can be seen from Table 2, a sizeable proportion of teachers seen convinced about the usefulness of the pre-reading tasks and claimed that they follow the procedures suggested in it while teaching the reading lessons.

Hence, the above information could serve as a springboard for the further analysis to be made at a later stage. In the following parts the main findings of the study are discussed.

### **Analysis of teachers' interview**

Five English teachers among six of grade nine English teachers in Boditi secondary school were interviewed by the researcher. The following are summary and discussion of teachers' interview on the following questions.

1. Do you encourage your students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge?
2. Are you interested to teach reading lesson?
3. Do you engage students into pairs or group during reading lesson?
4. What does good reading lesson look like in your opinion?
5. What are the factors that hinder reading skills during reading lesson?

#### **Item 1 Do you encourage your students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge?**

**Teacher 1: "yes, I do it sometimes. It is important to compare their knowledge with text."**

Teacher 1, encouraging students to relate their ideas with their prior knowledge are part of his activities when he

teaches reading. Usually, it engages him in what he teaches and in whatever activities that he wants them to practice in teaching – learning process. He believes that it gives opportunities for learners to ask questions and to compare their answers with their group members, and it also gives opportunities to challenge each other. He said that his students are ready to explain and use their background knowledge with one another in teaching reading lesson.

Teacher 2: "I do, but students' poor background in English language discourages my attitude."

Teacher 2 in many ways this teacher shared his experience with teacher 1 by saying making students to use their prior knowledge during reading lesson helps them to understand the reading text in well manner. Moreover, he applies it in his own teaching situation. According to him, encouraging students to use their prior knowledge during reading lesson is critical activity in teaching reading lesson. This teacher added his feeling on students' dependency on their teachers. He said that majority of the students expect from the teachers because of their poor background knowledge and experiences. That means they lack the experience of being responsible for their own learning.

Teacher 3: mmm, yes. I help them on discussing about the passage in pair or group.

Teacher 3 replied by saying yes to the same question that they started implementing co-operative learning in reading lesson I encourage my students to use their prior knowledge to understand the text. He added that students raised comments in the process of teaching reading is unsatisfactory because their learning experience were teacher –centered.

The rest of two teachers said that encouraging students to use their prior knowledge is very necessary to make them to understand the text in a well manner.

When the response of the five teachers is compared in first item, they were agreed that they encourage their students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge are the best method to enhance reading ability of the learners.

Finally, based on the questionnaires, interview, and classroom observation data the researcher concluded that teachers and students did not develop interest as well as confidence to practice pre-reading tasks during reading

lesson in language classes. The same is true, the researcher realized that, teachers' and students' perceptions and practices of pre-reading tasks during reading lesson was not applied in appropriate way or in positive/ good/ line in the selected secondary school.

**Item 2: Are you interested to give pre-reading tasks when you teach reading?**

In reply to this question, teacher 1 said,

I use different ways of teaching reading in the class, using pre-reading tasks is one of the methods which I apply during reading lesson.

I am interested make students to sit individually, in pairs, in groups or the teacher works with the whole class. I use one of these ways, based on the nature of the lesson, and I found it appropriate to attain my objectives. Therefore, I am very interested to give pre-reading tasks during reading lesson.

**Teacher 2:**

"I am not interested to give pre-reading tasks during reading lesson because the students are not voluntary to learn in such way.

My justification for this is that some students might be dominated by others and might not talk if a group consists of more than three students. It is also difficult to control the groups unless the number is limited to three." He also complains that speak their mother tongue and Amharic language during group discussion in teaching reading.

**Teacher 3:**

"I am interested to give pre-reading tasks during reading lesson because to make teaching reading effectively it is better to give pre-read tasks. Therefore, I am using pre-reading tasks during reading lesson in language class."

**Teacher 4:**

The pre-reading tasks during reading lesson are formed based on students' interest and sitting proximity. This teacher also complains the same in that of as the above teachers concerning learners' they use Amharic language during group discussions of pre-reading tasks.

**Teacher 5:**

"I am not interested to give pre-reading tasks during reading lesson because the time given within one period is not enough. In addition to this grade nine English text books is very huge, so it is impossible to cover all the lessons in this text.

For me teaching reading directly is the best way in teaching reading rather than wasting time with pre-reading tasks." Two of the five interviewees also reported that there are some students who are not voluntary to practice pre-reading tasks during reading lesson. Because of this reason it is impossible to use or to give pre-reading tasks during reading lesson.

**Item 3: Do you engage students in pairs or small groups during pre-reading tasks?**

Teacher 1 said that He frequently was employed discussion and group work during reading lesson in English language classes to apply active learning. Similarly, he was employed co-operative learning and demonstration sometimes.

Teacher 2 responded that he had better divide the class into small groups and he has selected the strategies which are related with his lesson to achieve the goal in teaching reading skill.

Teacher 3 said that it was impossible to engage students into pairs or small groups during pre-reading tasks because it is only one phase from those of three reading phases. Therefore, passing to reading comprehensions without any consideration of pre-reading tasks is better way.

On the other hand, Teacher 4 and 5 together said that it was impossible for the whole class to process the strategies properly. Then, it was better divide the class into small groups and practiced pre-reading tasks by relating the objectives of the reading lesson takes place at that time.

**Item 4 in your opinion what does good reading tasks look like?**

Teacher 1 said that he was faced a lot of challenges when he tried to use pre-reading tasks during reading lesson like: students' background knowledge, lack of students' interest, and limited class time were branded to implement such kind of tasks during reading lesson.

Therefore, pre-reading tasks that able to solve the above problems are good for teachers to implement them in the classroom.

Teacher 2 said that in his opinion tasks which motivate students to read a passage are the most useful and best to engage students in the process of reading comprehension. So it should be timely and it should fit with students' ability.

Teacher 3 replied that good pre-reading tasks look like the tasks that consider students background and interest. Unless it consider it is impossible to teach the whole reading tasks in the text book.

Teacher 4 similarly suggested that any pre-reading task can be a good pre-reading task if it should encourage and motivate students to have a good time when they read. If the students motivated at the beginning of the passage, they can read the passage and complete it with a great success.

Finally, teacher 5 informed that the good pre-reading tasks should be manageable because the given time for each portion in the text book is timely budgeted and designed to be finished within a year.

#### **Item 5 what are the factors that hinder you or other teachers from implementing reading tasks during reading lesson?**

Teacher 1 said that he was faced a lot of challenges; like: students' background, lack of students' interest, and limited class time were branded to implement pre-reading tasks during reading lesson.

Among these the major problems were students' interest and motivation.

Teacher 2 responded that he was faced many challenges were lack of students' independence to actively involve on using pre-reading tasks during reading lesson and the students' dependence on their teacher.

Teacher 3 answered that three were typical problems like lack of materials and students' dependence became an obstacle to give an opportunity for every student.

Teacher 4 said that he personally likes teaching English and he has taught English for many years but he doesn't like teaching this subject nowadays as students are very much weak in English. Specially, in reading skill they

are very weak rather than other skills because their result in all subjects is becoming less and less.

Finally, teacher 5 said that the students' behavior regarding to their lesson and their teachers is not successful to implement reading comprehension in general and pre-reading tasks in particularly.

#### **General Discussion of Teachers' individual interview**

As can be seen from the interview responses above, the problems that hinder the students reading progress are multifaceted. There are administrative problems such as free promotions which has made the students to be reluctant and careless towards their lessons. Lack of teachers' awareness on the current teaching methodology was also reflected as most of them emphasize reading aloud and ignore silent reading. More over according to the teachers' response lack of early child hood education has resulted in a negative impact in the students' language performance in general and in their reading ability in particular. On top this; as far as students' response is concerned the practice of reading aloud hinders them to think of grasping the message of the text as they are more concerned with pronunciation and form. It has also been confirmed that some teachers don't like teaching now a days as the behavior of students is getting worse over time.

This seems to be a harmful practice for the teaching and learning process of reading in the classroom. If teachers are not encouraged their students by using pre-reading tasks during teaching reading, they may not put the best of their efforts. Therefore, the teachers' misuse of pre-reading tasks during reading lesson is one of the major reasons to students' poor reading tasks.

#### **Analysis and Discussion of Participant teachers' Classroom Observation**

Classroom observation was conducted nine times while the three teachers were teaching in actual classes. Each teacher classes were observed three times. The performances of each teacher was checked against the items in the check list prepared based on the literature review. It was conducted by researcher. The observation data were collected by using checklist. After the observation, the recorded data have been carefully, discussed, analyzed and interpreted.

The following subsequent discussions are on the classroom observation sections (Table 3).

## **Discussion on the result of three days observation**

As far as the three continuous observations are concerned, it seems to me that the teachers are not practicing the appropriate methods of teaching reading. Students are not given the opportunity to read by themselves silently and comprehend the message. They were rather taught reading aloud throughout. However, the current English syllabus for any grade states that student read the passage independently and silently. It also explains the application of group work and pair work which have never been carried out during the observations. Similarly, the contemporary techniques and procedures of practicing reading i.e. pre-reading, while – reading and post-reading procedures were not employed. The methods of acquiring reading skills such as interpreting, analyzing, sequencing, synthesizing and the like have not been made use of based on the age and grade level of students. Even though, reading aloud is important at this level, reading is a silent activity in the real situation, students were not trained for this very nature of reading as it was observed.

Nuttall (1996:32) says “Reading aloud is useful in the early stages but it commonly persists far longer than is desirable.” This scholar further elaborates that naturally we seldom need to read aloud except in class. In Thompson (2001) also it has been stated that in everyday life, it is not normal to read aloud. In elaborating this idea the writer says most readings such as reading books, letters, advertisements and the likes is done silently. Therefore, I think students should practice real life reading i.e silent reading as well. As has been confirmed by the findings with other instruments that will be discussed later on, the teachers understanding of teaching reading and how students gain the reading skill is minimal. They feel that students reading ability is improved when they are reading aloud with correct pronunciation and at an appropriate speed.

The advantage of reading aloud is when it is done purposefully in such a way as creating relationship between sound and its written system.

In reading aloud students are more concerned in pronunciation than understanding. The teacher doesn't know whether students have understood or not.

Reading aloud slows the pace. Our aim is to help children read faster silently than they can read aloud. Most children in the class are passive while the teacher or one of the other children is reading aloud.

To this end, it seems that teachers are not following the actual reading method according to the observations made in the three days. Similarly, the importance of pre-reading seems to have been neglected according to what has been observed. However, pre-reading is a very useful technique in teaching reading. The main purpose of pre-reading is to create a positive attitude in the minds of students so that they will be initiated to read the text. It is also to activate their prior knowledge so as to gain new information. The teachers observed however, were unable to understand this fact and never used pre-reading activities.

## **Summary, conclusions and implication**

### **Summary of major Findings of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perception and the application of reading skill during reading lesson at Boditi secondary school in south Nations and Nationalities Region, in Wolaite Zone. In order to achieve its purpose, the following major areas were investigated in the study: perceptions of student on using reading tasks during reading lesson, teachers' practices of reading tasks during reading lesson, and the influence of the teachers' perceptions on their practice were the major areas. On the basis of the results obtained from the questionnaire data, the classroom observations and the interviews, both quantitative and qualitative analysis was made on the gathered data revealed the following major findings.

- Majority of the teachers believed in the importance of using reading tasks during reading even though, they did not give due emphasis to use reading tasks during teaching reading in the classroom.
- Most of the sample students' perceived pre reading activities, which is not practiced frequently by their teachers, as relevant to them.
- More than half of the sample students' believed that doing reading activities in group encourages active participation in reading lessons whereas most of them said that their teachers assigns them to do reading activities in groups rarely. More than fifty percent of the samples said that their teachers never provided them with reading tasks for their attempt in reading lessons. In addition, students said that teachers assisted them to do reading tasks rarely, however, most of them believed that getting teachers'

appreciation and praise encourages them do better.

- More than fifty percent of the respondents' indicated that teachers hardly ever emphasize on the usefulness of effort in promoting students reading skill and engagement.
- Half of the respondents said that their teachers sometimes help them to develop their reading skill through reading tasks and majority of the students perceived that having the skill of reading helps them to take note and comprehend the reading material easily.
- Half of the samples said that sometimes their teacher show interest in teaching reading and some of them believed that their reading purpose could be achieved highly by teachers' use of pre reading tasks.

Conclusion is as follows:

As it is stated in the review of related literature part, a number of research findings indicated that the decisive role that students' perception plays in affecting their teachers' use of reading tasks for learning and teaching reading lesson.

Based on the results of the data obtained, the following conclusions have been drawn.

The analysis of the data implied that majority of the participants (students and teachers) of the study perceived reading activities positively and some of them perceived negatively. Some of the teachers who developed negative feeling to use of reading tasks responded that using reading task adds more work and requires additional effort.

Although most of the teachers had positive attitudes towards using reading tasks, they failed to implement these activities in their actual teaching learning process of reading. This implies that the classes were dominated by the teachers and the students became passive participants.

Additionally, the researcher has arrived at the following conclusions.

- As it is known, students will not be motivated to read unless the teachers use pre- reading tasks during reading lesson.
- As the findings of this study show, there is lack of providing due emphasis in selecting and using reading tasks during reading lesson.

Therefore, it is possible to say that students' motivation for reading is at risk unless the teachers use reading tasks. In addition, it could be possible to conclude that students are disappointed as a result of their teachers is not being able to use the pre-reading tasks during reading lesson as they prefer.

Emphasizing problems that are related with selection of reading tasks and motivation, Alrights, also states that topics are always selected and used mostly on the basis of what society believes students need to learn, not on the basis of what students would choose if given the opportunity to do so.

- The research findings also indicated the occurrence of lack of using reading activities that take students' interest into consideration during reading lesson. in this study, the findings indicated that most of the students consider doing reading activities in groups as relevant to the. As it is known, running varieties of reading activities together could be taken as a good condition in which students tend to like each other, share common goals which intern create a feeling of supportiveness and enhance their initiation to win over others But, on the contrary, teachers apply reading activities rarely. This leads us to the conclusion that the practices of reading activities were not implemented properly in teaching of reading lesson.

As Nuttal, (1982) indicated, exercising small game like group reading activities help to promote strong interaction among students. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, in designing reading activities, undermining students' first choice and learning styles by teachers may contribute for feeling of dissatisfaction, discouragement and passiveness on students' engagement in reading activities. In line with this, Lockhart and Richards (1996) also suggested that the central question in planning learning activities is deciding whether students will complete activities individually, in pairs, in groups, or as a whole – class activity.

- The findings revealed that teachers hardly accommodated students' learning style and using pre-reading tasks as motivational orientations.
- More than half of the respondents indicated that, teachers' support, initiation and using pre-reading tasks in teaching reading was very much

limited and applied only sometimes. This also created dissatisfaction in students' part. This implies that teachers who teach at grade 9 at Boditi secondary school were less dedicated to use appropriate reading tasks during lesson.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusions the following recommendations should be made:

1. It is unquestionable that to change the classroom practices changing textbook alone does not affect the changes we aspire for line with the current innovations made in the language teaching and learning program. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and other concerned bodies should organize practice based workshops, seminars and in service training related with how to present reading lessons in line with the suggested pedagogical procedures rather than the theoretical and philosophical teachings of communicative language teaching used to develop the current ELT course book. In addition, the Ministry of Education should make efforts to furnish the school libraries with different materials on language teaching methodology such as journals, books, cassettes etc., to make easy access to the teachers so that they may read and improve their way of teaching reading skills in the new course book
2. Teachers should make their own personal effort to keep abreast with current theory and practices in language teaching in general and teaching reading in particular to familiarize themselves with appropriate methods of presenting reading lessons so that could put in to practice the new course book effectively in the classrooms.
3. Above all, further research should be conducted to find out why teachers are reluctant to put in to practice the prescribed procedures in the new Teacher's Book for teaching the reading section of the current course book in grade nine in Addis Ababa.

### **Pedagogical Implications of the Study**

The results of this study have important practical pedagogical implications in the process of promoting students motivation for learning reading by using reading tasks. This study pointed out a big gap between teachers' perception of importance of the use of reading comprehensions during the implementation of reading

lesson. Besides, the study also depicted that the probability of using students opinion as a good reference in designing and implementing reading tasks during reading lesson should be taken into consideration by the teachers of secondary schools.

In this context, as far as the purpose of using different reading comprehensions to arouse students' interest for reading, the study implies that considering how students value, judge or interpret reading activities that teachers use is the most important building block. Without this essential element, realizing the expected objectives or promoting students' for reading is impractical.

Moreover, the result of this study implies that since reading activities are carefully and implemented, students' motivation could be enhanced and they would be interested to complete activities with their full effort accordingly.

For instance including issues on which students interested to know and talk about is important. Furthermore, finding ways to raise teachers' awareness of using reading tasks and to train them in using reading skills that can help them to motivate learners should be a major methodological concern.

Finally, to verify the present study as a whole regarding the relationship of teachers' use of reading activities with students' perception of it, future research is required. For this to happen, improving the inadequacy of the present instruments, employing other additional measures and including the report of knowledgeable others are essential. Moreover, the assessment of variables was also limited to students' self-report of their own opinion.

Therefore, bearing in mind to include variables other than the present study for instance, teachers' perception of using reading tasks, style of teaching reading and students' interest are important.

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**Appendix 1**

**Student questionnaires**

**Table.1** Students’ responses on teachers’ application of reading skill during reading lesson

| No | Items  | Alternatives |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
|----|--|--------------|--|--------|--|-----------|--|------------|--|---------------|--|
|    |  | Never        |  | Rarely |  | Sometimes |  | Frequently |  | V. Frequently |  |
|    |  |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 1  | The teacher helps students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 2  | The teacher is interested in teaching use reading tasks during reading lesson      |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 3  | The teacher assigns students to do reading activities together.                    |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 4  | The teacher encourages questions and other contributions from students             |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 5  | The teacher gives brief introduction about reading text.                           |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 6  | Students are asked to discuss on the topic before they read                        |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 7  | The teacher encourages the students to relate the topics with their experiences.   |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 8  | The teacher makes the instruction clear to the students.                           |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 9  | Difficult words in the text were sorted out and explained                          |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |
| 10 | Students were given a chance to predict what the reading passage is about          |              |  |        |  |           |  |            |  |               |  |

Appendix 2

Teacher's questionnaire

| No | Questionnaire Items one- four  | Responses in |                   |        |               |
|----|--|--------------|-------------------|--------|---------------|
|    |  | Yes          |                   | No     |               |
| 1  | Do you always use reading tasks during reading lesson?   |              |                   |        |               |
| 2  | If your answer to question No 1 is 'yes' how useful have you found using reading tasks during reading lesson?              | very useful  | moderately useful | useful | highly useful |
| 3  | Do you think the procedures suggested in grade 9 English text books for using reading lessons appropriate for the level?   | Yes          |                   | No     |               |
| 4  | If your answer to question No 3 is 'yes' how often do you follow the procedures?<br>A. Always<br>B. Sometimes<br>C. Rarely |              |                   |        |               |

APPENDIX 3 Teachers' Interview

1. Do you encourage your students to relate ideas in the passage to their prior knowledge?
2. Are you interested to teach reading lesson?
3. Do you engage students into pairs or groups during reading lesson?
4. What does good reading lesson look like in your opinion?
5. What are the factors that hinder reading skills during reading lesson?