



ADAMA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND LAW
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

**THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING READING IN ENGLISH AT UKA AND
ADARE PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HALU WOREDA: GRADE EIGHT IN
FOCUS**

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SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

ADAMA, ETHIOPIA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITY AND LAW DEPARTEMENT OF
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MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)**

SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

ADAMA, ETHIOPIA

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled “The practice of teaching reading in English at second cycle primary schools: Grade eight in focus”, has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr Mekuria Abera.

The thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma to any university or institutions. All sources of information used for this thesis has been also fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the practices of teaching English reading skills at primary level especially in grade eight. It was used to answer two research questions. These were: First, what techniques of teaching reading in English as a foreign language are used in the primary levels especially in grade eight? Second, what are the challenges that negatively affect the children's development of English reading skills? To gather information for the study classroom observation, students' questionnaire, and teachers' interview were used. For the purpose of this study, simple random sampling techniques were used. Accordingly, 80 students, 2 sections and 8 English language teachers were selected for the study. The data were categorized and descriptively analyzed. As a result, the findings depicted that inappropriate reading techniques were used in the mentioned grade level. Teachers were observed using the traditional way of teaching reading which was dominated by reading aloud. There was no time given for silent reading. Techniques of reading such as pre- and post- reading were not used at all. The consequence of wrong reading practices used has resulted in the weak performances of the students in their reading ability. To that end, this research paper provides recommendation that could bring about a change in the practice of teaching and learning reading in the grade level studied so that current techniques and procedures of teaching reading could be employed.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Introduction

In this chapter, background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitation of the study and organization of the study were presented respectively.

1.2 Back Ground of the Study

Ever since the teaching and learning of languages started, scholars in the field have been striving to come up with appropriate and effective ways of teaching and learning for both first and second as well as foreign languages. English is a foreign language that is widely taught in schools around the world (Brewster, 1992). According to this scholar, English has now an official status in sixty countries and has paramount position in twenty more countries.

In Ethiopia also the beginning of teaching and learning English as a foreign language dates back to the emergence of modern education in the country in 1941. In those days, it was used as a medium of instruction starting from grade three and later on it has been used at high school level and above. Since then, English has been taught as one of the major subjects at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. It is also used as the medium of instruction in the levels mentioned. The new education and training policy of 1994 states that English should be given as a subject starting from grade one onwards and the policy has also given due emphasis to the use of English as a medium of instruction in the secondary and tertiary levels. To this end, as it is one of the four language skills the practice of teaching English reading skills is indispensably much important in language education (Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia, 1994).

Reading involves two main types and these may occur in a language classroom. These can be referred as intensive and extensive reading. As his suggestion indicates the first distinction that can be made is whether the reading is loud or silent. Within the category of silent reading, one encounters intensive and extensive reading. Intensive reading is used to teach or practice specific reading strategies or skills. The text is treated as an end in itself. Extensive reading on

the other hand, involves reading of large quantities of material, directly and fluently. It is treated as a means to an end. It may include reading simply for pleasure or reading technical, scientific or professional material. These later academic texts may involve two specific types of reading. These are scanning for key details or skimming for the essential meaning. A relatively quick and efficient read, either on it or after scanning or skimming, will give a global or general meaning (Brown, 2001).

In the same way, Brown (2001) explains that “intensive reading calls attention to grammatical forms, discourse markers, and other surface structure details for the purpose of understanding literal meaning, implications, rhetorical relationships, and the like” (p.79).

Similarly, Bradfield (2003) say “It is a detailed in-class analysis, led by the teacher, of vocabulary and grammar points, in a short passage." For example, Intensive Reading which is sometimes called "Narrow Reading" may involve students reading selections by the same author or several texts about the same topic. When this occurs, content and grammatical structures repeat themselves and students get many opportunities to understand the meanings of the text. The success of "Narrow Reading" on improving reading comprehension is based on the premise that the more familiar the reader with the text, either due to the subject matter or having read other works by the same author, the more comprehension is promoted (p.202).

Effective reading practice is strongly recommended for students at all levels, from the primary to the tertiary, and for the rest of one’s life. The issue of reading becomes more significant when it comes to the English language because English is used in a number of countries as first and second language. Besides this, English is used as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary levels in these countries. More importantly, in countries like Ethiopia, reading in English is more significant if students are needed to be competent enough in their academic achievement. Therefore, reading has paramount significances in the English curriculum. In this regard, literature has suggested giving special focuses to the practice of teaching reading (Bamford 2004).

Bamford refers reading to the act of thinking and constructing meaning before, during, and after reading by integrating information from the author with the reader's background knowledge. Students' ability to activate prior knowledge regarding content-area topics depend on word

knowledge and experience with a wide variety of reading materials. Limited experience affects reading practices because prior knowledge plays an important role in helping students understand higher-level concepts. All of these ideas suggest that the practice of teaching should give due consideration to the teaching reading. The ability to read and comprehend textbooks and notes may come through practicing reading.

In line with the above discussion, it is important to see the advantage of reading through reading practice. The activity of reading is regarded as a habit when it is repeatedly practiced and carried out. Reading to be practiced, repeatedly, it needs to involve the provision of different reading materials that attract the attention of readers. In measureable terms, reading practice is often considered in terms of the amount of the materials being read; the frequency of reading as well as the way and the average time spent on reading and this habit can be cultivated (Wagner, 2002).

Given the fact that language learning is mainly the 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 skills appropriately. From this, reading provides effective and adequate ways of learning language. Therefore, teaching reading, like other skills, needs carefully selected activities, methods and procedures at both higher and lower grades. More importantly, the teaching of reading at the primary level is where the base is laid and the foundation is established (Brown, 2001).

To that effect, this particular study focuses on investigating the practices of teaching reading at primary school with special focus on grade 8 students in Uka and Adare primary schools in Halu Woreda.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Reading is one of the most important skills to be practiced beginning from the primary school level. Skills in reading help learners to benefit a great deal from educational activities. Moreover, reading in general and reading English in particular is a base to the successful achievement of all other subjects in the Ethiopian education system. In a foreign language situation, reading is the

most useful and important skill. This being the fact, as studies indicate, the reading ability of Ethiopian secondary and tertiary level students is deteriorating over time. Among such studies, to mention a few of them are the PhD dissertations of Gebremedhin (1993), Gessesse (1999) and Taye (1999). Similarly, there are a number of MA theses on the reading ability of students at the secondary level. However, all these local studies focused on the tertiary and secondary level of English reading ability of students and their findings concluded that the English language reading practice of Ethiopian secondary and tertiary students has been declining.

In learning reading, the students are required to understand the text to get the information. They are not required to understand each individual part of the sentence or paragraph, but they should understand the message the writer is trying to convey. According to Anderson (1996) Reading is a very complex process. It requires a high level of muscular coordination and sustained effort. Reading is more than just visual task. Not only must the reader use and identify the symbols in front of him but also he must interpret what he reads in the light of his background knowledge, associate it with past experience and project beyond his understanding in term of ideas, judgments, application and conclusion.

Furthermore, Davis (1995) said that “understanding what we are reading is far more important to us than knowing the mechanical skill of reading. Without understanding, reading would serve no purpose.” It means that understanding text is the goal of reading skill that should be achieved by the students in each levels of the language learning process (p.86).

Realizing that understanding text is very important to be achieved by the students in reading skill, these difficulties in understanding reading text should be known and solved both by the students and the teacher because the difficulties will give negative impact on the students’ ability and motivation to achieve the reading target. Davis (1995) stated that “difficulty with reading can have an increasingly negative effect on the students’ learning, as reading requirements become greater and more extensive.” Therefore, the researcher believes that it is important to do research based on this topic with the assumption that every student may have different difficulties in understanding the reading text (p.104).

With regard to research studies conducted on the English reading ability of the second cycle primary students, despite my attempt to find one, I have not been able to find studies conducted at both PhD and MA level. However, there are some other research findings that depicted the low achievement of English of primary level students particularly in grade 8. The case in point is the National Learning Assessment (NLA) which is conducted every two years by the Ministry of Education (MOE) under the technical and financial support of BESO/USAID-ETHIOPIA with the help of the National Organization for Examinations (NOE). Accordingly, in three of the National Learning Assessment (NLA) conducted in the years, 2005, 2006, and recently in 2007, it has been found that the English language scores of students at grade eight have been below the standard set by the government. On top of this, from classroom observations I carried out as part of my professional activity, I have seen the problems children encounter to read English at this particular level. Thus, I have been motivated to investigate the root cause of the problem. I believe that this research is different from the other researches because it focuses on the practice of English reading skills of primary school students at grade eight levels.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study was:

- To investigate the practices of teaching English reading skills at Uka and Adare primary schools in Halu Woreda.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The Specific Objectives of this study were:

- To identify the techniques used for teaching English reading skills at the primary schools especially in grade eight.
- To find out the challenges those hinder the students' development of English reading skills at the primary level.

1.4 Research Questions

The study attempts to find answers to the following research questions.

1. What techniques and procedures of teaching reading in English as a foreign language were used in the primary levels especially in grade eight?
2. What were the challenges that negatively affect the children's development of English reading skills?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study was significant in showing the practice of teaching reading in English at Uka and Adare primary schools. The schools were selected on the basis of their better score in national examination at grade eight levels. In this case, it initiates grade eight English language teachers to re-assess their techniques of teaching reading skill during English language classes. In the same way, it may create a good opportunity and develop experience for teachers to assess student's needs in teaching reading English language.

Accordingly, the study might give some sort of clue to the causes of the reading problems not only at the primary level but also at the higher levels which could presumably be the lack of well-designed methods and techniques of reading practices at the lower levels. More importantly, the study can serve as a stepping stone for future researchers interested in the study of teaching and learning reading in English in primary levels.

1.6 The Scope of the Study

This study was limited to Uka and Adare primary schools in Halu Woreda which is found in West of Oromia Regional State of Ilu Aba Bora Zone. The target grade level is grade 8 which is the terminal grade for secondary school. Because of time constraint, it has been difficult to use more sample schools. The schools were selected on the basis of their better score in national examination at grade eight levels.

The researcher strongly agrees that the inclusion of additional primary schools and increasing population size in the study could help to get more relevant and broader information.

Furthermore, the researcher believes on the importance of making frequent classroom observations so that it could be possible to observe, identify and come with the practices of teaching English reading skills teachers implement in English classroom. Therefore, the study would be more reliable and stronger in its evidence.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This research was conducted only on two second cycle primary schools of Halu Woreda. On the other hand, teachers included in the observation sample group were observed only three times each because it was impossible to have more observation sessions due to the restriction of time constraints. In addition, as it was the time when students were preparing for exam, samples' shortage of time to participate in the study was also another problem faced during data collection. Despite these restrictions, however, the researcher has attempted to solve the problems by consulting the concerned bodies to make the study as completed as possible.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter covers introduction part of the study that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, objectives of the study, scope and limitation of the study. Chapter two, on the other hand contains literature review that would be gathered from both conceptual and empirical literature sources. Chapter three includes methodology which is assumed to be a soul of research; Chapter four would cover data analysis and interpretation. Finally, summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations have been presented in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2. Introduction

This chapter deals with the definition of reading and the importance of Reading. Then it outlines the types of reading, the phases in teaching and learning reading.

2.1 Definition of Reading

Scholars have defined reading in various ways and all the definitions seem to have similar concepts. For instance, Grellet (1981) defines reading as a process of extracting and understanding the required information from a text. He further notes that it is an active skill where the guessing, predicting and checking as well as questioning oneself are entailed. In the same way, Wallace (2003) defines reading as a hierarchy of skills, from processing of individual letters and their associated sounds to word recognition to text processing competencies. According to this definition reading begins as early as the first day of identifying a single letter. Similarly, Williams (1984) states reading as a process of decoding symbols and looking at words and understanding what has been written.

Reading is one of the four language skills taught in English language learning process besides listening, speaking and writing. However, among of all the skills reading is considered as the most important skill. Wagner (2002) stated that “reading is essential skill to success in our society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social and educational advancement. Furthermore, according to Wagner “reading supports the development of overall proficiency and provides access to crucial information at work and in school.” Therefore, it can be concluded that people's daily life and reading activity are closely related because reading is not only useful in the world of education, but also in social and working life. (p.248)

Both the definitions stated above indicate that reading begins at the primary level where children are made to acquaint themselves with letters and combination of letters to form words. For Harmer (1983), reading involves both the eyes and the brain where the eyes receive message and the brain performs the interpretation of messages received. According to all the definitions stated

above reading is an active process where someone deals with the written material in guessing and predicting in relation to his/her prior knowledge. Reading calls for analyzing and interpreting the message which is beyond mere deciphering.

2.2 The Importance of Reading

The ability to read in English has paramount importance for children's in such a way that it meets the everyday reading needs later in life (Cummings, 1991). Reading is needed in both class room and real life situation. According to Madeson (1983), the major language skill that enables learners to grasp ideas, facts, concepts and thoughts is reading. This is to mean that reading enables people to access information from technologies and books. It is also a skill that learners make use of in the environment out of school in their daily routine (McDonough and Shaw, 2003). They also maintain emphatically that reading is one of the most important foreign language skills.

Reading can help the students to understand about a country and its people. It can serve as a vehicle for entering into the country's present and past civilization. The ability to read will stay with them longer than the other skills, and it is the skill that will be convenient to use. That is why reading is very important to be taught to the students starting from primary school up to tertiary level.

The fact that education cannot be offered without developing the reading ability of children makes this skill the most crucial one. According to Nuttall (1996), the very reason to learn foreign language is to get better jobs, access to literature etc. and reading ability is necessary for these activities. Highlighting the significance of reading at the primary level Namid (2005) says, "At primary level all teachers must be teachers of reading."

Thus, if reading is important as this, it needs to be practiced as early as possible in the primary level in order to develop successful reading ability gradually at the higher levels. However, as has been explained in the statement of the problem above, many research works have concluded that the reading ability of both secondary tertiary level of students has been below what is expected of them.

In general, scholars agree that reading is not only the most important language skill that enables learners to grasp ideas, facts concepts and thoughts but also it is a skill that plays a role in developing other language skills.

To this end, I believe that if the reading practices of children at primary level could be handled appropriately according to the best current practices in language teaching and learning methods and approaches, the problem of the higher level students' reading ability might be alleviated.

2.3 Types of Reading

In dealing with the types of reading scholars divide reading in to two kinds, depending upon the purpose of the text for reading, the length of the text and the classroom procedure as well as the very objective the text is prepared for. Accordingly, the two types of reading are called **intensive** and **extensive** reading. These two types of reading however are complementary and children should be exposed to both types (Nuttall 1996).

2. 3. 1 Intensive Reading

As it has already been mentioned the classification of the two types depends on the purpose of the text for reading, the length of the text and the classroom procedure. Based on this, intensive reading refers to the reading of short text. It entails the reading made at class room level under the guidance of the teacher. This is a type of reading we usually see in language class rooms both at primary level and secondary or tertiary levels. The main purpose of this type of reading is understanding the meaning of the text in general or the specific information. Hedge (2000) explains intensive reading as a type of reading that is concerned with looking at a text carefully for the purpose of choosing precise words or phrases. Cummings (1991) also in dealing with this specific type of reading says that intensive reading is a kind of reading of short texts for comprehension.

From what is stated above it is possible to understand the crucial role of intensive reading in enhancing not only the reading ability of students but also students' language skills in general. To sum up, the practice of intensive reading at primary level is vital. It is the base for other reading strategies and plays a role in helping students to develop other language skills.

2.3.2 Extensive Reading

Extensive reading has been explained by different writers. For instance, Sesunan (2003) explains it as a type of reading a text in a widely manner but not deeply where the aim is for pleasure and entertainment in which the written texts are not studied in detail. Cummings (1991) also explains it in a similar way by saying that it is a reading of books and magazines etc., meant for pleasure, to obtain information or to satisfy interest.

At this level, the parents and the environment play a significant role in helping children to read. According to Scrinvener (1994) parents are the first and major teachers who should spend the longest time with them in providing and creating a conducive environment for their children's reading habit.

Obviously, the most decisive and significant factor for the preparation of children to read by themselves is the attitude they have towards reading. This is something that children develop at an early age. To let students develop this useful habit of reading, schools and the parents' contribution towards it is paramount. Krashen (1993) in expressing the importance of extensive reading for children says that extensive reading helps to improve second language without the support of teachers and other people.

2.4 Phases in Teaching and Learning Reading

There are three main stages in teaching reading: pre-reading, while reading and post reading (Abot and Wingard, 1981; Williams, 1984; Nuttall, 1996). These phases of reading are discussed as follows:

The Pre-reading Phase is to arouse the interest of the readers and to activate their prior knowledge on the topic. In this stage students will be made to think and discuss the topic to be read so that their background knowledge of the message in the text can be recalled. This stage as discussed above is a stage where prior knowledge of the students in relation to the text they are reading is made to be activated.

The while- reading stage is a stage in which students are made to read silently in order to answer questions already set. It is an intensive reading practice where they try to grasp main points and answer questions. During this stage activities that could be carried out for the primary level children as mentioned by in Hedge (2000) can be read and match, read and label, read and complete and read and draw.

In the post reading stage students will be asked whether they have understood the general information of the text in relation to their prior knowledge. There are three levels of comprehension questions. These are: questions for exact meaning; questions for inferred meanings; questions related to the students' own experience. This stage can be carried out by arranging small group discussion that could be followed by whole class discussion (Williams 1984).

In general, throughout the three phases during reading practices two major areas of knowledge play a decisive role. These are what are called schematic knowledge and language knowledge. Schematic knowledge refers to the prior knowledge of the children. It could be what they have already known about their environment, locally or the knowledge they have about the world as a whole. Prior knowledge can be gained from both informal sources such as family and the environment as well as from previous reading and education. "Comprehension is the use of prior knowledge to create new knowledge." (Adams and Bruce 1982).

Thus, readers should bring their prior knowledge to the text they read and writers of texts should consider students' prior knowledge in preparing reading texts.

2.5 The role of the teacher

The teacher's ability to teach reading plays a decisive role in students acquisition of language skills and ultimately for the successes of the learners. The role of the teacher is to be responsive to the varied needs of each child (Namid 2005). To this effect, the teacher has to present appropriate topics and activities according to the level of the students involved. On this point scholars say the following:

When developing activities for a reading programme, the teachers tasks should activate and extend the pupils' background knowledge should involve real-life issue and interests directly related to the child and to what that child believes to be important. Ruddel and Unrau (1997) cited in Namid (2005).

According to the above scholars, children are more interested to read about what they know instead of unknown events. McDonough and Shaw (1993) also insist on the use of authentic materials as opposed to traditional types of text used in most cases. Thus, the teacher should bear in mind whether or not the reading text interests the children they teach.

Similarly in Nuttall (1996) the following roles and responsibilities of the teacher in teaching a reading lesson are stated:

- Language teachers have to enjoy and value reading themselves by showing that they read a lot.
- They need to help students enjoy and value reading by offering them attractive texts.
- Teachers should let students understand what reading involves and how language conveys meaning and how texts are put together.
- They should identify what skills students lack and work out ways to develop these skills.
- They should choose suitable texts on the basis of students' educational level and age.
- They should choose and devise effective tasks and practices.
- They should make sure that every student work productively by encouraging students promotes text focused discussion and enable them interpreted the text themselves.

2.6 Principles of Teaching Reading

Among writers on reading lesson Harmer (2003) provides six short and precise principles for the teaching of reading. The principles of reading according to this writer are as follows:

Principle 1: Reading is not a passive skill.

Regarding this principle the writer tells us that reading is an active occupation. Therefore readers should understand the meanings of words, see pictures understand the arguments and take a

position to agree or not. If students do not do these things while readings then they are only scratching the surface of the text and there will be a tendency of forgetting it quickly.

Principle 2: Students need to be engaged with what they are doing.

According to this principle students should be engaged with the reading text. This helps them to be actively interested in what they are doing and benefit much from it.

Principle 3: Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.

Even though the importance of the study of reading texts in relation to their use of language is undeniable, the main purpose of practicing reading is to let students get the meaning and the message of the text. Thus, we must give students a chance to respond to the meaning and message of texts.

Principle 4: Prediction is a major factor in reading.

Book covers, photographs, headlines, contents and titles give us hint of what is in the book before we read a single word. Our brain begins predicting what we are going to read. We build expectations and the active process of reading takes place. Therefore, teachers should give hints to their students so that they can predict what is going to be read.

Principle 5: Match the task to the topic.

Once students are given a reading text to read an appropriate task should be designed. The right kind of questions and useful other activities that engage students must be ready. Unnecessary and inappropriate questions could make an interesting text boring and unattractive.

Principle 6: Good teacher exploits reading text to the full messages.

Any reading text is full of sentences, words, ideas, descriptions etc. It does not make sense to get students to read it and then drop it to move on to something else. Good teachers integrate the

reading text into interesting class sequences using topic for discussion and further tasks, using the language for study and later activation.

In general, the literature review presented in this paper began by defining reading which is followed by the importance of reading. Then types of reading were discussed thoroughly. Next, the phases in teaching and learning reading were explained. The roles of teachers in the teaching of reading have also been presented in detail. The last part of this chapter has dealt with principles of teaching reading. In all the discussions an attempt has been made to relate it with reading practice at primary level.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide decision on the research design research site, subjects of the study, sampling techniques and sample size, data gathering instruments, data collection procedure, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study was designed to investigate the practice of teaching reading in English at Uka and Adare primary schools grade eight students. In this case, mechanisms used by teachers to practice teaching reading in English and problems affecting students' reading skills were examined. To achieve this objective, the study was conducted by employing a mixed method in which both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to answer the research questions. This approach is used since social phenomena are very complex and different kind of methods are needed to best understand these complexities and to get comprehensive information by supplementing one approach with others Widdowson (1990). Moreover, it helps the researcher to freely use different research methods in order to get through data in studying the proposed problem.

3.2 Research Site

In order to conduct the study, Uka and Adare primary schools in Halu Woreda which is found in west of Oromia Regional State of Ilu Aba Bora Zone were selected as center and source of data. Uka Primary School is located in the center of the city and Adare Primary School is located to the west part of the town. These schools were selected because there were teachers with long years of experience in these schools and the reading material provision and the physical set up of the schools were conducive to the teaching and learning process.

3.3 Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study were both students and teachers of grade eight at Uka and Adare primary schools. There were 400 students in 10 sections and 8 English language teachers in both

schools. From these, 80 students, 2 sections and 8 English language teachers were selected for the study.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

For the purpose of this study, simple random sampling techniques were used. The sample students were selected from both schools through simple random sampling technique as a simple representative of the data through lottery.

So as to access equal chance for all kinds of students, males or females, low, medium or fast learners, and the researcher first ensured the number of students in each section from their attendance list. This enabled him to pick out 80 students which are 40 males and 40 females from both schools randomly based on their role numbers. In the same way, two sections from both schools were also selected randomly. All 8 English language teachers from both schools were selected purposefully. Accordingly, one section in each school was observed for three days. Eight English teachers and 80 students in grade eight of the two schools were made to fill questionnaires. Similarly, 8 English teachers and 20 students in both schools were also attended focus group discussion. Additionally, individual interviews were carried out for 4 teachers and 10 students in both schools.

3.5 Data Gathering Instruments

In order to collect data from selected samples and validate findings through triangulation, the researcher used three data gathering tools. These were classroom observation, questionnaire, and interview. The detail of each instrument is given next.

3.5.1 Classroom Observation

The research question that deals with techniques of teaching English reading skills in grade eight was looked through this instrument. Thus, a carefully designed check list was used to observe the teaching and learning practices in the English language reading lessons. Accordingly, in each school, one grade eight class were selected and two teachers were observed three times as they taught reading. The performances of each teacher were checked against the items n the check list prepared based on the literature review. Some of the observations were video recorded.

According to scholars such as (Harmer, 2003; Nuttall, 1996; Williams, 1984) the practice of teaching and learning reading in classroom includes three phases of activities. These are pre-reading phase, the while reading phase and the post reading phase. Thus, continuous observations has been conducted mainly to check whether or not these phases were carried out and appropriately managed.

In line with this, the classroom observation was employed for the reading lesson to find out whether the student centered teaching and learning method is being carried out. Most importantly, it was to see the students' reading comprehension practice in terms of their decoding skills where predictive questions, interpretation and other strategies employed.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

In order to obtain the necessary data for the designed study, questionnaires were used to collect data for the reason that it would allow the collection of information on the variety of issues in relatively short time, less cost and wide coverage. Therefore, questionnaire that consisted twelve items was distributed for students. In order to avoid barriers of understanding, questionnaires for students were developed based on the related studies in both English and Afan Oromo.

3.5.3 Interview

To be able to validate the information solicited through questionnaires and so as to get the actual information with detail justification which allow the researcher flexibility to probe respondents response more deeply, interview is very vital for the study. In this case, structured interviews were used with students. Ten students from both schools were interviewed.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

In collecting the required data, three instruments were used for the study. First, a brief orientation on the purpose of this study was given for both students and teachers, and the researcher asked their willingness to take part in the study. Next, classroom observation has been used. Then, Questionnaires were distributed to the students. In addition, interview was carried out with teachers.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

For the purpose of the designed study, analysis and interpretation of the result were carefully undertaken. In analyzing of the data, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods were employed. Descriptive statistics of percentage in the tables were used for qualitative method which was gathered through questionnaires to make the data convenient for interpretation.

Thus, the data which was obtained from observation, focus group discussions and interviews were analyzed qualitatively in order to support the quantitatively analyzed data. Finally, the findings obtained from each form of data were integrated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4. Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis as well as interpretation of the data gathered from the sample schools through various instruments. The demographic information of the respondents and the questionnaire's results were presented in tables while the results of observations, focus group discussions and interviews were presented in narratives.

4.1 Data from Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is the main tool for this study. Below are statements of reading lesson practices that refer to the pre-reading activities with “Yes” and “No” columns indicating data relating to the three observation days in both schools.

Table 1: Classroom Observation Checklist

		The teacher in Uka school						The teacher in Adare school					
N o	Items on Pre- reading Practices	Day One		Day Two		Day Three		Day One		Day Two		Day Three	
		Date	Period	Date	Period	Date	Period	Date	Period	Date	Period	Date	Period
		16/08/09	3 rd	24/08/09	2 nd	02/09/09	1 st	17/08/09	1 st	25/08/09	4 th	03/09/09	2 nd
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	The teacher gave brief introduction about the reading text.		X		X		X		X		X		X
2	Students were made to discuss topic before they read text.		X		X		X		X		X		X
3	The teacher encouraged the students to relate the topic with their experience.		X		X		X		X		X		X
4	The teacher gave clear instruction to the students.		X		X		X		X		X		X
5	Difficult words in the text were sorted out and explained.		X		X		X	X			X		X
6	Students were asked to predict what the reading passage was about.		X		X		X		X		X		X
7	Students were made to read silently.		X		X		X		X	X		X	
8	Students were made to read aloud.	X		X		X		X		X		X	

9	The teacher reads the text aloud before he/she let the students to read.		X		X		X		X		X	X	
10	Students were made to answer questions orally.		X	X		X		X		X		X	
11	Students were made to answer question in writing.		X	X		X			X		X	X	
12	Students were given practical activities to demonstrate.		X		X		X		X		X		X
13	Groups were formed to discuss about the passage and report to class.		X	X		X			X	X		X	
14	The teacher tried to integrate the reading lesson with the other language skills.		X	X			X		X		X	X	
15	The teacher encouraged the students to read other materials out of their class.		X		X		X		X		X		X
16	The teacher uses others stories that could arouse students interest.		X		X		X		X		X		X
17	The teacher tries to develop reading habit in the students.		X		X		X		X		X		X

What is obviously seen in the check list above is that both teachers do not use pre-reading phase activities at all to draw the attention of students towards the text they were going to read. In other words students were not made to activate their prior knowledge so as to gain new information. Many writers tell us that the pre-reading activities are significant for the actual reading practices. Harmer (2003:70) says “Teachers should give students hints so that they can predict what is coming too.” However, both teachers failed to do so in almost all the pre reading items except the item stated on number five about introduction of new vocabulary which was performed by the teacher in Adare School on the first observation day.

Unlike the pre-reading phase in which both teachers failed to perform any of the practices, the two teachers in the two schools performed to some extent in the while- reading phase. Accordingly, the performances and procedures of the two teachers are discussed below.

4.1.1 First Observation Day- The Teacher in Uka School

The teacher started her class by greeting the students and asking the date. She then wrote the page number of the text and the topic instruction that says “Read and Do” and ordered a student to read aloud. This is actually a while reading activity. The pre reading phase was skipped all together. She then let many students read aloud turn by turn. In this case, the seventh item in the check list that reads as: I read the passage myself to the students before they read, has not been accomplished. According to Williams (1984) a teacher that starts a lesson by simply telling students to open their books on a certain page and let them start reading, is unlikely to motivate his/her students. As they read students were corrected on the spot for wrong pronunciation and other mistakes they made. More than half of the students read the same text turn by turn. They were then made to read the questions aloud and answer them in the same manner. She frequently used to give corrections and asked questions while the students were reading aloud. She also praised students on all occasions even when they did not read appropriately.

As many as more than half of the class was asked to read one by one the same paragraph. After half of the period had gone, they were made to answer questions by reading. A student was allowed to read the question and another was made to answer the same question. If the student made an error, the whole class was asked the question “Is he/she right?” at which students said “No” in chorus. Here also item number eight that reads as: I let them answer questions as they read the text, has not been observed since they were made to answer questions after they had completed reading aloud. According to Thompson (2001) while reading is done silently and answers for questions are done at the time of reading.

This was what the Uka School teacher was practicing to teach reading throughout the three days when she was observed. However the teacher in Adare used different methods in the three different periods somehow.

4.1.2 First Observation Day-The teacher in Adare School

The teacher in Adare School as observed on the first day started by writing the topic on the black board in the same way like the Uka school teacher. However, he behaved differently from the Uka teacher in such a way that he read the passage himself before he let students to do so. After he had finished reading he gave the students the chance of reading aloud one by one. After many of them got the turn, the teacher wrote some of the vocabulary on the black board and explained the meaning with the aid of a picture. The picture was shown to help them give the meaning of the vocabulary item in Afan Oromo. The exercises were discussed orally and the class was over after a while. No written exercise was carried out.

As could be observed from what the teachers in both schools performed, it seems that the practice adopted by the second teacher is far better than the first one regarding the while- reading stage despite its drawbacks. In fact the appropriateness of the while reading activities is also questionable.

4.1.3 Second and Third Observation Day-The Teacher in Uka School

The teacher in Uka School used the same procedure in all the three days. She started her class by greeting students and asking the date. She then wrote the topic of the skill to be practiced on the black board i.e. 'Read and Do'. Then she let individual students read the passage one by one. Many of the students read aloud. The students were very careful to correctly pronounce each word in the passage and the teacher gave more significance to the appropriate way of the students pronouncing words. Asking students to read aloud specially unseen texts means is equal to letting them concentrate on pronouncing the words that make them unable to concentrate adequately on the meaning of the message Venkateswaran (1995). The teacher gave correction on the spot for every error students committed. However, according to Cross, D (1991) errors that do not create comprehension problem should not be corrected. Regarding speech practice, she explains explicitly that the errors that should be corrected are those which create uncomfortable situation for the hearer.

From the practices observed in all the three days, reading for this teacher was mainly pronouncing words correctly and was to be done aloud at a reasonable speed and appropriate

tone. This is what has been confirmed by the teachers involved in the focus group discussions and individual interviews which will be discussed under focus group and individual interview part of the discussion.

4.1.4 Second Observation Day- The Teacher in Adare School

The teacher in Adare School as observed on the second day started by writing the topic on the black board as usual. However, he did differently from the first day in such a way that students were not made to read aloud. Despite not being briefed about the topic, they were made to read silently. The silent reading however, neither lasted long nor was followed by while reading exercise. It was soon followed by the usual reading aloud where many students took turns to read. However, according to the responses of teachers and students during individual interview, silent reading, though not usually done in a reading period is practiced some times. On the other hand, they said that the use of pictures for guessing meaning of vocabulary has been unusual. Thus, it seems that the teacher knows the appropriateness of silent reading and the importance of teaching aids, but he is not using these methods usually for some unknown reason.

The questions found after each of the reading paragraphs are also treated orally even when there appears writing instruction. The pictures in the text book at the side, below or above the passage were not used during the reading practice. Although, William (1984) states that information given in written language can be matched with pictorial information and these activities can be carried out at all grade levels.

4.1.5 Third Observation Day - The Teacher in Adare School

On the third day, the teacher started the lesson as usual. He wrote the topic on the black board and then he read the passage himself aloud after instructing the students to follow him.

Then students were made to read silently for a while. The silent reading did not take more than five minutes. Reading aloud followed and many of the students were given the opportunity of reading one by one. After about three-fourth of the class had read paragraph by paragraph, the teacher drew their attention to four vocabularies taken from the passage and wrote them on the blackboard. In line with this was a picture that illustrated the vocabulary items. Students were

made to say the meaning in Afan Oromo by looking at the pictures. Having discussed the questions orally with students, the teacher told his students to work on the written exercises as homework and at last he announced that the class for English was over.

4.1.6 Discussion on the Result of the Three Days Observation

As far as the three continuous observations are concerned, it seemed 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 grade eight states that “student read the passage independently and silently” (English Curriculum Guide for Grade 8. 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. On this point, scholars have a lot to say. Adebisiet.al. (1980) explains that a child is not read if he/she merely says the words aloud without understanding their meaning. In fact, there is nothing wrong in letting students read aloud at this level.

However, all reading practice sessions shouldn't be dominated by reading aloud. 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 classroom. In Wagner (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, 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 Venkateswaran (1995). Having stated the usual attempts of teachers in teaching reading, Adebisiet (1980) explains the drawbacks of reading aloud as follows:

In reading aloud students are more concerned in pronunciation than understanding. Thus, the teacher doesn't know whether students have understood or not. In fact, reading aloud slows the pace. But, our aim is to help children read faster silently than they can read aloud. Most children in the classroom are passive while the teacher or one of the other children is reading aloud (Adebisiet, 1980).

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 students' mind 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. The while- reading activity is also dominated by reading aloud which is not advisable in the practice of reading comprehension.

4.2 Data from Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was also used to gather data concerning the research question that deals with techniques and procedures of learning English in grade eight. To that end, the students' questionnaire was distributed to eighty sampled students who were currently learning English in grade eight at both schools.

Table 2: Responses to the Students' Questionnaire

	Items	Responses		Remark
		No of respondents	%	
1	Do you learn English reading passage?			
	Yes	80	100%	
	No	-	-	
2	If your answer is “yes” how often do you learn?			
	Always	-	-	
	Usually	20	25%	
	Sometimes	60	75%	
	Rarely	-	-	
3	1. If you learn reading how many of the passages in the text do you learn?			
	All	10	12.5%	
	More than half	20	25%	
	Some of them	50	62.5%	
	Few of them	-	-	
4	Do you learn text (passages) other than in the text books?			
	Yes	-	-	
	No	80	100	
5	If your answer to item 4 is ‘yes’, how often do you learn?			
	Always	-	-	
	Rarely	-	-	
6	Do you like English reading passages?			
	Yes	25	31.25	

	No	55	68.75	
7	As you think, how many of you like reading in English?			
	All of us	-	-	
	Many of us	10	12.5%	
	Some of us	70	87.5%	
8	To what extent do you understand what you read?			
	All in all	-		
	To some extent	70	87.5%	
	Nothing	10	12.5%	
9	Do you privately read English texts?			
	Yes	8	10%	
	NO	72	90%	
10	If you answer to No. 9 is yes, how often do you read?			
	Never	72	90%	
	Usually	2	2.5%	
	Rarely	6	7.5%	

11	Does your teacher initiates you to read other English passages for your own?			
	Yes	10	12.5%	
	No	70	87.5%	
12	Do you have adequate reading ability that enables you to learn other subjects in English?			
	Yes	5	6.25%	
	No	75	93.75%	

From the above table it can be observed that the responses to the students' questionnaire that indicates whether or not their teacher practice teaching the reading passage in the text book. Accordingly, regarding item 1, 100% of the students responded that they learned English reading passages. For item 2, 75% of them answered that they sometimes learned English reading passages. Only 25% of them answered that they usually learned English reading passages. In the same way, in responding to item 3, 62.5 of them answered that they learned some of the passages in the textbook. 25% of them responded that they learned more than half of the passages in the textbook. Only 12.5% of them answered that they learned all of the passages in the textbook.

Concerning item 4, 100% of the respondents answered that they did not learn texts other than in their textbook. Item 5 which refers to how often do they learn English reading texts was jumped over in case of their answer for item 4 refers that they did not learn English texts other than in the text book. In relation to item 6, 68.75% of them answered that they did not like the English reading passages. Only 31.25% of them answered that they liked the English reading passages. Similarly item 7 refer to how many of them like English reading passages. In responding to this, 87.55 of them answered that some of them liked reading in English. 12.5% of them answered

that many of them liked reading in English. Item 8 deals with to what extent do students understand what they read in English. For this question, 87.5% of the students answered that they understood it to some extent and 12.5% of them replied that they understood nothing.

Regarding item 9, 90% of them answered that they did not read English texts privately. Only 10% of them read English texts privately. Similarly item 10 refer to how often they read English texts privately. Consequently, 7.5% of them answered that they rarely read English texts privately and only 2.5% of them responded that they usually read it. Additionally, in responding to item 11, 87.5% of them responded that their teacher did not initiate them to read English texts for their own. Only 12.5% of the respondents answered that their teacher initiated them to read English texts for their own. In order to reply the last item 12, 93.75% of them answered that they had no adequate reading ability that enables them to learn other subjects in English. Only 6.25% of them answered that they had adequate reading ability that enables them to learn other subjects in English.

4.2.1 Discussion on the Result of the Students' Response to the Questionnaire

The responses to the students' questionnaire indicate that however the frequency of their teachers teach them reading in English differed from respondent to respondent; they usually learn the reading passage in the text book. This is also confirmed by the responses given during their interview and focus group discussion. However, "reading is certainly an important activity not only to expand knowledge but also to learners' advantage if given frequently" Wilgam (1981:89).

Regarding whether or not they learn texts other than those in the textbook, all respondents answered that they never learn it. However they do not texts other than those in the textbook, this item deals with extensive reading programmes which many scholars emphasize for its importance in learning reading but it seems that the primary teachers have not thought of it "Extensive reading is equally as important and necessary as intensive reading in teaching and learning language" Nuttall (1996:247).

It was also confirmed that most of the students do not like reading English passages and some of them like it. This seems to me that the reading passages are not interesting to the students. The reason is that, students at this level specially need texts such as stories and puzzles. Subsequently, “the implementation of extensive reading is vital since its main purpose is for enjoyment and pleasure” (Wilgam 1981:162).

The other item deals with the extent to which the students understand what they read. Concerning this, most of the students understand it to some extent and a few of them never understand what they read in English. This response indicates that the students have lack of understanding what they read in English. This lack of full understanding emanates from lack of appropriate strategy of teaching reading. As students focus on pronunciation and form in reading aloud instead of meaning and message, comprehension can't be achieved.

On the other hand it can be assure that most of the students never read English texts privately. Additionally, most of the teachers never initiate the students to read other English passages for their own. From this we can understand that the teachers neither focus on improving their students' reading skill nor initiate them to do more on reading English texts either in the classroom or out of the classroom.

The last response was confirmed that most of the students have no adequate reading ability that enables them to learn other subjects in English. From this it is possible to understand that the students might not successful in the other subjects because they can do nothing without understanding the message of the texts.

4.2.2 Students' Questionnaire on Classroom Procedure

The other part of the students' questionnaire deals with the points included in the following table.

Table 3: Responses to the Students' Questionnaire that are Directly Related to Classroom Procedure

No	Items	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Remark
1.	Our teacher introduces the topic briefly before we read.	12	48	-	20	
2.	Our teacher let us to discuss the topic before we read.	27	33	10	10	
3	Our teacher let us to discuss the topic in relation to our own experience.	17	53	10	-	
4	Our teacher asks us questions related to the topic.	-	20	40	20	
5	Our teacher helps us to understand the instruction before we read.	20	10	10	40	
6	Our teacher explains difficult words before we read.	-	20	30	30	
7	Our teacher reads the passage before we read.	-	20	30	30	
8	Our teacher let us answer questions as we read.	-	28	22	30	
9	Our teacher let us answer the questions orally after we read.	-	10	60	10	

10	Our teacher let us discuss what we read in our group.	30	10	20	20	
11	Our teacher encourages us to read English at home or in the library.	10	25	25	20	
12	Our teacher let us read aloud.	-	-	10	70	
13	Our teacher let us read silently after we read aloud.	10	25	25	20	
14	Our teacher gives us reading assignment.	45	15	10	10	

As it can be observed from the above table, in responding to item 1, 60% of them responded that their teacher sometimes introduced the topic briefly before they read. 25% of them replied that their teacher always introduced the topic briefly before they read. Only 15% of them answered that their teacher never introduced the topic briefly before they read. Concerning item 2, 41.25% of them answered that their teacher sometimes let them to discuss the topic before they read. 33.75% of them answered that their teacher never let them to discuss the topic before they read. 12.5% of them responded that their teacher usually let them to discuss the topic before they read. Similarly, 12.5% of them responded that their teacher always let them to discuss the topic before they read. Regarding item 3, 66.25% of the respondents answered that their teacher sometimes let them to discuss the topic in relation to their own experience. 21.25% of them answered that their teacher never let them to discuss the topic in relation to their own experience. Only 12.5% of them replied that their teacher usually let them to discuss the topic in relation to their own experience.

Item 4 refers to how often their teacher asks them questions related to the topic. For this item 50% of them responded that their teacher usually asked them questions related to the topic. 25% of them answered that they sometimes asked them questions related to the topic. In the same way, 25% of them answered that their teacher always asked them questions related to the topic. For item 5, 50% of them responded that their teacher always helped them to understand the

instruction before they read. 25% of them responded that their teacher never helped them to understand the instruction before they read. 12.5% of them responded that their teacher sometimes helped them to understand the instruction before they read. Similarly, 12.5% of them responded that their teacher usually helped them to understand the instruction before they read. In relation to item 6, 37.5% of them answered that their teacher always explained difficult words before they read. 37.5% of them answered that their teacher usually explained difficult words before they read. Only 25% of them responded that their teacher sometimes explained difficult words before they read. Regarding item 7, 87.5% of them answered that their teacher never read the passage before they read. Only 12.5% of them answered that their teacher sometimes read the passage before they read.

In case of item 8, they were asked that how often their teacher let them answer questions as they read. As a result, 37.5% of them responded that their teacher always let them answer questions as they read. 35% of them answered that their teacher sometimes let them while 27.5% of them responded for usually. Regarding item 9, 75% of them responded that their teacher usually let them answer the question orally after they read. 12.5% of them answered that their teacher always let them to answer the question orally after they read. 12.5% of them answered that their teacher sometimes let them to answer the question orally after they read. In relation to item 10, 75% of them responded that their teacher never let them discuss what they read in their group. Only 25% of them answered that their teacher sometimes let them discuss what they read in their group. Concerning item 11, 87.5% of them responded that their teacher never encouraged them to read English texts. Only 12.5% of them answered that their teacher sometimes encouraged them to read English texts.

For item 12, the students were responded for the question that refers about how often their teacher let them read aloud. In response to this, 87.5% of the students answered that their teacher always let them read aloud and only 12.5% of them responded that their teacher usually do so. In responding to item 13, 75% of them answered that their teacher never let them read silently after they read aloud. Only 12.5% of them answered that their teacher sometimes let them read silently after they read aloud. Similarly, 12.5% of them answered that their teacher usually lets them read silently after they read aloud. For the last item 14, the respondents were asked that how often their teacher gave them reading assignment. As a result, 68.75% of the respondents

responded that their teacher never gave them reading assignment while only 31.25% of them answered that their teacher sometimes gave them reading assignment.

4.2.3 Discussion on the Result of Students' Response on Classroom Procedure

According to what has been provided as responses by the eighty sample students involved, many of the responses directly match with the practices observed during class room observation. To begin with, the item about the introduction of the reading topic which is done only sometimes according to the respondents reply was not done at all during the observation or if done it took only a few minutes. However, the importance of introducing the topic as clearly as possible is paramount in the teaching and learning of reading. Similarly, teachers seem to give less emphasis to the discussion of topics to be read before the reading activity is on progress. Likewise, the discussion of the topic in relation to their experiences is also significant but only few teachers made use of it. All these activities are part of the pre-reading tasks and as it has been discussed earlier both the teachers who were observed failed to carry out the tasks. In this manner, the responses in the questionnaire match with what was observed in class room where no pre-reading activities were performed. However, these activities are important not only to introduce and arouse students' interest in the topic but also to motivate learners by giving a reason for reading and to provide some language preparation as well Williams (1984).

Regarding the idea of making the students understand the instruction, though it is not known to what extent they could make them understand, many of the respondents have said that they do it. However, giving clear instructions is more than merely telling the instruction orally or by reading it out.

The activity of explaining words that are new to the students should be done most of the time as students at this level might not often be capable of guessing meanings. So, all the teachers would better have provided this instead of only some of them. On top of this, reading the passage aloud before students is helpful. It is also a means of initiating students toward extensive reading. The teacher reads interesting story loudly as the students listen attentively so that students will be encouraged to read more stories Susenan (2003). The other advantage of reading aloud by the teacher would be to be a model in pronouncing words in making use of punctuation marks to

stop or pause accordingly. But, even if reading aloud for primary students have some advantage, it is better not to use it regularly.

As far as the items referring to while reading and post- reading are concerned, though there is some variation between what was observed in the classroom and what the respondents replied, many of the responses fit the observation result. The item that deals with whether students answer questions orally after reading was responded by 75% of the respondents as a usual practice which is exactly in line with what has been observed in the classroom. Nevertheless, it seems that students should be exposed to different ways of giving answers to questions. According to Thompson (2001), during the post-reading phase varieties of activities such as writing assignments on the passage, an oral discussion about the main topic of the passage and a dramatization of the story could be employed. Thus, relying only on oral responses may not be sufficient practice.

Pertaining to the practice of reading aloud what the respondents replied proved the actual practice was carried out in classroom. Reading aloud was observed to be the most dominant activity. Teachers feel that students learn reading through reading aloud only. This view of the teachers was also conveyed during both focus group discussion and individual interview. They were even arguing against silent reading in favor of reading aloud for the teaching and learning of reading at school. However, reading aloud is meant for other purpose of language practice not for reading comprehension. On this particular issue, Wilgam (1981) says pronunciation of words based on spelling could be a problem when students are reading silently where their attention is meaning rather than form. Thus, students should be offered opportunities to read aloud so that their correct pronunciation could be checked and maintained. To that effect, reading aloud should not be discarded all together. It should be used purposefully but not for reading comprehension purposes.

4.3 Data from Teachers' Interview

The other instrument used for data collection as mentioned in the methodology of the study was interview for teachers. The research question that deals with the challenges that affect grade eight students development of English reading skills was looked in to this instrument.

Accordingly, four teachers from both schools were interviewed. Below are the responses and discussions of the teachers' interview.

The four teachers i.e. two teachers from each school were made to react on the following questions turn by turn.

- Do you like teaching English reading skills?
- What is your basic problem in teaching reading?
- How do you rate the adequacy/appropriateness of the reading skills in the English text book?
- What should be done to improve students' reading ability?

The majority of the respondents said that they liked teaching English and they were assigned to teach English in accordance with the talents they have towards the subject. However, one teacher said that she doesn't like teaching the subject because of the students' poor ability to work on the subject. This teacher said that she personally like teaching English and that she has taught English for many years but she doesn't like teaching this subject nowadays as students are very much weak in English.

Concerning the major problem they have in teaching reading, two of the teachers said that not only in teaching English reading but also in all subjects the ability of students is declining from time to time. Their behavior is also getting worse. Thus, the teachers told that they encounter many problems in teaching children nowadays. In talking about reading English in particular, the teachers confirmed that a few of the students are good at reading aloud but the majority neither can read nor understand the message.

The disparity of students in their ability of reading is also a problem according to another interviewee. The fact that a few of them who had family follow up work better than those who have no family follow up. Similarly, few of them have an interest to learn, but many of them have no interest to learn not only English as general or English reading skills in particular but also all subjects in general. To alleviate students' inability in reading, according to the teachers:

- Schools and parents should try to make students read a lot.
- Parents should follow up their students.
- Teachers should be given sustainable training.

4.3.1 Discussion on the Teachers' Interview

As can be seen from the interview responses above, the problems that hinder the students reading progress are multifaceted. On one hand, the lack of family follow up made the students to be reluctant and careless not only in reading skills but also towards their all lessons. On the other hand, lack of teachers' awareness on the current teaching methodology of teaching reading practice was also reflected as most of them emphasize reading aloud and ignore silent reading. Moreover, according to the teachers' response the students' lack of interest has resulted in a negative impact in the students' language performance in general and in their reading ability in particular. This seems to be a harmful practice for the teaching and learning process. If students haven't interest of reading, they may not improve their reading ability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5. Introduction

This chapter is meant to summarize the steps followed to conduct the study and to state the result found in brief. It also deals with what should be done to solve the problem indicated.

5.1 Summary

As it has been mentioned in various parts of this thesis, the main objective of this study was to investigate the practices of teaching English reading skills at two primary schools grade eight students in Halu Woreda. The study had two specific objectives. The objectives were to identify the techniques used for teaching English reading skills and to find out the challenges which hindered the development of English reading skills.

To this end, a methodology of conducting the study was designed in which three instruments were employed. Classroom observation was the major instrument followed by the students' questionnaire. Interview for teachers was also conducted.

The schools for the study were selected on the basis of the long years of experience that the schools have and their better performances of grade 8 national examination.

Accordingly, it had been observed that the practice of teaching English reading in grade 8 is dominated by reading aloud where pre, while and post reading activities are not implemented. On top of this, silent reading is never practiced and the teachers' knowledge about the importance of practicing silent reading has been minimal. Post reading activities are not practiced at all except question and answer activities carried out between the teacher and the student at the end of the reading aloud activity. The practice of extensive reading was never performed due to the absence of libraries and supplementary readers.

The result found from class observation, and teachers' interview responses triangulate with what was found from the students' questionnaire responses.

The concern and worry of teachers about students deteriorating ability of not only in reading English but also other subjects over time was also indicated in the data.

As it was vividly explained by the teachers during the individual interview the reason for the bad achievement of students reading ability are multifaceted ranging from lack of interest on the part of students to follow their lessons seriously.

In general, the study has come up with finding that depict that the practices of teaching reading English in grade eight of Halu Woreda government schools are traditional where current techniques and procedures of teaching and learning English as a foreign language have not been used. As a consequence the reading practice of the students is low.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on what has been found out as a result of the research study and the summary stated above, the following conclusions are drawn.

- The grade eight teachers assigned to teach English do not have appropriate training for teaching English language in general and teaching reading in particular.
- The teachers' assumption of teaching reading seems to be wrong since they assume that students learn reading better when they read aloud.
- Teachers' methods of teaching reading seems to be traditional where no current methods such as briefing on the topic and activating prior knowledge of the students are being carried out.
- Students' interest in reading seems minimal as they have been made to practice intensive reading ignoring the use of authentic materials and other texts according to their level so as to build up interest in reading.
- Students don't have opportunities for extensive reading as in most government primary schools there are no libraries or supplementary reading materials.
- The majority of government school primary level students do not have the opportunity to read at home due to parents' low standard of living and illiteracy.
- Students don't have both family and teachers follow up that used to initiate them to have interest on their education and English reading skills as well.

5:3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings of this study the following recommendations were made:

The practice of teaching reading English in grade 8 in Halu Woreda has turned out to be a traditional one. Therefore:

- Teachers should be acquainted with the current foreign language teaching and learning practices through sustainable training.
- The importance of extensive reading in school and out of school should be emphasized and teachers and parents should work together to arouse interest of students in reading.
- Supplementary reading texts should be developed and made available so that students will not rely only on their text books for their reading practices.

Students reading ability was observed to be low. Therefore:

- The fact that reading is silent in the real situation, students should be given more training in silent reading though reading aloud shouldn't be totally abandoned.
- Students should be taught to read and comprehend the meaning and message of the text and teachers have to take care of this fact while teaching reading.
- The method of group work and pair work in teaching reading should be emphasized as students learn from each other and language is better learnt in groups than individually.

The major reasons for low achievements of reading were identified. Therefore:

- Both parents and teachers should follow up the students to initiate them to their education in general and to English reading skills in particular.
- Students should be encouraged to read out of school so as to improve their reading ability and schools should work towards this goal.
- Reading rooms or libraries should be set up for students.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Classroom Observation Check List

N o	Reading lesson practices	Rating frequency scale							
		Day One		Day Two		Day Three		Day Four	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	The teacher gave brief introduction about the reading text.								
2	Students are asked to discuss on the topic before they read.								
3	The teacher encouraged students to relate the topic with their experience.								
4	The teacher made instruction clear to the students.								
5	Difficult words in the text were sorted out and Explained.								
6	Students were given a chance to predict what the reading passage is about.								
7	They were made to read silently.								
8	They were made to read aloud.								
9	The teacher reads the text aloud before he/she let the students to read.								

10	They were made to answer question orally.								
11	They were made to answer question in writing.								
12	They were given practical activities to demonstrate.								
13	Groups were formed to discuss about the passage and report to class.								
14	The teacher tried to integrate the reading lesson with other language skills.								
15	The teacher encouraged students to read other materials out of their class.								
16	The teacher uses other stories that could arouse students' interest.								
17	The teacher tries to develop reading habit in the students.								

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaires

Dear Students:

This study will be conducted on the practice of teaching reading in English at two second cycle primary schools in Halu Woreda. The information that we get from you is very important for the success of this study. Therefore, I want to say thank you for your willingness to fulfill these questionnaire.

INSTRUCTION I: *Personal information.*

1. Sex_____
2. Age_____
3. The name of your school _____
4. Your grade and section _____

INSTRUCTION II: *The following questions were prepared to get some input regarding English reading passage. Then choose and circle the correct answer from the given alternatives.*

1. Do you learn English reading passage? A.YES B. NO
2. If your answer is “yes” for question number 1, how often do you learn reading passage?
 A. Always B. Usually C. Sometimes D. Rarely
3. If you learn reading how many of the passages in the text do you learn?
 A. All of them B. More than half C, Some of them D. Few of them
4. Have you ever used from other sources in order to learn English reading passages?
 A. YES B. NO
5. If your answer is yes for question number 4, how often do you use it?
 A. Always B. Rarely C. Sometimes

6. Do you like English reading passages?
A. YES B. NO
7. If your answer is yes for question number 6, as you think how many of you like English passages?
A. All of us B. Many of us C. Some of us
8. How do you understand what you read?
A. All in all B. To some extent C. Nothing
9. Do you read other English passages personally?
A. YES B. NO
10. If your answer is “yes” for question number 9, how often do you read?
A. Always B. Usually C. Rarely
11. Does your teacher initiates you to read other English passages for your own?
A. YES B. NO
12. Do you have adequate reading ability that enables them to learn other subjects in English?
A. YES B. NO

INSTRUCTION III: The following questionnaires are directly related to the classroom teaching learning procedure. Then put “√” in the given alternative columns.

No	Items	Sometimes	Usually	Always	Remark
1.	Our teacher introduces the topic briefly before they read.				
2.	Our teacher let us to discuss the topic before we read.				
3	Our teacher let us to discuss the topic in relation to our own experience.				
4	Our teacher asks us questions related to the topic.				
5	Our teacher helps us to understand the instruction before we read.				
6	Our teacher explains difficult words before we read.				
7	Our teacher reads the passage before we read.				
8	Our teacher let us answer questions as we read.				
9	Our teacher let us answer the questions orally after we read.				
10	Our teacher let us discuss what we read in our group.				

11	Our teacher encourages us to read English at home or in the library.				
12	Our teacher let us read aloud.				
13	Our teacher let us read silently after we read aloud.				
14	Our teacher gives us reading assignment.				

Appendix C: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Do you like teaching English?
2. What is your basic problem when you teach English reading passages?
3. How do you evaluate the reading passages in the textbook?
4. What should be done to improve students' reading ability?

Appendix B: Gaaffilee Barattootaaf Dhiyaatan

Kabajamoo Barattootaa:

Qorannoon kun dandeettii afaan Ingilizii dubbisuu barattoota kutaa 8ffaa ilaalchisee kan geggeeffamuu dha. Milkaa'ina qorannoo kanaatiifis ragaan isinirraa argamu baayyee murteessaa waan ta'eef ragaan dhugaa isin nuuf kennitanu barbaachisummaan isaa daangaa hin qabu. Kanaafuu gaaffiilee dhiyaatan hundumaayyuu sirriitti akka guuttanu durseen kabajaan isin gaaffadha.

❖ **Walta'iinsa keessan hundaafis dursee isin galateeffachuun barbaada!!**

QAJEELFAMA I: Odeeffannoo Dhuunfaa

1. Saala _____
2. Umurii _____
3. Maqaa mana barumsaa _____
4. Kutaa barattu _____

QAJEELFAMA II: Gaaffileen armaan gadii dandeettii dubbisuu afaan Ingilizii ilaalchisee hubannoo tokko tokko argachuuf kan gaafatamanii dha. Kanaafuu filannoo deebii sirrii qabee jiru itti marsuun deebisaa.

1. Dubbisa Afaan Ingilizii ni barattuu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii
2. Gaaffii 1ffaadhaaf deebiin keessan “Eeyyee” yoo ta’e yeroo ammam barattu?
A. Yeroo hunda B. Yeroo baayyee C. Al tokko tokko D. Yeroo muraasa
3. Dubbisa afaan Ingilizii ni barattu yoo ta’e dubbisaalee kitaabicha keessatti kennaman ammam isaanii barattu?
A. Hunda isaanii B. Baayyee isaanii C. Walakkadhaa ol D. Muraasa isaanii

4. Dubbisa afaan Ingilizii barachuudhaaf dubbisaalee dabalataa kitaabaan alaa dubbiftanii barattanii beektuu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii
5. Gaaffii 4ffaadhaaf deebiin keessan “eeyyee” yoo ta’e yeroo ammamiif dubbiftu?
A. Yeroo hunda B. Yeroo muraasa C. Al tokko tokko
6. Dubbisa afaan Ingilizii ni jaallattuu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii
7. Gaaffii 6ffaadhaaf deebiin keessan “eeyyee” yoo ta’e ammam jaallattu?
A. Muraasa B. Baayyee C. Hunda
8. Waan dubbistan ammam hubattu?
A. Guutumaa guutuutti B. Walakkaasaa C. Omaa hin hubadhu
9. Isin dhuunfaa keessanitti barreeffamoota afaan Ingilizii ni dubbiftuu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii
10. Gaaffii 9^{ffaa} dhaaf deebiin keessan “eeyyee” yoo ta’e, yeroo ammam dubbiftu?
A. Al tokko tokko B. Yeroo hunda C. Yeroo muraasa
11. Barsiisaan keessan dubbisa afaan Ingilizii kan biraa ofiif akka dubbiftanu isi jajjabeessanii beekuu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii
12. Dandeettii afaan Ingilizii dubbisuu kan gosa barnoota kan biraa barachuu isin dandeessisu ni qabduu?
A. Eeyyee B. Lakkii

QAJEELFAMA III: Gaaffiileen armaan gadii kallattiidhaan adeemsa baruu barsiisuu kutaa keessaatiin kan wal qabatanuu dha. Kanaafuu gabatee filannoof kenname keessatti kan deebiidha jettanu jalatti mallattoo “√” kaa’uudhaan deebisaa.

No	Gaaffiilee	Altokko tokko	Yeroo baayyee	Yeroo hunda	Yaada
1.	Barsiisaan keessan utuu isin hin dubbisin waa’ee mata durichaa ni ibsu.				
2.	Barsiisaan keessan tuu isin hin dubbisin waa’ee mata durichaa irratti akka mari’attan ni taasisu.				
3	Barsiisaan keessan data duricha hubannoo kanaan dura qabdanuu wajjin walqabsiiftaniiakka mari’attan ni taasisu.				
4	Barsiisaan keessan gaaffiilee mata durichaa wajjin walfakkaatanu isin gaafatu.				
5	Barsiisaan keessan utuu isin hin dubbisin dura qajeelfama akka hubattanu ni taasisu.				
6	Barsiisaan keessan utuu isin hin dubbisin jechoota ciccimoo isinii ibsu.				
7	Barsiisaan keessan utuu isin hin dubbisin dubbisicha ni dubbisu.				
8	Barsiisaan keessan akka isin dubbistanitti gaaffiilee akka deebistanu ni taasisu.				

9	Barsiisaan keessan erga dubbistaniin booda gaaffiilee afaanii akka deebistanu ni taasisu.				
10	Barsiisaan keessan waan dubbistan irratti gareedhaan akka mari'attanu ni taasisu.				
11	Barsiisaan keessan dubbisa afaan Ingilizii mana kitaabaatii akka dubbistanu isin jajjabeessu.				
12	Barsiisaan keessan akka isin sagalee keessan ol qabdanii dubbistanu ni taasisu.				
13	Barsiisaan keessan erga sagalee keessan ol qabdanii dubbistaniin booda immoo gadi qabdanii akka dubbistanu ni taasisu.				
14	Barsiisaan keessan abbaltii dubbistanii hojjattan isinii kennu.				

Appendix C: Aaf-Gaaffii Barsiisotaa

1. Afaan Ingilizii barsiisuu ni jaallattuu?
2. Yemmuu dubbisa afaan Ingilizii barsiiftanu rakkoon keessan inni bu'uura maali?
3. Kitaaba ittiin barsiiftanu akkamiin madaaltu?
4. Dandeettii dubbisuu fooyyeffachuuf barattoonni maal gochuu qabu jettanii yaaddu?