

The Status of Reading Skills Development in Subject-area
Teaching and Learning: The Case of Comprehension in
Afan Oromo among Primary School Children

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ABSTRACT

The core issue in this research was the status of reading skills development in subject-area teaching and learning. The research aimed at to investigating the status (degree) to which material, technical and linguistic conditions allow the constructive building of reading skills in subject areas given in Afan Oromo at second-cycle primary school level. To do this descriptive survey method of research was employed. Second cycle primary schools of Oromia in three selected zones (West Shewa West Wellega East Wellega) were the target data areas. Teachers, students and experts of the respective zones and regional experts were data sources whereby 270 teachers, 225 students and 12 concerned experts were partakers. Questionnaire, interview, observation checklist, and document survey were data gathering tools. Four issues were presented to be examined in the realization of this research: efficiency of teachers' training for due enhancement of reading skills in Afan Oromo subject-areas, efficiency of reading materials for due reading practice, channels for dealing with students' readiness in reading, and linguistic competence.

It was found out that, teachers didn't get medium-sensitive training in order to guide students in reading to learn. Lack and insufficiencies of the necessary textbooks was also one of the setbacks. Insufficient and far-reaching guides were a part of the shortages, too. The teachers happened to over work such that they failed to deal with individual differences. Hence, the whole matter of reading in subject areas remained literal. The vast amount of newly coined and technically borrowed words didn't have enough glossaries and technical references. Textbook was taken unduly as a sole feeding bottle which did not support the pupils' comprehension well. Based up on the above findings, the researcher has come to deduce that reading to learn in the selected schools has been highly bound to ordinary copying of text data, and interpretive and creative reading have been prone to shortage to worse and absent to the worst. The sole and proximate professionals, the teachers, themselves have been used to



dispensing information, not guiding pupils' independent reading and concept formation. This, in turn, has made the whole work of pupils' reading to learn unfruitful since it blocks creative envisage. Textbooks and teachers' guides, by themselves, have been insufficient as seen by the researcher practically, and even, some subjects have been taught with no text around (for instance, Civic Education). After examining the status of reading skills development in the subject areas given in Afan Oromo, the researcher has come up with the following major recommendations:

1. Course provision in Afan Oromo subject areas should enclose the way through to developing reading skills, and this must be done by the respective colleges of teachers education. More strategically, such a provision must gear towards making subject methodology media-sensitive, and be given in both in service and pre-service channels.

2. The supply of text books and teachers guides in Oromia in general and in the targeted research area schools in particular should see a great improvement if pupils are to read constructively. So, the provisions of books at the second-cycle primary level has to get due consideration as planned as for the first-cycle primary. Both Oromia Education Bureau (OEB) and the respective technical advisors have to show their shares, in here.

3. The reading materials at hand must have exercises and expressions duly set to initiate reading to learn at the different comprehension levels, and hence the respective curriculum experts have to re-assess the liability of the core medium for pupils reading, and take progressive measures.

4. Sessional enriching programs to refresh teachers at the grass root level should enclose ways of tackling and treatment of reading skills set back at the operational level. For this to prove practical, every remedial (tutorial) to be given has to be based upon need assessment and feedback from both teachers and students.

ACRONYMS

- . SQ3R-Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review
- . OEB- Oromia Education Bureau
- . SPM- Strategic Planning and Management



CHAPTER – ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Reading is a body of skills that has a wide scope of communicating ideas that can aid the informants to communicate well. The purposes of reading vary from reading to get information to that aiding the gaining of a wide realm of experiences that can facilitate the involvement in innovation and problem solving. In that, the mighty ocean of information found in print requires skills that can enrich the solicitation of reaction. Otherwise, the whole work of gazing at words or the prints so far provided remains just a "heavy bundle" of chunks that decorate pages rather than provide information that can bring about a behavioral change through the behavioral outputs so far provided.

Comprehension of challenging ideas in content area is rarely easy for students when it is seen from the spectrum of content-area reading comprehension. No collection of textbook aids will substitute for the careful guidance to be provided by the teachers and the thoughtful effort to be made to work on the given items (Readence, et al.: 1989). In order to guide students' comprehension in content-areas, the teacher must, therefore, have a good working knowledge of comprehension strategies. Such guidance reveals that, the traditional recitation method used by the teachers in content area teaching and learning allows no time for teaching students to use their texts.

McClain (1981) states also that, when the teacher lectures during the period and assigns reading for outside work alone, little work and development are actually done with the text, and pupils' reading to learn will be very much limited. This is partly so because subject-area reading requires action that involves critical thinking and comprehension that goes beyond the recall of stored information.

Here, content-subject textbooks place higher demands on the students such that the chain of self-learning comes to rise from learning how to read to actual studying (Harris and Sipay, 1990:599). The implication is that, reading becomes a vehicle for learning new information rather than being an action done for its own sake. In such a process, narrative texts open the way for more complex expository-text structures wherein more intricate and abstract ideas are to be found, and the paradigm of involvement shifts from the teacher to the students. The rationale is such that, the heart of the reading process is meaning, and the primary aim of reading in content areas is to develop readers who understand and react to what they read (Cushenbery, 1985:57).

The important point in this case is that the shift from narrative texts to expository texts entails the shift in the reading purpose and complexity. More to add is the fact that, comprehension is composed of a large number of skill segments at the literal, interpretive, and creative levels, which begin with direct reference, continue with analytic reading, and lapse to constructive undertaking (Ruddel, 1997; Herber, 1970; Harris and Sipay,

1990). Many learners may, however, find the communication process between the writer and the reader to be very much complex.

They may fail to comprehend what has been written, owing to lack of background experience for the words and concepts presented. Hence, it becomes indispensable for both, teachers and students, to be aware that, reading skills should be dealt with as comprehensively as the contents to be covered. For that to prove practical, reading must always be thought of as a process, not a subject. Every subject-content teacher has to be aware that s/he has a serious responsibility for helping students to develop skills in the area of content reading (Cushenbery, 1985:). Cooper (1997) states also that the meanings the reader constructs or assigns don't come from the printed page. It rather comes from the reader's own experiences that are triggered by the ideas the author presents. Readence and others specifically stress on the roles of content teachers as they cite the following idea regarding helps to be rendered to learners to enable them learn to use their respective texts:

It makes sense to describe content reading as a means of improving communication. There is a sort of a "long-distance" communication that materializes between an author of a text and a reader attempting to comprehend it. The reader is, in effect, trying to communicate with authors of texts by constructing a meaning from their words and thoughts. Given, then, the goal of the reader and the difficulty of texts, a facilitator is needed to promote this interaction between the reader and the text. Indeed, this should be the role of the teacher (Ibid).

According to Burns and others (1999), the process of reading holds nine aspects, which range from simple sensory perception to constructive

utilization of concepts in the forms of selected experiences. In that perception of symbols leads to perceptual interpretation, which, in turn, leads to logical and linear flows of ideas. The sequential aspect opens the gate for relating words to direct experiences so that some meanings will be made out. Meaning formation, in this aspect, leads to inferential and evaluative thinking which will be accompanied by the creation of new learning.

The learning aspect leads to association of past and present experiences with personal interests and attitudes to accompany, as headlights for further envisage. The affective aspect leads to the sensible organization of the material for constructive purposes. The same writers assert that, where teachers take their roles to be information dispensers alone, the classes get boring and students tend to neglect to read their assignments. Such teachers are, certainly, not encouraging the development of independent readers who can take their place as useful citizens and lifelong learners in the society.

Durkin (1983:316-317) adds an enriching idea to the above citation also that, a teacher's preparation for a chapter should not only commence from his very reading but also keep going to the stage of helping pupils read. This means that, teachers must decide ahead of time what deserves close scrutiny by considering such factors as importance, relevance, and students' abilities and interests. Otherwise, much of what students learn is quickly forgotten.



Readence and others (1989:8) have shown four skills that teachers can exercise to facilitate learning text as moderators of the learning process such being tailoring message, activating prior knowledge, focusing attention and monitoring comprehension. The work of Moore and Readence (1986) cited in the same writing asserts that there are some specific guidelines for the implementation of content area reading. Such are activities that may involve presenting isolated skills, aiming toward content, and presenting content and processes concurrently. But to the chagrin of the teacher who comes to the classroom to share knowledge, the students have varying degrees of experience. Dramatically, the bits of knowledge s/he selects to impart may not be understood, digested, evaluated, and utilized by all the students because learners of differing backgrounds have certain degrees of difficulties.

Aiming toward content must, hence, focus on acquiring content versus how to acquire that content for the attainment of the purposes. This is a part of the required skill development, and learning content is not simply reading the assigned pages, answering the end-of-chapter questions, and listening to the teacher present what has already been read.

The accompanying rationale is that, students need to be prepared to read a text, need guidance in reading for selected ideas, and need reinforcement to retain the material learned (Ibid, 9).

When it comes to subject-area reading in the mother tongue (local language), the emphasis is such that if students learn in it, they can

develop *self-reliance* and *psychological motivation* to learn and retain social and cultural values (ICDR, 1994). This has been thought of a global agenda of the child's right to education, as stated by Mazaba and Nthepe in Mialaret (1979).

These contributors state that, for many children in the world, not only in the Third World, starting of schooling marks not only the transition from one environment to another but also from one language to another.

They add also that, the need to teach in the mother tongue stems from the urge for authentic cultural expression, on the one hand, and careful thought about the role of education, on the other. A related assertion given to the real sense of education as an endeavor to introduce the desirable change in to a culture while steadily standing on it also re-embarks the value of dealing with proximate culture and language in the initial context.

According to Teklehaimanot (1999), a workable plan has been endorsed in Ethiopian Education and Training Policy with the recognition for the nationality languages to be used as media of education at the primary level. Divergent from the past scenario in which schooling and modernization showed their back to the Ethiopian culture, the current education and training policy states that the use of [the mother-tongue] nationality languages has been constituted cognizant of the pedagogical advantage of the child in learning in the mother tongue and the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages in primary education. The same writing briefly states two conditions of which manipulator aspects have been said helpful to establish a strong cultural foundation of education.

One such an aspect is the Federal Government's mandate to establish and implement national standards and basic policy criteria for the protection and preservation historical legacies. Another policy aspect, most important of course, that has been meant to establish a strong cultural foundation of education, is the people's power over their local affair that has the advantage for the people for influencing the designing of the curricula and approval of basic education on the essential bases of the people's cultural heritage.

As rightly set by the writer above, "curriculum content and title development of text books of primary education" is now mainly the responsibility of the respective regional state governments together with technical assistance from the Federal Ministry of Education.

Afan Oromo is one of the nationality languages in Ethiopia that has seen its advent in to a medium of instruction only recently in spite of its rich speech coverage and lexical variety. Right at the outset of the implementation of this advent, as Dereje (2000) denotes, the Education sector of Ethiopia experienced poor quality influenced by lack of adequate teaching materials, inadequate teacher training, and curricula that do not respond to regional, cultural and linguistic diversity. Schools have come to experience poor infrastructure, delayed distribution of teaching and learning materials and slow dissemination of new and innovative ideas.

Lack of professional expertise in local curriculum design, in materials development, monitoring and evaluation, lack of literary stocks for the newly adopted media of instruction (such being dictionaries, glossaries and

other printed literature) and other have been cited as the moving aches to the ministry. But, the status to which reading skills development in subject-areas is found has remained a question in this current affair of implementation. The emphasis in this research is, therefore, investigating the status of reading skills development in subject-areas teaching and learning, with specific reference to comprehension in Afan Oromo among primary school children.

This extends from the gloss of fact that, in the very heart of most classroom learning is the exploitation of print media that are expected to have deeper provisions and accessibility both to the teachers and the students. This is true of most schools in Oromia Regional State, and hence, investigating reading is the best means of getting access to academic information, for how much each student has read to learn marks the extent and the significance to which the person has learned in its real sense (Burns, et al., 1999:11). This appears to be reasonable since subject-area comprehension in Afan Oromo doesn't seem to have been researched, by far.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Reading is a skill that has wider demand in schools like ours, where print media are the most accessible routes of engaging students in concept formation. The issue of *student-text ratio* that is cited in annual educational statistics can tell us the reality of such prevalence. Such a distribution has also been manifest in the case of Oromia wherein the annual educational

statistics indicates that the text/student ratio of the recent year (1995 E.C.) was 1:2.

This ratio could delineate insufficiencies of texts /pupils on the average. Added to that case may be the overlooking of reading skill development to be the sole task of language teachers. In cases where reading skill is bound to language area alone, the option is such that only a limited part of concept formation is covered. That is access to information that may be a starting point but not an end in itself. Independent activity is unconditionally overshadowed unless due care and follow up is made about the independent act of reading for concept formation.

That independent act of reading is made possible only when subject area items and channels of processing information are adjusted for reading to learn as they do for learning to read (Ruddel, 1997:134). This is due to the fact that, learning to read may open the gate for primary exposure but may not be everything needed for the proper handling of subject-area learning.

Communication in such a reading depends on comprehension, which is affected by all aspects of the reading process, and learning to read may provide word recognition strategies as a part of the associational aspect of the reading process. But reading to learn involves much more than decoding symbols into sounds. The reader, therefore, is destined to construct meaning while interacting with the printed page (Burns, et al., 1999:5).



This may not seem new to subject area teachers because they go to classrooms with reading orders and do not consider reading to be of much disparity and organization as different from the text content (Robinson, 1975:5). The method perpetuated in such cases is the recitation method that dominates the vast majority of the content presentation in the classrooms.

Such a traditional style of teaching in content allows almost no time for teaching students how to read their texts (Herber, 1970:2-3). Added to that all trouble is the rate of knowledge explosion that stands as vast as an ocean to which solution the teacher may resort to providing lectures or dictating notes.

Herber, further, briefs the reasons for reading problems by stating as follows:

For many years, research has focused on basic problems of learning through reading, yet the problems remain. We are closer to the knowledge of how to solve the problems than we once were; our curricula have improved; our students' achievements have increased in comparison with the case of the previous generations. Yet, there is much dissatisfaction with our educational product... that we still apply old methods to new materials (Ibid, 2).

The grandest question and the best answer lie in how to make effective learning out of ineffective teaching. Since learning is the product that is built behind a certain participatory activity, the teaching process must be set effectively so that it can give way to a desirable and constructive learning. Here, reading to learn is no exception. Burns and colleagues (1999) stress that, as the child advances through the school-grades, it

becomes increasingly difficult for him to be weak in reading and strong in content subjects. The reason is such that, as exposure into subject-area increases, text-difficulty also increases. Reading tasks become increasingly complex as students advance through the grades and require continuing improvement (ibid, 3). This can be in terms of vocabulary, the introduction of new terms that increase faster and with fewer repetitions, and references that become vaster and deeper in steps (Ibid, 407). The vocabulary loads may require prior practice but more work is left in giving weight to the child's independent study (Herber, 1970:7).

The concept load, with its abstractions and complications may put subject adequacy in a question mark, but still, the teacher's keen work to convert compensatory lectures into the recognition of the complete act of reading to learn such as word perception, comprehension of stated and implied meanings, critical and emotional reaction, and application of perceived ideas to behavior is highly requested (Ibid, 11).

While the real sense of reading to learn appears as vital as in the citations, the degree to which the vitalizations of subject area reading is held in a constructive and learner-centered manner, remains a question that needs to be researched. Core to this effect is the identification of both the structural and internal organizational patterns of printed body of items which mark the existence of items of value that are worked on by both teachers and student. Such identification is essentially developmental. Developmental as it is, the procession goes on as the extraction of

important ingredients requests. That is the question of purpose the answer of which goes to the *objective* of the lesson.

Burns and others (1999) state here by referring to the trans-active theories that every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. They urge reading to go along with the child's developmental needs, and teaching reading to be held in the most teachable moments. This research was hence based on the investigation of subject-area reading skills development, specifically the case of Afan Oromo comprehension.

The question was whether teachers and students in the second-cycle primary schools in selected zones of Oromia had the channel for reading skill development across subject areas in Afan Oromo. This research focused on answering the following basic questions:

1. How are subject-area reading skills practiced across subject area teaching learning in second-cycle primary schools in the selected zones of Oromia? How are the chains of involvement structured?
2. What factors inhibit the consistent development of subject-area reading skills at this level of learning?
3. What remedial activities have been in operation to enrich students' actions for independent concept formation?



1.3. OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The research has been meant to treat reading skills development. Skills, as set and understood from this point, are those built upon selective dealings on text items. Reading skills in subject areas then, are no exception since they are realized depending on the utilization of the allocated resources. This utilization, in turn, involves taking "process" into account as well as "content".

This assures reading to be indispensable to the successful learning of all academic subjects, and at the same time, *content* as specified in a text is only one part of the dynamic interaction between reader, text, and teacher in classroom learning situations. The need goes to the learning of content and the teaching of processes to help learning integrated within a total lesson framework (Readence, 1989:9). Hence the following purposes were set to illuminate this work:

- (1) Investigating the degree to which reading skills are developed across primary school subjects teaching-learning in Oromia;
- (2) Looking into the role teachers and students play in enhancing reading skills development in subject-area teaching-learning in Afan Oromo;
- (3) Assessing factors that inhibit consistency of reading skills development across subject areas, and analyzing the remedial stands that have been taken by the respective subject teachers to enliven students' independent concept formation.

1.4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Findings from this research are expected to be valuable to the following:

1. To the subject-area teachers, it will give an expository heed to look into the nature of reading activities that are performed by pupils in the classroom.
2. To curriculum designers and experts, it will open the gate of insight for review of their designing channels so that they can make out workable reforms in the skills of reading across subject-areas in Afan Oromo.
3. This research will also have a great value to researchers who may be intending to work on children's constructive role in concept formation, for such a study touches the creative execution of language skills across subject-area teaching and learning.
4. An expectation is there also that this study will contribute to course-design for teacher training to include reading-skills development in subject-area methodology.

1.5. DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH



The research at hand has had the following boundaries in data area, population, tools and procedures of data collection and approaches to data processing:

1. Data Area- The research covered data collected from 45 schools in three selected zones of Oromia. Sample schools were selected based on simple randomization and more randomization was made on the inclusion of the schools such that, second-cycle primary schools were target data areas. The rationale for taking those sample schools was that expository content areas reading was expected to be worked on at this respective level on a departmental basis, and students' endeavor to achieve by reading actively was also assumed to be the demand at this very level.

2. Population- Respondents were selected from among the second-cycle subject-area teachers and students. Accordingly, 270 teachers and 225 students were taken as respondents. The reason for taking this number was that in the very region, no curricular diversity has so far been manifest and even the very focus of the research has been the status of reading skills development in the subject-areas. Respective reference was also made to zonal supervisors and regional experts. While teachers were required to give research information regarding their qualification, their approaches in course provision and in their modes of assessing learning, students were required to give information regarding their very reading endeavors and their constructive suggestions about the provision of instruction.

Zonal supervisors and regional experts were required to give due information regarding the succession of school lessons as planned by teachers depending upon the pre-ordained plan and more specifically, on the channel of feedback for improvements that have so far been reported to

be made. However, cases of people with certain disabilities in reading weren't treated in this research since its very essence was a generic survey. It didn't employ psychological tests and experimental procedures as tools of data gathering, either since the target area of study was curriculum implementation not psychology. Though the researcher took social studies textbooks and guides as items of document analysis that taking was not meant for analyzing subject-specific reading skills development in isolation. Hence, it was a general survey of reading skills around all subject-areas given in Afan Oromo.

1.6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A researcher plans his work to make the findings objective and reflective of the factual data. This requires collection of data from all concerned angles, and making references as much overt as possible. But, in this research, some limiting factors have been observed.

The researcher initially planned to gather data from subject-area teachers who have already held their diploma. But, from practical grounds, this has had its own setbacks since not all teachers have had diploma level training. So, the concerned data has been limited to some teachers who had diploma level training and some others attending distance education to meet the required profile. This matter has levied an unexpected diversity on the research data.

Documentary survey was said to include the investigation of research documents, and more specifically, teachers' reflective feedback to the textbook organization and enclosure. But such a document couldn't easily be found within reach. So absence of research documents has limited the information that could be gathered for the realization of this research.

The researcher expected to get data from ten subject teachers from each respective sample school. But, the reality could prove that a single teacher was assigned to teach both grades- seven and eight. This has, most probably, limited the adequacy of the research information.

1.7. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS USED IN THE RESEARCH

Self-learning is learning that requires the individual's endeavor to achieve knowledge and skills that can also aid the building of positive attitude for further learning.

Subject-area reading- Reading in the content areas that is largely based the mastery to construct concepts from contexts by extracting points from the text.

Dispensers- The reference is to the transmission of information that is readily to be used by the receivers wherein the users do not have any due share.

Moderators- According to this context are people, and more *specifically teachers* who stand as supporters to facilitate students' *self-learning* by reading independently.

Afan Oromo comprehension- Comprehension in subject-area reading that largely embraces skill-development across concept formation.

Critical thinking- According to Lapp and Flood (1983:243) refers to the interpretation and evaluation of content area items. In this research, too, it has been used to refer to deep analysis of content items to be largely used by the readers, the pupils.

Comprehension- According to Burns and others (1984:3) involves much more than decoding symbols into sounds but it is a state in which a reader

must derive meanings from a printed page. In this research, too, the same definition holds true except for its centrality on subject-area study, and more specifically on subject-area reading.

Narrative texts- Refer to texts basically meant to aid the pupils' reading through stories and plays, wherein the plot can enable the readers to anticipate the theme.

Constructive utilization of concepts, in this research, refers to the pupils' independent option to relate information that they gained through reading to their experience to construct a new schema, not just copying text items down.

Tailoring message: Means coordinating a message by putting it in a coherent mode such that, it can be comprehended duly.

Medium-sensitive training: In the researcher's denotation, this refers to the pertinence of teachers' training to the exploitation of the target media (whether a radio, a textbook or any other).



CHAPTER -TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 ESSENTIALS OF READING COMPREHENSION IN SUBJECT-AREAS

A number of scholars have pointed out the notable significance of comprehension as the most important aspect of the reading process. Cushenbery (1985:57), for instance, signifies that the heart of the reading process is meaning, and the primary aim of reading instruction is to develop readers who can understand and react to what they read. Ruddel (1997:37-40) adds also that, the most common academic goal of reading is comprehension, that is, the construction of meaning that in some way, corresponds to the "author's" intended meaning.

From this standpoint, reading has additional goals of learning not only to understand a text but also to extend knowledge in subject areas. Complementary to the above idea, moreover, is that students are expected to become better readers and to read increasingly difficult texts at each grade level.

They are also expected to apply knowledge that has been constructed from reading texts. Readence and others (1989:3-4) also assert by supporting the above idea when they stress the precedence of reading comprehension over the basic decoding skills that are said to be sufficient at the elementary school level. To them, modifying the elementary reading skills

automatically to be subservient to subject matter reading demands would be a fantasy since specific instructional strategies are required at the progressive levels. This is due to potential reading difficulties that come behind textbooks and supplemental materials that are used in subject-area reading.

Hittleman (1988:2-3) says also that learning to read develops from a person's ability to understand and use both oral and written language in social situations since the ability to understand written language is an extension of the ability to communicate orally. This, latter assertion, is inclusive of the basics of basal communion related to the speech realm, and hence sharpens the edge to cut through the utilization of the mother-tongue, even. The writer, further, notes the following regarding learning to read:

Learning to read requires knowledge of the structure of oral and written language. It requires the application of thinking strategies to ideas communicated in a written form. Therefore, school programs, for developing reading skills, need to cultivate students' cognitive learning processes, oral language proficiency, and the use of language in social contexts (Ibid).

This is a transaction since it requires an exchange among the reader, the text and the reading situation. Changes, whatever their forms, result from this exchange, and that will be in the reader, the reader's ideas and feelings about what is read. So, reviewing the essentials of reading comprehension will illuminate the purposes, the types and formats of the materials involved, the situations and contexts of reading, and the means by which

understanding is determined along with the reader's skills, abilities and experiences (Cooper, 1997; Hittleman, 1988).

2.1.1. Levels of Comprehension

Reading, like the stages of human existence, is developmental. It goes through successive levels. The rationale for the existence of such levels is that, an author's intended meaning doesn't automatically become the reader's reconstructed meaning. To justify this, Ruddel (1997:68) assures the existence of three levels of comprehension in reading as follows:

i. Literal comprehension

This is the level at which meaning is derived from reading the lines such that, the reader constructs meaning that accurately reflects the author's intended message. Readence and others (1989: 125) provide a special denotation to this level when they term it text-explicit comprehension that involves getting the facts of a passage as stated by the author, whereby a text-based question is asked and the answer is explicitly given by teaching the language of the text.

ii. Interpretive comprehension

According to Ruddel (1997), is meaning derivation by reading between the lines. The reader perceives author intent or understands relations between text elements that are not directly stated. It is text-implicit, and hence, answers questions that require the reader to draw conclusions in response to unstated cause-effect relationships or comparisons, perceptions of

nuance as well as symbolic use of language and ideas. This idea agrees to Heber's earlier assertion that runs as in the following lines:

The interpretive level of comprehension is applied to what the author said in order to derive meaning from his statement. The reader looks for relationships among statements within the material he has read. From these intrinsic relationships, he derives various meanings. The intrinsic relationships he perceives are colored and influenced by his previous knowledge of and experience with the topic in question (ibid, 163).

A related idea in Harris and Sipay (1990:583) puts interpretive comprehension as inferential comprehension, which involves application of reasoning ability in order to understand the idea and events or their relationships.

iii. The Application Level of Comprehension

According to Herber, the applied level of comprehension takes the product of the literal, what the author has said, and the interpretive, what the author meant by what he said, and applies it in some pragmatic or theoretical exercise (1970). To Ruddled (1997:68)^{sl}, this level is meant to derive by reading beyond the lines through which the reader understands unstated relationship between information in the text and information in his own repertoire.

Schema-implicit or experience-based as it is, it requires integration of new information into the reader's previous fund of knowledge, from which new relationships emerge. It is such an integration that is to be built in subject area reading. Generally, levels of comprehension are to be used by every subject- teacher since each teaches in a class whose students range in

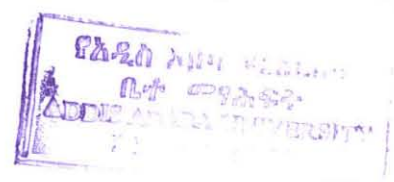
achievement over several grade levels though the same text is available to them. Even when the question of grade difference is resolved by the presence of multiple materials, the question of levels of comprehension remains the same. This is from the standpoint of disparity in the degree of comprehension. Students do not all grasp written data in the same manner. Some are high achievers; others are average achievers and others still, are low achievers (Herber, 1970:90). The poorer readers, for that matter, can be guided to read at the literal level of comprehension: the average or adequate readers respond at the interpretive level; and the good or superior readers at the applied level.

2.1.2. Purposes of Comprehension in the Subject-Areas

Reading comprehension has different focuses. Some read to get new information about other people while others read for entertainment. The variation in focus stands as a landmark between the text and the reader. That is, the purpose dictates the focus that, in turn, dictates the depth of comprehension. Burns and others (1999:181) say that children who read with a purpose tend to comprehend what they read much better than those who have no purpose.

The following idea has been taken from the same writers contributions to further illuminate the above assertion:

All of the reading that children do should be based upon a purpose, because children who read on a purpose tend to comprehend what they read better than those who have no purpose, this result may occur because children are attending to the material rather than just calling



words. For this reason, teachers should set purposes for young [readers] by providing them with pertinent objectives for the reading, or help them set their own purposes by deciding on their own objectives (ibid, 86).

Manifest from the above assertion is also the vitality of setting reading objectives that may include reading for enjoyment, to perfect oral reading proficiency or to use a particular strategy to update knowledge about a topic. Reading objectives can also be those meant to link new information to that already known, to obtain information for an oral or written report, to confirm or reject predictions, to perform an experiment or apply information gained from the text in some other way; to learn about the structure of a text or to answer a specific question. The purposes of reading can, hence, be seen under two focuses- Extensive and intensive.

2.1.2.1. Intensive Focuses and Strategies of Reading

These refer to reading shorter texts to extract details of specific information (Grellet 1981:4). To Ruddel, the identification of such a focus is highly interrelated with the levels of comprehension, and that requires maintaining a classroom pivot while teaching reading.

In subject – area reading, the pivot varies according to the variation in the strategy (strategies). This can best be served by providing specific purposes since such a provision helps readers to avoid the insurmountable task of remembering everything they read and allows them to know that they are reading to determine main ideas, locate details, understand vocabulary terms, or meet some other well defined goals.

The strategy can be a textbook and the processing can be either text-based wherein in the reader runs primarily to extract information from a text

schema-based where the reader primarily brings prior knowledge and experiences to bear on the interpretation of the material (Burns, et al. 1999:178). Basic in this respect can also be the identification and analysis of the pattern and organizations of skills as well as transformations (Herber, 1970:103).

Two organizational structures-external and internal – can be traced. The identification of patterns doesn't just happen. The readers must follow it such that the points so far treated can have the expected meanings. Some of patterns are easily discernible such that, the reader can, if in need, find out the required items. They are also of clear features since they convey the peculiarities with which content subject items are explored. To follow such identification up, learners as both assigned and self-initiated readers must have the span of treatment and mechanisms of extracting meanings. Such peculiarities as outlines, pictures, boldface type scripts and the likes are items that need close attention. For this to prove true, both the production and the implementation of the reading materials must be related with the readers' condition and the purpose thereof. Harris and Sipay (1990:523) state external organization of a text by a synonym "text structure" that refers to how the ideas in a text are organized by the author so that readers familiarize denotations over time and through exposure in hierarchy or relevance of utilization. Internal organization of reading material is discerned in the forms of cause/effect; comparison /contrast time order and enumerative order. Main idea is also a part of these sources as an organizational pattern (Herber, 1970: 150). Such are those to be identified at the interpretive comprehension level where the student searches for

relationships within the text to form concepts of intrinsic nature. After the relationships have been made plain, it becomes an essay to associate intrinsic concepts with direct experiences outside the text. Burns and others (1999:418) provide study guides to lead expository reading in content fields when they set the crucial aspect of purposes for reading as well as provision of aids for interpreting materials through suggestions about the application of reading strategies.

2.1.2.2. Extensive Reading Strategies

Extensive reading is wider in scope and personal since it covers a wide range of items that the readers utilize for their own drive. Reading of this sort can be an act of constructing meaning while transacting with a text. The way we make sense of print is just a part of our interaction with the world outside and the schemata we form, thereof (Ruddel, 1997:23). Meaning, as noted in this respect, is an amalgam of the interaction between prior knowledge and previous experience, plus the information readers elect to tackle in relation to the text. As a part of the immediate and remembered, the text must distinguish between, “making meaning” from a text and “getting meaning”.

This trend of making meaning may request the reader to move beyond the text, and that must be done according to the reader’s degree of mastery. Some writers assert that magazines and newspapers that are available at home can make a worthwhile contribution to the child’s background to become an active partaker.

2.1.3. Patterns, Skills and Transformations in Subject-Area Reading to Learn

Subject-area reading, like any other expository undertaking, holds organizational patterns by which any written material can be identified. Such structures are identified as external and internal organizational patterns:

A. External Organizational Patterns: A gross characterization focusing on format and physical features, identified as tables of contents, indices, chapter headings, divisions and sub-divisions shown by bold face type, underlining or italics, maps, charts, pictures and the likes, of which presence brings about an exposure to different clues. Herber (1970) states that such items can enable the learners to run through the nature of the content merely by identifying the external peculiarities.

B. Internal Organizational Pattern: In a reading material, this is a structure that is followed in hunting for the cause and effect ties, comparison/contrast, chronological and logical order of facts and events, etc.

This has a different magnitude and its constructs are so broad that it subsumes each of the other patterns. The gestalt would rather require one to keep track of the level at which the readers are destined to operate. In that, comprehension levels allow students to read without becoming overly concerned with nomenclature and the various combinations of skills that function when they read. That is, a way towards reading through full confidence.

2.2. Factors Affecting Subject-area Reading

Reading in content areas is affected by different constraints. Some are similar to the over-all reading constraints while others are subject -area based. Generally speaking, reading in content area textbooks, such as those for Social Studies, Science, Mathematics and other curricular areas, is often difficult for readers. Because text- contents are more expository (explanatory) than basal readers, they are much harder for children. In that, the following factors are worth mentioning when it comes to subject reading comprehension:

2.2.1 Teacher-Based Factors

The teacher has many important responsibilities, one of which is establishing a supportive classroom environment (Burns, et al., 1999:536). The teacher has the crucial role of making a major difference in the student's learning.

The same writers above cite the finding that, 15 percent of the variation among children in reading achievement at the end of the school year was attributable to factors that related to the skill and effectiveness of the teacher, whereas, only 3 percent of the variation in achievement was attributed to the overall approach of the program.



This delineates the fact that, the most essential ingredient of a good reading program is the teacher. As essential as she/he is in contribution, she /he may also be as distorting as the wrong model.

The succeeding ideas in available literature show such teacher-based factors as the following:

2.2.1.1 Prior Experience



The teacher, as a facilitator of the reading program, must, himself, have the competence to handle texts and programs. Concerning this, Devine (1989:143) says that children profit from demonstrations of self-monitoring devices where in teaches take time to read possibly difficult texts aloud in class and show children how they themselves check own their comprehension. The importance of comprehending what is already known, before reading, is an obvious necessity since it influences the facility with which individuals can understand a text and how well the reader understands the author's message. The teacher can consider this in planning and conducting reading lessons as well as in assessing reading comprehension. For this to go smoothly, it is not enough for the teacher to be a dispenser of information alone. There is an urge for him to know and have the experience to handle the procession of pupils reading. Burns and others (1999) state three forms of guides, which the teacher must consider when teaching reading. One of these is content- process guide that focuses on both the content and process aspect of learning reading. The other is related to pattern guides that stress the relationship among the organizational structure, the reading/thinking skills needed for

comprehension and the important concepts in the materials. The anticipation guide before reading a selection requires students to react to a series of statements related to the selection to be readily made. Generally, three statements can represent these: what I know; what I want to know, and, what I learned. The teacher's background experience can help in the elicitation of these experiences to the readers.

Regarding this, Lapp and Flood (1983:350-351) reflect that, the key to developing a personal love for books is a teacher who communicates 'enthusiasm' and appreciation' for literature through his attitude and example. The same writers add also that the best way to develop enthusiasm to love literature is by being a good model for the students. The following basic questions have also been set as indicators of self-assessment for teachers:

1. Do I freely choose to spend my spare time reading?
2. Do I read to my students regularly?
3. Do I reach for a book when I need information?
4. Am I knowledgeable enough about children's books to make recommendations based on student's interests and achievement levels?
5. Do I discuss my interests in reading with my students?
6. Do my personal attitudes and my classroom environment demonstrate that I value reading?
7. Am I enthusiastic and positive in my approach to reading?

2.2.1.2 Teachers' Training Quality

The kind and depth of training teachers have gained has a great impact on their mode of classroom organization and use of methods. This is manifest in the development of reading skills across subject areas, also. Cushenbery (1985:26) states that, lack of adequate training may cause a teacher to be overly dependent on a single method or approach to the teaching of reading. A part of this undertaking is shortage in the teachers' questions. The kinds of questions posed by teachers may influence what children learn to consider when they read. Asking the same kinds of questions directs students' attention on one dimension alone.

If the teacher asks only literal questions, children attend to details as they read where as, asking well-crafted questions can promote reading ability (Harris & Sipay, 1990:573). Moreover, the teacher is destined to provide conditions that enable students to learn. He should employ a variety of methods to meet the needs of a diverse student population. He can use such procedures as modeling and direct instruction to help pupils acquire the strategies and knowledge they need to succeed.

Burns and companions state also that, by adjusting learner- centered environment, the teacher can support pupils in their efforts to become responsible, independent learners (1999:536). The same writers add the following regarding the vital role teachers play in initiating learning through reading, as facilitators and managers *"No matter how good a lesson may be, students will learn little if the teacher is unable to manage their behavior.*

One way (of managing this) is by modeling appropriate behavior and learning strategies (Ibid, 536-537)."

One way of keeping track of individual activities is through student's contracts' in which students create bonds to complete creative projects designed to help them with their individual reading needs.

That all goes right partly when the teacher knows what to do, and how to do. This is from the rationale that reading, as an active process doesn't happen to the student; and, it is not done for him either. It requires a favorable attention and attitude since it is not mechanical. Therefore, the teacher should be armed with techniques of creating harmony among reading skills. This is a part of the overall training that need be considered since the paramount concern for most teachers is not their lack of cognitive tendency to impart information but inadequacy of training to be provident supports of students' reading (Passe'1999: 391).

2.2.2. Student- Based factors Affecting Reading

Eggen and Kauchak (2001:365) state that, during the middle grades, the emphasis changes from learning-to read to reading to learn, stress being on decoding and view reading as a sequential, letter-by-letter, word -by word analysis of a text. That is a data-driven model and taking meanings from the text based upon individual expectations and prior knowledge. Readaence and others describe the components of comprehension such as in the following lines:

2.2.2.1. Background Knowledge

The rationale is that, the background knowledge readers bring to the text influences both comprehension and attention since it tells what to look for and how to make sense of ambiguities (Eggen & Kauchak, 2001:366). This, according to Harris and Sipay (1990:33-34), goes with reading readiness as a state of general maturity based on aptitudes and learned knowledge and skills, which allows a child to profit from reading instruction under given instructional conditions. Such an instruction typically involves, among other things, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, visual-motor skill and concept-development lesson. Once one is physically and mentally ready, the other requirement is background information and review. When a learner begins a new unit of reading, s/he needs a frame of reference for the new ideas he is to acquire. Recall of isolated bits of information may not have any bearing (Herber, 1970:32). Background information, hence, refers to those major and minor concepts which identify, qualify, and support the specific unit to be studied without which the reader's comprehension will be incomplete (Burns, et al., 1984:149).

✓ When a student has little experience with or knowledge of a topic, his interest is minimal. Review can, therefore, provide the true frame of reference into which students can fit new ideas acquired through their reading and study. It provides intellectual hooks on which new ideas can be hung.



2.2.2.2. Readiness for Reading

Readiness, according to Readence and others (1989:93), refers to the mental state in which an individual is prepared to derive maximum meaning from a learning situation, with a minimum of frustration. Since reading a text is involving, readers must have some knowledge and processes to figure out what the authors are trying to say. One such an undertaking, according to Devine (1989,XV), involves linguistic competence-sharing the language system of the writer or writers. Readers need to have the knowledge of how sounds are organized to represent words, how words are organized in sentences, and how words are arranged to form schemata (concepts) and carry meanings. This is, in other words, the requirement in phonological, syntactic, and semantic knowledge. Motivation to figure out a printed text requires some amount of mental effort and desire to understand. That is why the question of reading readiness had so long been a point of much debate that hung between mental maturity and consideration of individual differences. Knowledge of conventions, as in reading across the page from left to right and beginning at the top of a page and moving downwards as well as letter combinations that represent sounds, is a part of the consideration to be there. Hence, new learning, not only build upon previous learning; they are also affected by the extent and quality of the previous learning.

Children do not learn to read "all at once"; they learn over a long period of time. They do not develop readiness all at once, either. Readiness is

developed over a period of time, as learners become ready for each of the subsequent learning.

It precedes all learning at all educational levels, and goes along every bit of learning through the levels. How children get involved is all the matter. Teachers should, hence, consider the child's readiness for every instructional activity. If or not the child has the prerequisite skills necessary for learning the new skill should be assessed ahead of time (Burns.et al, 1984:23). The remedial is such that if the pupil doesn't have the necessary prerequisite reading skills, a thorough developing of such forerunner skills must be held before presenting the planned activity.

2.2.3. Material-Based Factors

Reading is based on the extraction of meaning from a text. Meaning extraction, in turn, depends on different factors that are related to reading texts. Below are ideas that have been reviewed:

2.2.3.1. Availability of the Materials

Text provision is one of affective values because the very presentation of contents commences from the existing material. Readence and others (1989:9) assert that students learn best and acquire content most successfully when their attention is focused directly on the material to be learned.

In a similar manner, Harris and Sipay (1990:135) note that, materials for a rich, well-rounded reading program should include sets of basal readers or

other materials, in numbers appropriate for the groups using them, ranging in difficulty as appropriate from the lowest to the highest group.

Reference works; including picture dictionaries and various dictionaries, and encyclopedia set, atlases, an almanac, and the like are also required. Workbooks that accompany the reading series and others not correlated with the series, which ease the burden of duplication, are also essential. Special teacher-devised materials that help to fill the gaps in the available commercial materials are of complementary and initiating value as well.

Diverting from this obvious requirement are the particular instructional problems reading may pose in the process. That is from the setback behind unavailability of the special texts students need. On the other hand, heavy reliance on textbooks may eventually lead to an inevitable sharing of the author's bias in view, in philosophy and assertion of values. While bias in views may emanate from considering the one time published materials to be everything, philosophical bias may lead the teacher into overestimating content-learning at the expense of critical thinking skills wherein students are driven in to cramming by being deprived of the valuable learning experiences. Heavy reliance on textbooks can also effect in the deskilling of teachers (Passe, 1999).

2.2.3.2. Comprehensiveness of Reading Materials

In subject-area reading, the existence of variety in text materials marks the strengthening or the retardation of reading. Readence and fellows (1989:43) state that, the desire to increase reading comprehension and achievement test scores should entail reasons or purposes for reading, which go beyond

the realm of the textbook. In creating reading inspiration, the ultimate goal of content area reading should be to create students who process information, have positive attitudes towards books, possess broad reading interests, and have acquired a taste for quality literature and learning (Ibid, 44). Ruddel (1999:134) puts the vitality of comprehensiveness when saying that in the content classrooms learning from texts occurs as the results of a variety of transactions. These need students to recall prior knowledge and previous experience, to organize information while reading, organize information after reading, synthesize and articulate new learning, to learn vocabulary that labels important concepts, elements and relationship; and produce or create something new and apply new information.

2.2.3.3. Simplicity for Exploitation

Burns and others brief that, reading, as a process of thinking, is an act of recognizing words, which also requires interpretation of graphic symbols. The reader should, hence, be able to use the information to make inferences and read critically and creatively-to understand figurative language, determine the author's purpose, evaluate the ideas presented, and apply the ideas to the actual situation (1999:11).The transactions in such a reading process involve not only the presence of sufficient information but also the logical connectedness of the points that hold the information.

Since information is a staff that passes through schema, its relative pertinence to the thinking level and objective of the subject area study should be a part of the whole concern in reading. Ruddel asserts that cone

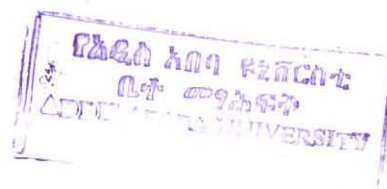
of experience, as the basis for integrating language and literary activities into content area learning, is a useful way to develop lessons and units that give needed assistance to readers and writers in trouble (1997:320-321). Turner (1994:77-79), for instance, puts reading skills needed in the social studies as follows:

1. Recognizing the Organization of Subject Area Reading Materials

This specifically works in using bold-faced headings as cues to content, recognizing topic sentences and using them in skimming and scanning, identifying main ideas, finding supportive ideas, learning vocabulary and concept meaning, recognizing concepts by using contexts from definitions and identifications.

There is also an aching demand for the use of glossaries and outside resources to find the meaning of vocabulary. Using structural analysis and context clues that help to obtain vocabulary meaning will also be of importance. According to Lapp and Flood, the potential vocabulary difficulties in social studies can be categorized as technical, specialized, multiple meanings, and abbreviations and acronyms. Vocabularies being one aspect, explaining information that is supplemented by maps, diagrams, pictures, graphs, charts, and timelines can also be of a related advantage.

In a similar manner, understanding a cause-effect-relationship, making comparisons, detecting propaganda, differentiating facts from opinions, sequencing and conceptualizing time and space relationships are skills that



need to be drawn upon (1983:245-247). Especial concern can be there in mathematics, where the reader is expected to meet the dual objective of understanding and problem solving since such require him/her to have some competence in reasoning. Reasoning is closely related to comprehension because both entail ability to detect problematic clues, to hypothesize and to evaluate conclusions (Ibid, 255). One can tell how concepts are explained. The other involves the interpretations of signs and symbols.

2. Bringing Meaning to Reading

In this respect it is not sufficient for pupils to identify text words alone. Relating what has been read to personal experiences, observations and past learning is also needed. That is relating a new material to previous studies as well as recognizing and following relationship in a text with the right sequence and chronology.

This assertion tells us that, reading materials must be free from group and individual biases, must be free from being too mechanical in their presentation and representations.

3. Reading for a Purpose

This goes with understanding questions and problems In order to come up with appropriate solutions. Skimming for overall meaning and scanning for specific information are also parcels of the operation. The use of tables of contents and index to find specific information, and obtaining information from maps will also be of value. These all will be possible only when the

materials have due clarity and simplicity. Recent debates mushroomed to designate quantitative formulae as only insensitive tools of guessing readability of a text. Readability formulas have become the points of large debate owing to their deep reliance on quantitative information that neither represents the mental picture of the reader nor the exact limit of text difficulty (Sadker & Sadker, 1997:242). Therefore, several writers substantiate the use of other means than quantitative data.

Readence and fellows (1989:67) for instance, put the maxims of text evaluation as fellows (from the perspective of an author):

Structure: This requires choosing a pattern of organization that best conveys the informative of an author.

Coherence: Making relationships among ideas clear enough so that there can exist logical connection or “flow of meaning” from one idea to the next.

Unity: This needs addressing one purpose at a time; and not straying from the purpose by including irrelevant and distracting information.

Audience appropriateness: This involves making sure that the texts fit the knowledge base of the reader. May (1990:396) puts the difficulty of content area reading by stating five reasons. One of the reasons is that expository style is a lot tougher to follow than the narrative. The abstractness of the vocabulary is another. The elaborateness of sentence structure is also the other reason. The narratives have little sources of stress to the readers. These, however, are matters that seek attention than alarm a caution. The vast difference between story texts meant to learn to read and expository texts- reading to learn lies in the fact that, the latter give the reader no character to identify with, no setting, no conflict, and no

reaction to the conflict. Instead of leading the reader through a familiar and predictable structure, the writer leads him through a mass of information which may seem to a child like a jungle, full of strange and frightening animals. Now, what Kaplan gives us as the *cognitive revolution* (1991:459) comes to pose some effect, for reading is a sophisticated cognitive skill that involves perception, attention, memory and evaluative thinking. Unless perception is paved its way for, the way to attention will be rough, and memory formation will soon be in coffin, with evaluative thinking to die a fetus. May, with his vast resource, says that, to assist children with content area materials, recognition must be built on the main expository modes the authors use. These, in their orders of difficulty, are the ones to follow:

Sequence- Showing how to do things in orders of priority needs some sequence. This may be indicated by such words as *first, finally, next, following that, before* and *after*, or by number; or it may be marked by requirements for reasoning ability to follow orders of events such as dates, changes in seasons, or the passage of time (Harris & Sipay, 1990:595).

Cause and Effect- This goes with the inference made by readers of a cause or an effect that has been implied in the material (Burns,et. al, 1999:235). But cause-effect expressed through subject and predicate may be difficult for children to understand. Different markers can also make comprehension a difficult task to perform (Harris and Sipay, 1990).

Description: in description, presenting attributes, explanations, settings, or specific provision of information about the topic are the grand tasks.

Problem/solution: Creative readers relate the things they read to their own personal problems, sometimes applying the solution of a problem they encounter in a story to a different situation. Not one but different forms of problem-solving texts destined to be extracted by the teacher.

Comparison/contrast- In the comparison and contrast patterns, similarities and differences between two or more topics are pointed out. This type of identification requires the reader to note the likenesses and differences between the ideas being compared or contrasted (Harris & Sipay, 1990:568).

2.2.4. Linguistic Factors Affecting Reading

Language fulfills many human purposes in addition to serving the obvious and vital communicative functions. The sending of and reception of a message has, by itself, a lot to contribute in reading and creating the sense of perceptibility.

Burns and others (1999) state the following regarding the above ideas:

Despite the popularity of newer media such as radio and TV, no person can reach full human stature in our society without competence in reading. Ten years of compulsory failures at school can be crippling enough for the poorer reader without the continuing experience of deprivation, which he faces in a society, based on the expectation of literacy. The written word influences modern living more deeply every day. Print is persistently increasing its impact on the lives of ordinary people, and in much more complex ways than it influenced a literate minority in the past (Ibid, 11).

Whatever the form or the theme, the source of reading is something set in writing. Generic classifications delineate the following linguistic features to have a dumping effect on reading.

2.2.4.1. Words and their Representations

An envisage into the variety of skills in reading gives us the idea that recognizing the script of a language is the foremost task facing the reader since the deduction of meaning follows that envisage. Word recognition skills are essential but comprehension involves much more than decoding symbols into sounds; it needs deriving meaning from the printed page (Burns, et al, 1984:3).

The reader is, therefore, destined to identify content words from the structural clues and the connective devices. S/he is also required to know word recognition procedures found as in the following steps according to Burns and others (1984:139):

Step 1. *Applying context clues, as indicators of what lies in the very written channels,*

Step 2. Trying sounding of the initial consonant, vowel, or blending along with context clues;

Step 3. Checking for structure clues (prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, compound words, or familiarity of syllables)

Step 4. Beginning sounding out the word using known phonic generalizations;

Step 5. Consulting the dictionary

The same writer leave teachers the points that children should not consider the use of word recognition skills important only during reading classes. They should apply these skills whenever they encounter unfamiliar words and expressions (ibid, 140).

Heber (1970:151) forwards three assumptions about word recognition in content areas as follows.

Each subjects has its own special language which students must learn to use in order to read and react successfully to various sources related to the subject.

The entailed discussion briefs that basic concepts in any discipline are expressed in nomenclature with meaning peculiar to that discipline. It follows from this that if a person is to communicate his understanding of those concepts, has to have language facility, which the concepts are expressed. Ruddel (1997:117) states, in this respect, that meaningful use of words is a form of reflection and connectedness.

Whatever activities teachers assign following the identification of new words must be sensible repetitions, for meaningful use of the newly acquired content vocabulary requires students to write or speak reasonably by exploring new ideas and language, making connections, and reinforcing what they have just learned. According to Devine (1989:124), Students must be taught how to use structural and contextual clues, and to make efficient use of the dictionary, for student's efforts to make sense of

assignments is wasted unless they have skills valued to build word meanings.

Burns and others (1999:77-79) state also that word recognition strategies and skills help a reader recognize written words, in that the ability to use context clues, phonics, structural analysis and dictionaries, as word attack, is very much essential. It is impossible to teach every word as student will encounter in a given subject area at a given grade level. Given the shortage of time and the extensiveness of the curriculum, it can be very hard for a classroom teacher to teach every technical word that his students will encounter during their studies regardless of the hot demand.

The solution has been earmarked by Herber (1970:152) that if students have some trouble, teaching a few words at a time can enrich word analysis, word recognition and word meaning skills. Consistency in this procedure develops students' competence to the point that, they can apply skills independently to untaught words.

Word recognition alone may not suffice; there is also a need to build expressions operationally across subject-area reading. In such a process students are expected to work on their repertoire in order to expand their mastery of concept formation.

2.2.4.2. Expressions and their Comprehensibility

Every subject area can have basic concepts that need to be built students as the process keeps going. The urge to identify and attack expressions goes along a similar pace. Earlier review could delineate that not all words are to be defined. Expressions can be handier to deal with in that respect.

Harris and Sipay (1990:541) state sentence comprehension to have both linguistic and non-linguistic information. While the former refers to word meanings, the later refers to word knowledge. Why some sentences appear more difficult than others can be attributable to the existence of a difference between what is actually written and what the sentence means.

That is the difference between the surface structure and the deep structure, for that matter. A sentence can be understood when the meaning of its deep structure is grasped well. In that, two sentences may look very similar in surface structures but different in underlining meanings. Therefore, the closer the match between the surface and deep structures of a sentence, the fewer transformations the reader has to make, and the easier the sentence will be to understand (ibid). In addition to identifying expressions, there is also an urge to work on the organization or reading activities at pre-reading, while reading and post reading task levels. Ruddel (1997:145), states the urge to maintaining a classroom focus on subject matter while teaching reading and study strategies, indirectly because; first, they are needed for learning content; and second they help

to show students how to do what they are required to do; and third, they provide a structure that will assist them before, during and after reading.

Pre- reading activities, according to Burns and other (1999), include previews of background knowledge, anticipation guides for predicting successive events in the reading, semantic mapping that will introduce important vocabulary to appear forth; and writing suggestive comments before reading. During reading strategies and activities include guiding questions, cloze procedure and meta-cognitive strategies.

Guiding questions help the student to turn factual information in to questions that will help to facilitate self-response. Cloze procedures also aid students in filling missing story parts. Meta-cognition refers to the reader's display of selective skills to deal with the kind of text material at hand. Teacher's modeling of reasoning ability can help much here. Questions, visual representations, reader's theatre, retelling and application can be used in post-reading. How expressions have appeared in the text can hence be seen along the context, as it appears in the lesson, not barefoot. The comprehensibility can also be death with accordingly (Herber, 1970:165; Readence et. al 1990:217; Ruddel, 1997:96).

2.2.4.3 Dialect and its Features

Not only word meanings but also dialectal varieties are required to be considered in reading. Our very exposure to word sounds and meanings can divert our path of comprehension. In areas where dialect renditions such as making very long or shot sounding of vowels, or sounding silent

scripts are not taken into consideration, readers may be unjustified victims; because, reading is personal while dialect is communal (Harris and Sipay, 190:213) .

Eggen and Kauchak (2001: 69) assert that a culturally responsive teaching begins with accepting and validating learner differences as in dialects. Dialects must be seen as both functional and valued in ingredients in the culture of the student's neighborhoods. From the logic provided by Burns and others (1999:572, a dialect, though a variation of a language sufficiently different from the original to be considered a separate entity, is not a different language. Dialectal variations can be associated with socio-economic level, geographical region or national origin. After all, each dialect is a complete and functional language system and no dialect is inferior or superior to another of purposes of communications. Hence, reading teachers should be familiar with the principal differences in production and syntactic rules of a child's dialect in order evaluate the child's misreading in decoding as different from misreading in dialect. And minor concepts, which identify, qualify, and support the specific unit to be studied. Further review provides the true frame of reference into which students fit new idea acquired through their reading and study.

Anticipation and purpose: Reading without anticipation boils down to word recall. Two broad areas of purpose needed to be established in purpose formation are the ideas to be established and the skills to be applied.



Direction: the teachers determine major ideas his students are to acquire and the skills needed to discover them in reading a given assignment. Based on this analysis she can give them specific direction in how to apply the necessary skills.

Language Development: Each subject area has its own language and its own technical vocabulary. To study the subject, students must know the language, which serves as the basis for communicating ideas within that subject (Herber, 1970).

2.3. Developing Strategies and Techniques for the Subject area Reading

2.3.1 Strategies for Locating Information

In locating information, both textual and contextual activities have to be dealt with. Textual analysis refers to the identification and analysis of prose whether narrative or expository (Lapp & Flood, 1983). Expository prose, as an object of descriptive approach to writing, is used to educate post primary grade in most educational settings. Rather than beginning with an overall story grammar, examination of the elements and types of exposition, a review of the underlying internal relationships with a text will exist. Content area reading like any other transactional activity has some techniques and strategies to be based on. Hittleman (1988) briefs techniques for independent reading under the acronym SQ3R-each referring to chain of activities. The benefit from these is such that, students move toward independent approach to reading and using textual materials

in the content areas; develop strategies for adapting their reading to an expository style and develop strategies for making integrated use of textual and graphic information. The phases of SQ3R are the following:

Survey-This is an initial preview step at which the readers skim the reading assignment.

Question-This a phase of converting chapter headings into subsequent questions wherein hypotheses or predictions are developed for further envisage.

Read-Here, the readers strive to find answers for the prior questions they have devised both for answering the questions and getting through new ideas.

Recite-In this part, students answer questions that have been posed during the survey and question stage.

Review-This deals with the long-range retention off information within 24 hours of completing the recite stage.

2.3.2. Strategies for Organizing Information

Reading is basic to every subject area reading and is vital for the extraction of textual information. Its process starts with the learners forming schemata. In that, students need schemata of a variety of types to be successful readers. The schema formation goes about in two basic forms- perception and interpretation. Perception involves determining the relationship between textual symbol and sound. Interpretation, on the other hand, requires the association of sounds with symbols and symbols with experiences for the formation of workable chains of concepts and experiences.

The core issue in this research was, hence, investigating the status of reading skills development in subject-areas teaching and learning with specific reference to comprehension in Afan Oromo. The procession treated how far reading skills were given due attention, based upon the aforementioned review information and the researched data.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Every researcher designs his/her work in such a way that the work does not diverge from the intended coverage sphere. The researcher has, likewise, carried out his work by following the succeeding basic design for collecting, tabulating and interpreting data.

3.1. Methodology of the research

In the overall treatment of cases in this research, a descriptive survey method of research has been used.

3.2. Target Population of the Research

To facilitate research information, data were gathered from among selected second-cycle primary schools in West Shewa, East Wellegga and West Wellegga such that, teachers, students, supervisors and the respective experts were taken.

Accordingly, 270 teachers and 225 students were purposively taken to be respondents. Moreover, three regional experts and nine zonal inspectors of the respective sites were consulted for research information. Grades 7 and 8 were chosen for their mediating and demanding nature, which the researcher believed to be of much concern.

3.3. Sampling Techniques and procedures

While purposive sampling was used with zones, teachers and students, availability sampling was used with the experts and supervisors (on the bases of preference and availability), simple random-sampling was used with school samples. To get through the school sampling, the researcher followed the following procedures. First, he formed woreda-categories, by randomly choosing from among the woredas in the respective sample zones. Then, he randomly chose fifteen second-cycle primary schools of grades 7 and 8 from each one of the zones, not the woredas of course. Finally, he listed down the schools alphabetically and drew 15 schools (from each zone) at random until the top 45 samples were identified from all the three zones.

3.4. Tools and Procedures of data collection

In this research, categories were formed from the very outset of area delimitation. Accessibility being the grandest case for the selection of the

three zones, first, woreda and school-categories were formed. Then, teachers and students were identified according to their response liability on purposive grounds. From that, zonal and regional samples were made out to be respondents.

In collecting data from the respective respondents, questionnaire and interview were largely employed. Questionnaire was used with the teachers and the students so sampled, owing to the ease for use with large numbers of respondents. Interview was used with the concerned experts such being the most liable access to gather information in a face- to- face channel. Observation checklist was also employed as an aiding tool for looking into the objective classroom arrangement and an overall interaction among teachers and students. Generally, 12 sections, in six of the sample schools were purposively taken and observed.

The use of observation was such that, it was employed at two separate sessions. Document survey was also employed to be used as a starting point to assess the enclosure of activities that could inspire subject-area reading skills. Such resources as subject-area student-texts and teachers' guides were looked into, from didactic spectrum of development. The procedure for data collection was such that, first teachers and students were consulted through the questionnaire. Then, the researcher did observation. Depending on the observed cases, document survey was used after experts had been consulted through interview. The distribution of data gathering tools was completed in the lesson-time, and hence, the collection of information was done in such a way that it could sense practical.

3.5. Presentation and Analysis of Data

The collected information was finally tabulated and analyzed depending on the percentage of responses so indicated. The text content analysis has been done according to some formal ratings both quantitatively and

qualitatively. In the quantitative realm, Fry's readability formula has been employed as a comprehensive device. Entirely, qualitative treatment has been made use of, in the realm of data analysis.

CHAPTER-FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this part of the research, data gathered from the respective respondents through the above-cited tools have been tabulated and analyzed. Accordingly, part one encloses responses given to the questionnaire addressed to teachers and students of grades seven and eight, separately. Analysis of interview responses gathered from the respective experts and inspectors has been held in part- two the respective analysis. Observation and document survey have been set as enriching body of the questionnaire data, and the information on document survey has been analyzed separately.

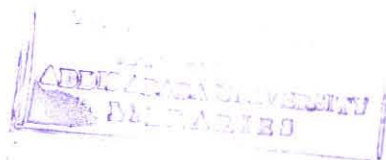
4.1. Presentation and Analysis of Data Gathered Through Questionnaire

4.1.1. Presentation and analysis of teachers' responses to the questionnaire

A. Points Regarding Teachers' Prior-training, Lesson Planning and Implementation

Table 1. Have you taken courses on reading skills development in subject-areas?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Yes	22	8
(b) No	248	92
Total	270	100



As seen in the above table, majority of the respondents have not taken any special courses regarding subject-area reading. Accordingly, 92 percent of the response delineated lack of exposure to such a skill development. What must be plain, here, is that almost all schools solely depend on books as sources of lesson information.

Yet, teachers do not know how to develop pupils' reading skills in subject-areas. What the remaining 8 percent termed training on subject-area reading was the generalist course of methodology. Asked to suggest their reaction about their lack of training the respondents said that, they faced a lot of trouble in making constructive use of lesson and time. Cushenbery (1985:26) states that, lack of training causes a teacher to stick to 'a single approach' of teaching. The same problem was found manifest, as the classroom observation held by the researcher indicated that, teachers dominated most of the activities while students were attending passively by closing their textbooks. In most of the observed classrooms, even students did not have their books with them only because they did not feel it important, and partly, because they did not have the textbooks at hand.

All parts of the teacher's preparation, when seen in their essential realms of teaching the reality, however, dictate teachers' use of various reading methods, which correlate with pupils' preferred learning modality. Such a provision, as stated by Readence and fellows (1989:122), requires giving supports. Presenting contents without relating them to processes of

handling would lead the pupils into collecting isolated bits that lack grains of relatedness with prior experiences.

The urge to annex the reading of new information to previously built schemata (chain of experience) triggers the involvement in all aspects of the instructional process. This requires awareness that many students need to follow as an explicit model and stream of feedback. As Durkin (1983:316) states, teachers have to be in a position to help students learn how to get information from a text. All parts of the teacher's preparation when seen in their essential realms of teaching and learning do need related training. For instance, reading the text chapter has been taken as a part of the teacher's preparation. Nevertheless, the reason for students' reading is to form concepts independently while it is aiding or supporting the students learns, for the teachers.

Whatever the essence, points of importance (content and vocabulary), procedures to deal with them, reading objectives to be attained and procedures for attaining reading objectives have to be clear ahead of time (ibid). These all need due training since they are not items to be made out by common sense practice.

Herber (1970:24) adds also that, all students need guidance in their proper use of their texts, and that guidance is required to identify the right level of comprehension at which the students are led to respond to the text. In the case under study, however, all such requirements have been missing.

Mather (1977:140-141) denotes a variety of skill management systems in reading such as a sequentially ordered set of behavioral objectives for the

reading skills to be monitored, and a set of practices designed to measure each objective.

Table 2. Lesson plan enclosure about the pupils' independent reading of subject-areas

Response option	Number of response	Percent
(a) Affirmative	45	17
(b) Negative	225	83
(C) Undecided		
Total	270	100

Here majority of the responses had the inclination to the negative that teachers did not arrange for the students' independent reading. Moreover, the extending question that stood complementary to this very idea could delineate that what the teachers felt to be an independent reading skills development was only a literal, day-to-day copying of notes, which had neither deep anchor nor a wider channel, such that there was no observed pupils' reading plan in spite of its crucial aspect. Only in 17 percent of the case was the enclosure of reading activities in the lesson plan responded to be affirmative. Upon suggesting the nature of activities that have been planned to be worked on, the respondents traced the provision of notes from the teacher's side. But when the teacher frequently gives notes, and the students do not attempt to meet the challenge to do so, there comes unconditional inclination to teacher dominance, and pupil's passivity becomes one of the norms. Nevertheless, the participatory aspect of reading takes readers as composers since thoughtful readers plan reading around a given purpose in mind. That purpose makes them think about

the text and begin to activate background that is related to the topic (Cooper, 1997).

So, the essential feature of the teaching-learning plan as inclusive of the learner's role to pave the way for his/her own learning includes subject-area reading that needs activation of involvement much more than what can be done at literal level. The point is that, teachers are destined to plan for their pupils' reading depending upon the reality of the classroom which holds availability of the materials, validation of independent reading plan and feasibility through the consistent holding of reading to learn. This, in turn, requires the understanding on the side of the teachers that "instruction" which doesn't lead up to "construction" is a lame hand.

Table3. The type of reading practice so far planned

Response option	Number of respondents	Percent
(a) Home-take reading	22	8
(b) Reading notes produced by the teachers	181	67
(c) Reading assignment successively corrected	45	17
(d) Private reading (personal) and presentation	22	8
Total	270	100

As seen in the above table, note reading was the biggest task planned by the teachers to enable the students to participate in classroom subject-reading activities. This can be magnificent since it overweighs the rest options (67%) followed by reading assignment successively corrected, which bore only 17% of the response demand. This tends to reflect the fact that

notes prepared by teachers rather dictate the teaching-learning plan produced by the teachers.

The implication is that teachers of this respective level stand as information dispensers whose golden words are eagerly waited every day by the students. One of the special features of expository texts, however, is that they are organized differently and often include words and terms peculiar to the content area. Teachers can aid pupils in reading to learn if they plan on such an activity and follow the materialization up in due course. Such a plan can hold the treatment of the organizational patterns of the text, meanings for technical or specialized vocabulary and identification of deficiencies in background knowledge that hinder the comprehensions of specific passages and selections (Devine, 1989:193-194). The presence of varieties in the forms of texts and the intense complexity of expressions necessitates the building of concurrent reading plan.

The same writer above asserts that teachers can do the following to activate the students' reading to learn:

- Previewing reading assignments, which may be full of technical words, which may be too difficult to master.
- Teaching technical words before reading such that, all problem words can be identified and explained in advance of reading.
- Reviewing structural and contextual clues wherein the review of previous instruction can be offered in the use of structural and contextual clues to world meanings.



-Encouraging pupils' use of personal glossaries, here implying the need to keep track of words and their meanings by creating personal glossaries or using reference such as dictionaries. These all will require teachers to plan ahead of time, as do items as basic rocks of instruction (ibid, 196-197).

But, in the case under research, the teachers appeared 'to read for the students' since lion's share was given to teachers' notes. The researchers' very observation could bring one reality to light, that was absence of reading contract between the teacher and the pupils whereby the pupils could take responsibility of reading to learn by starting with classroom guidelines. In answering questions related to their reading and arguing on complex points, no special involvement other than 'yes' or 'no' was observed. Taking private notes, presenting self-initiated notes and interpreting broad topics were all de-emphasized.

Table 4. What do plan to initiate students' reading?

Response Options	Number	Percent
(A) Only to concentrate on text items	22	8
(B) To grasp points most likely to appear on exams	180	67
(C) To practice what they read everyday	68	25
Total	270	100

The responses above indicates that the value of each reading task goes more to grasping points that are most likely to appear in the tests. This is also indicative of the reality that most of the reading remains hung at the literal level where collection of cognitive items takes the lion's share. But, scholarly writings depict that subject-area reading requires identifying text

organizations which may enclose simple lists of items that later lead to further discussion, orders, generalizations and examples, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, question and answer, etc (Devine, 1989).

The point, here, is that sheer emphasis on examinations or temporary tests does never warrant better armament for independent concept formation. To add in a different way, the student cannot get valued experience when reading only for passing tests.

It is out of doubt also that learners give attention to what they are responsible to complete on their own. Although some guides are required, the elicitation of the pupils' initiative will be none-to-equal.

In cases where preparations in the classroom are solely mastered by paper-pencil tests, specifically, the reader is missing and the books with their backdating publications remain decors for the once built school drawers.

The second valued reading task actually was the practice aspect of everyday reading. Here, teachers' plan was said to hold points, which could inspire independent reading practice. But, this is contradictory to the reality observed in the classroom. From the researcher's observation, it was clear that the pupils didn't have any reading reactions in the classroom. Nor did they have personal reading plans the option of which could help them read even beyond what the text dictated.

From this it is justifiable to say that reading plan in the second-cycle level of the respective areas was highly dominated by the teachers' provisions and preparation for tests alone.

Different writers assure that active involvement in the written material is the mission behind reading, since reading is not a passive process.

Nevertheless, weighing the student's content reading through temporary lesson-oriented tests doesn't indicate the required skill development. Here, McClain (1981) ascertains that one essential purpose of teaching is guiding and encouraging students' creative inquiry, blending established knowledge, and connecting methods with personal experiences.

Initiating pupils in reading to learn, everyday is an arch for consistent skills development. But, this very point was rated to be operational only in 25 percent of the cases. This highly delimited activity is the one highly requested by different writers and scholars. One of the scholars in the area of reading who puts the merits of personalized reading is Barbe (1961) who says that independent reading essentially needs "providing periods" when children select material which they want to read and are allowed the class time to read upon which they can report orally or in a written form.

Arcaro (1995:67) indicates, also, the value of connecting learning with experiences as follows:

Essential knowledge is the core of the educational process. Essential knowledge is that which has been accumulated in the past, has experiential connections to the present and has applications to the future. It is the broad set of facts, ideas and skills that build upon each other and that transfer from one learning experience to another throughout one's life. But, knowledge in its entirety is information that is largely found in the text materials.

As stated in the earlier sections, reading to pass tests alone will never qualify as the right position. This is from the reality dictating reading

comprehension, in that completion of a certain text won't assume all can be dealt with, since comprehension is a body of skills that reaches out to a wide variety of contents (May, 1990:395). Moreover, reading in the subject-areas requires students to learn "how to use their 'texts' in the various content areas" and practice outlining the content and selecting details to support the main points. Here, students are destined to note italicized words, to check their comprehension against end-of-chapter questions, and to attend to chapter and topic headings. They also learn to choose key words to skim text material and to search out information in the reference books (Mason, 1981). But, the case in this research showed that great emphasis was given to temporary actions of meeting the classroom test demand. Hence, the quality of reading to learn independently was highly overshadowed by teacher-made notes and was bound to text information. In this respect May (1990) puts five reasons why kids have to be given special attention in reading expository texts even though they have attractive scores on tests.

Such are the following:

- The toughness of expository style of writing;
- The degree of abstraction in the vocabulary of expository writings
- More elaborate sentence structure
- A different language schema in expository texts
- The lacking of imagery created by storywriters that needs to be filled by the respective readers (ibid, 396-397).

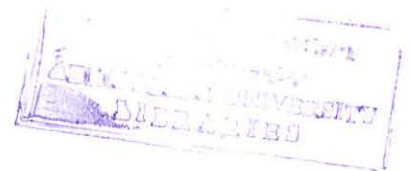
The probing way to success, in such cases, will be for teachers to be more concerned about explaining the nature of the expository aspect of writing, which differs so much from story schema that children carry around in their heads. This will be done by exposing the knowledge of how authors use certain structures or ways of organizing or presenting information (ibid, 397). Even to grasp points that are most likely to appear in the examinations, reading for sifting such points needs to follow directions that help to think analytically and to connect past and present repertoire (Burns, et al, 1999:23, May, 1990:114-111, Lapp & Flood, 1983:310).

Table 5. Do you have means of identifying the students’ reading level?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Yes, we do.	45	17
(b) No, we don't	225	83
(c) Not identified	-	-
Total	270	100

The above data could show that, indicators of the students’ reading levels were missing in 75 percent of the cases. Upon reasoning the cases, the respondents said that they couldn’t work over the ever-demanding child boom in each classroom added to the bulky dose of content-area subject to be covered within a limited time period. Teachers’ workload that surpassed 35 periods per week was also reported to have been one of the great barriers that stood as blocks against teachers’ follow-up and consistent recording of the pupils’ activities, of which reading skill development is a parcel. The didactic reflection, still, is that the child is not spoken of as the

center of gravity. Teachers, in their overall reaction, appear to stick to their plans, which stand at the margin of planning alone. What is expected of the teachers, in this respect, is the creation of affective channels that will enrich self- learning. What Fisher (1996) terms the matching of cognitive dispositions and what is to be taught seems to have missed its fertility, as seen in the case under research.



B. Material efficiency for subject-area reading skills development

Table 6. Textbook distribution per student

Response option	Number of respondents	Percent
(a) Each student gets all Books (copies)	-	-
(b) Students share a book in two's	-	-
(c) Many students share a copy	203	75
(d) No text has still been received	67	25
Total	270	100

As seen in the above table, majority of the respondents agreed upon the idea that a text is shared among many students. The same indicated also that there are cases where no textbook exists to be used, even as a reference. The problem here is that, textbooks are the only proximate sources of information for the students, and hence, their shortage (absence) obviously implies a shortfall in independent study and reading skills development.

Cushenbery (1985:13) states that, to meet the reading needs of all students in the content area, a large number of diverse and interesting books have to be present, which may range differently as grade levels go higher.

But the reverse has been observed in the above data that textbooks couldn't suffice the required demand, and expecting a dependable involvement from the students in such circumstances becomes illusive. Cruickshank, Bainer and Metcalf (1999:11) state that, teachers are limited when there are insufficient materials such that both the classes and the process of teaching lack one of the great potentials for instruction. Where

instruction is overshadowed, it is not hard to imagine the problem of construction.

Table 7. Presence/ absence of teachers' guides

Response options	Number of respondents	Percent
(a) Teachers' guides are present	180	67
(b) Teachers' guides are lacking	90	33
(C) Undecided	-	-
Total	270	100

In the above responses, it could be known that in most subjects teachers' guides were present while in others they were not. As suggested by the respondent's teachers' guides were present for Social Studies, Biology and Chemistry. In other subjects such as Civic Education, Physics and History, teachers' guides were said hard to be found. In cases where teachers' guides were said to exist, the implementation was such that, simple copying of text-items was customarily done, as stated by the teachers. Nothing was said about the learners' own reading practice. This was manifest in responses given to the extension as seen in the following table.



Table 8. Do teachers' guides provide sufficient guides for reading skills development?

Response options	Number of respondents	Percent
(a) Yes, there is a very strong tie with enrichment of the reading skills	46	40
(b) No, there is no special emphasis to reading skill development	67	60
Total	113	100

Table 8 depicts that, in most of the surveyed cases, teachers' guides were said to be inefficient to guide both the teachers and the students to book on reading skills development. In that 60 percent of the cases showed the non-existence of chances to deal with reading skill development in specifics. Here, two cases have been confirmed from the supplied information:

-Cases where there are no teachers' guides and the whole work of teaching is done under a haphazard shadow.

-Cases where teachers' guides are present but cannot supply due guidelines for the development of reading skills.

In case (a), the teachers commented that, even the very use of the texts remained, closed, to the extent that, the special skill emphasis was blocked by lack of due guidelines.

In case (b), the absence of emphasis-bearers denigrated attention to be given to reading skills, as was to be done to the dispensation of cognitive

elements. This is a special cataract in cases where practical efforts are required of the students, as the respondents delineated.

Table 9. The coincidence between directions in the textbooks and those in the teachers' guides

Response	Number	Percent
(a) Coinciding	45	40
(b) Not coinciding	68	60
(c) Undecided	-	-
Total	113	100

In the response table above, it was indicated that in 60 percent of the cases, directions in the teachers' guides did not support textbook directions. From this it follows that the presence of text directions only bears no fruit unless it has fitness for the exploitation of text-items. Actually the real bridge between textbooks and guides is *a coinciding direction*. Where such a bridge is broken, it is easy to claim that, the expected effect treads along the common-sense channel. Reading cannot be materialized without appropriate direction the coincidence between text-direction and text- content. The following table presents the detail.

Table 10. The coincidence between text direction and text contents

Response option	Number	Percent
(a) Coinciding	181	67
(b) Not coinciding	89	33
(C) Undecided	-	-
Total	270	100

As seen in this table, the coincidence between text direction and content was strongly positive. Accordingly, 66 percent of the responses given indicated the presence of a strong tie between what text direction bears and the content that fulfils it. Lapp and Flood state that, clear and concise directions have a very strong value (1983). So both the response and available literature do match, in this respect.

The commented fact however is that, though text directions and contents are coincident, what the directions dictate doesn't go along with the reality of classroom implementation. Upon suggesting the case, the respondents said that, the whole trouble was brought with child boom in the classroom that unpredictably blocked the arrangement of pupils' activities. The other issue of concern was about the problem of pictures and illustration for subject-area reading. As is well known, what can affect subject reading can lie in the text and/or in the reader's mind. Pictures, as factors in the text have hence, been treated as in the following lines.

Table 11. Are pictures with due clarity to aid reading?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Yes	112	41
(b) No	158	59
(c) Undecided	-	-
Total	270	100

The above table indicates that, 54 percent of the responses indicated lack of clarity with pictures and their illustrations. Two conditions were stated by the respondents regarding picture default in aiding reading. One was the absence of variety, that is, pictures weren't consistently given as necessary ingredients of the reading process. The other case or factor was that pictures were given but they lacked clarity such that when asked to relate concepts to them, the pupils felt confused. A related default is the pupils' tendency to underestimate the value of pictures as empty vessels.

This shortage has had the following backwash effects on reading comprehension, as practically stated by the respondents:

It blocks students' efficient reading and mares their taste of concept formation;

it keeps the very text out of value such that the users overweigh its shortage than its contributions. What could be contributed to the reader's repertoire will be lessened as concept complexity increases. The above relative suggestions, when seen under the eyeglasses of scholarly works,

have a great value to the improvement of reading skills development in subject areas.

the writer, further, notes the following- "When readers cannot cope with or do not possess adequate strategies for the demands of switching points from reading verbal material to reading visuals, then they will be unable to process the author's underlying message(ibid, 214)."

Table 12. From which phase of reading practice do your pupils benefit most?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Personalized (independent) effort to practice	45	16
(b) Group practice	45	16
(c) Preparation for tests	180	68
Total	270	100

As seen in the table of responses above, preparation for tests was the consistent case for reading. This case has been attributable to the scarcity of reading materials (textbooks) and the very motive pupils have to read until examinations have been over. The respondent teachers added in the open-ended space of the question by saying that, the greatest reading, back or forth, emphasized tests. Added to that trouble, as they stated, was the presence of some text-ingredients only in theory that made every part of the reading essence collection of a story that had so much intricacy. The respondents to the search said also that some ingredients such as acids,

sliders, etc were not easily found in all compounds such that the whole work of learning chemistry remained theoretical.

But personalized effort to reading practice can help pupils work on text contents as independently as they can. Fossard (1985), under a special heading '*knowing and using words*' says that reading means knowing how to use and understand words. This, accordingly, involves the reader to find out about ideas and facts. Such an endeavor inspires the reader's curiosity.

On the other hand, reading is not a natural ability like breathing or walking. It is a skill, and like all skills, it requires practice before it becomes easy. The above writer brings an action synonymous to reading, as follows: "In that respect, reading is something like playing football; the more you practice, the more skilled you become."

It was, therefore, an essential practice that was rated the least in the above response data. Hence, reading to learn, in that respect, didn't entertain pupil's individual asset to form concepts independently. Where a personalized effort for reading is limited, the skill of identifying and essentially summarizing main ideas, which allows the reduction into a manageable size of text information, will be mishandled. Here, as Tonjes (1991) states that, where independence in reading is overlooked by teachers' mishandling of roles, lower performers who have trouble deciding which points are major ideas and which are random details will be formed. Regarding this, Readence and companions (1989:49) state that students will develop reading interests and enjoy reading if teachers are capable of

helping them find sufficiently interesting materials, and are willing to give them the time to read.

This assertion can brief the fact that sheer presence of written documents without the necessary utensils to enliven the appropriate manipulation will effect in failure in comprehension and concentration. Accompanying is inconsistency in the realm of reading to learn since consistency in reading at one level aids reading at another level.

Any barrier or break in the process of reading will entail fracturing in concept formation and in the transfer of learning.

As Herber(1970:121) puts it, transfer of learning is vital for the generalized use of knowledge and skills, and the creation of greater economy in learning. The items read, in addition to being understood, do need being practical, as well. The reality manifest from this assertion is also that, for reading to lead to practical involvement, there must exist a way to build workable situations like procedures, utensils and due indicators of attainment. Above all, readiness factors come to pose a considerable pressure upon reading skills development. Such important reading factors as experiential background, language facility, interest in reading, social and emotional development, physical development and cognitive development are of considerable effect (Burns, et. al, 1984). Adequate background experience is needed for due treatment of skills development. Though some supply can be gained from informal settings, more organized undertakings can be adjusted through formal channels.

In that, children must be familiar with the concepts and vocabulary they will see in written form in order to gain meaning from them. Now, reading in content-areas requires readiness that goes much higher than what lies in lower levels.

There are needs to identify facts from opinions, and beginnings from endings (ibid, 35). The important things to keep in mind are the needs of the children and the available resources. Children's needs can be verifiably known, as they get involved.

Language facilities are also needed for effective communication in reading with reading with reasonable fluency by "eliminating" or at least, minimizing disinclination and indifference to anticipation.



C. Questions regarding Afan Oromo as the Language of Instruction and Reading

Table13. Which of the following features do Afan Oromo content-area items hold?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Too much difficult for the pupils to comprehend	113	42
(b) Too vast borrowed words with no glossary	91	34
(c) Unnecessary details	22	8
(d) Dialectally imbalanced enclosure	22	8
(e) Purely comprehensible items	22	8
Total	270	100

The information from the above data delineated that the items in Afan oromo texts were too much difficult for the pupils to read and form concepts on their own. The respondents raised nearly equal assertion also that, there were too vast borrowed words with no glossary to aid clarity of comprehension. the respondents complemented that in cases where such difficulties were felt, some forms of adjustment were made to aid expert discussion. the widely embarked in-staff training and exchange of experience have had some remedial effects, but that has been just an overall treatment, not of reading in specific. The final comment raised above all was that the very generic plan of teaching learning must be done in such a way that it can sustain both the learning process and the working capacity of the learners.

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4.1.2. Presentation and analysis of students' responses to the questionnaire

Table 14. Do you like to read textbooks?

Response option	Number	Percent
(a) Yes	225	100
(b) No	-	-
Total	225	100

As seen in the above table, all of the respondents said that they had a reading interest. The extension was their preference in reading from among the subject-area textbooks. The following table has the detail.

Table 15. Which subject area textbook types do you like to read most?

Response option	Number	Percent
(a) Mathematics	113	50
(b) Science	56	25
(c) Social Studies	56	25
(d) Aesthetics	-	-
Total	225	100

Although preferences were reflected in three of the four cases, the greatest share was taken over by mathematics. Science and social studies texts shared equal preferences, as the responses indicated. The related question came behind the reasons for the preferences, as stated in the following table.

Table 16. Why do you like this most?

Response option	Number	Percent
(a) Because, it is easy for reading	38	17
(b) Because, it forwards ready points for test	37	17
(c) Because, it has sufficient expressions and workable exercises	112	50
(d) Because my teacher provides me enough reading practice on it	38	17
(e) I prefer it for unknown reason	-	-
Total	225	100

Most of the responses indicated that preferences were based upon sufficient expressions and workable exercises that constituted the text. Manifest from this is the fact that where guides are plainly set and where there are enough exercises to enrich due practice, reading for comprehension can be easy and profitable. Without such an aid, students have nothing to modify and their independent reading endeavor may boil down to absence of self-directed concept formation, which is a much less efficient way to learn.

Readence and others state to support the above idea that, building an instructional program that teaches young peoples how to read is a powerful and obviously legitimate concern (1989:47). Planning for effective instruction, for that matter, lies in making the task of reading clear such that students will easily identify what is expected of them in the reading task. This is what each reader must get to know before beginning to read

so that s/he can associate her/his prior knowledge with the present reading task (ibid, 48).

Table 17. What are your problems in taking notes independently from personal reading?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Lack of practice and experience to read to learn on personal bases;	68	30
(b) Complex text-concepts which go beyond comprehension	90	40
(c) Borrowed expressions that are unfamiliar with daily practice	45	20
(d) Lack of time	22	10
Total	225	100

Majority of the respondents said that, they failed to prepare personal notes due to the fact that they lacked the technique to manage reading complex text-concepts, which, they said, went beyond their levels of comprehension. Lack of practice and experience to read to learn stood second in the list of cases.

Third in its rank of affective result has been the presence of unfamiliar borrowed expressions that has hindered daily practice. The students rated time factor, which was said to be the grandest cataract among the teachers, the least affective.

Table 18. Of the following cases, which one is the most difficult for you in Afan Oromo subject-area reading?

Response option	Number	Percent
(a) Studying new and unrelated expressions day in and day out	68	30
(b) Comprehending long and complex expressions	-	-
(c) Comprehending sequence of actions that are separately set	-	-
(d) Comprehending complex pictures and representations	45	20
(e) Working on questions that have no clear answers	112	50
Total	225	100

According to the response given to the above question, questions that lacked predictable answers were commonly stated as cases of difficulty for the pupil's independent reading. Here, 50 percent of the responses indicated the prevalence of questions that were far more than smooth comprehension can tolerate. Such are hard to entertain in due course, still, unless some techniques are used. Unrelated expressions were indicated second to the one above, such that putting concepts in coherence is the entire hard task. Studying new and unrelated expressions everyday was rated more difficult an issue than comprehending pictures of complex nature. In that, the presence of new and diversified expressions in content textbooks is a common phenomenon. The study must be initiated by both external and internal references. External references which aid as sources of information that fall outside the passage in which the unfamiliar word occurs. Readence and others (1989) state that textbook aids, dictionaries,

encyclopedias, etc as external sources. The internal sources take the forms of phonics, context clues, and morphemic analysis.

Table 19. Have you ever presented points from your personal reading in the classroom?

Response options	Number	Percent
(a) Yes	68	30
(b) No	157	70
Total	225	100

Most of the respondents indicated that, they had little experience of extensive reading, and even those who said to have read more did so just by repeating words of the text. Finally, asked to suggest things to be improved, the respondent pupils said that, for smooth reading comprehension special time allotment must be there. Further, teachers were said to emphasize a step -by - step processing of reading instead of rushing to finish the lesson. The pupils suggested moreover that reference materials be found in the school, and calm reading sites be adjusted. Time factor was the other matter of attention, in that more of the lesson time was occupied by teacher-talk and group involvement that was consumed out of attention.

4.2. Presentation and Analysis of Interview Responses

In this part, responses provided by regional and zonal experts to the interview questions have been presented and analyzed.

4.2.1. Presentation and analysis of responses from regional curriculum experts

A. Presentation of Interview Information

1. Hand-in-hand reading skills development along with the production and provision of text materials

Responses given by the curriculum experts delineate the fact that, text books and the related guides have been produced with the greatest emphasis on the incorporation of new concepts in each chapter, and no attempt has been made about the regularity of reading skills in subject areas.

From the reply so far made, it has been plain that there have been no due reading guides to each topic and subtopic, and there have not been entry guides and exercises to point out the procession through which the pupils process text information independently.

2. Preparation of text materials in such a way that they can lead pupils to independent concept formation.

According to the regional experts' response, no direct focus has been made out about children's reading to form concepts independently. The whole emphasis has been on the dissemination of information as required to be done at each level.

A special response given by one of the veteran experts runs as in the following lines:

Our emphasis in Afan Oromo subject text production lies in preparing due contents and practice exercises that are related to the contents. In our case, we consider the role of emphasizing subject- area reading skills to be shouldered by the language panel. There is no planned undertaking to help pupils read for independent concept formation.

3. Do you think text materials do suffice the demanding number in the respective school level? Moreover, what are the contingencies to bring shortages to ease?

The reply has been such that, the 1:1 ratio has so far been attempted to be worked on in Oromia. Yet, it is only the grades 1-4 that can be boastfully spoken of getting the required ratio. As for the contingencies, the response has been that where shortages were felt, Oromia Education Bureau (OEB), in collaboration with certain publishing agencies such as Mega, has been working on mutual, profit making bases. Nevertheless, the responsibility of making sufficient use of texts has been highly questionable because Mega does not allow an overall access to the publishing, no access to the alteration of the contract either.

4. Are there extensive reading channels? In what form?

The experts replied that, the extensive channels have not been clearly set as to aid the pupils' reading, and they are sponsored by non- academic agencies like Culture and Information Department. Schools, for that matter, are not expected to reach with such provisions since even the formal route of text provision is a hard task to manage with the ever-rising demand behind child boom.

5. Is there dialectal barrier in Afan Oromo textbook exploitation? What mechanism have you been using to bring the matter to ease?

The expert response has been that, from the very outset of text production, Oromia Education Bureau along, with the Institute for Curriculum Development Research, has been examining cases behind due language use, and has been assembling contributors from corners, wherein dialectal variety has been the focus of attention. One typical example has been given with respect to the impact of geographic dialect where a homonym could be a clear reference in one area and a taboo in the other.

That has been Xeerii [(teri)] in Science textbook which means intestine in zones like Shewa and the rest western zones like Ilubabor, Wellega and Jima while it bears a taboo in Arsi where it refers to the female sex organ. Instead of Xeerii, the experts have taken mar'ummaan (mer'uman), which meant intestine all over the region. Hence, dialectal barrier hasn't been of considerable effect in its negative contribution.

6. After all, do you think there may be an overall emphasis to skill and Media-sensitive training in subject-areas?

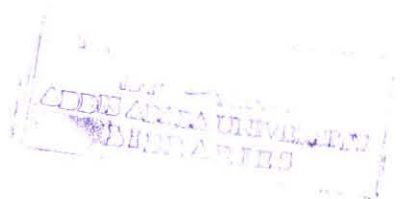
Here, the regional experts' responses have been entirely positive but they have not been with clear mindset as to whom or which party should take the initiative.

In their overall vision is the idea of the general education to which they have been giving top priority but the second- cycle primary level is waiting exploitation, as the response brief indicated.

One of the responses from the experts has been set as in the quotation below:

In our program, we follow the workable strategy of making curriculum development and implementation student-centered. In the basic educational channel, our goal is to expand the formative skills and some technical skills. The process is still open to question though textbooks have been in use for almost a decade. Regarding media-sensitive training, as of reading, however, no need has been of much emphasis.

The fact pertinent to this is that, there prevails lack of initiative to supplement or to improve items and the related exercises in the texts. Such a lack denotes lack of follow-up channels for skills in subject-area reading though the primary source of academic information is the text material. Scholarly ideas provided at different times delineate that lack of due guides exposes the academic work to unconditional shortage of relatedness to real life condition. One such a guide is content-Process guide that focuses on both the content and process aspect of reading to learn (Burns, et al, 1999). This largely refers to the content to be dealt with, along side the Process to be followed. There is also a need to work on the Pattern guides, which deal with the relationships among the organizational structures of the reading materials, and aid thinking skills needed for comprehending the important Points. Preliminary in the process of reading is the anticipation guide that is required to relate new learning with the previously attained reading standard (Ibid, 416). Generally, there has been little emphasis given to subject area reading skills development in Afan



Oromo even at curricular level, since an over all attention has been given to the dispensation of information alone.

On the other hand, Afan Oromo content materials do not suffice the demanding number and the prospect of having contingent supply channel is also in question. While the policy demand is strategic planning and management of learning in a learner- centered manner, the shortage in the number of texts to students and the negligence of emphasis to reading skills appear to be striking to independent concept formation. In the realm of reading to learn, one crucial aspect is that extensive arrangements can be used to make readers active and far-sighted. Since the aim of subject reading is to develop content / process envisages, the processing can be enriched through exposure to different materials.

However, in Afan Oromo Comprehension on subject areas, no inviting channel has been there; the general dealing has been in dispatching solid contents just for informative purposes. What is interesting, here, is that the use of Afan Oromo textbooks has had a connective effect both for making the scientific principles homely and for building the learner's ability to conceptualize the book fed experiences without any stumbling effect of dialectal variety. How the materials have so far been organized requires due molding (This part has been entertained under document survey).

But, the delay in the revision of text materials as to develop the learners' due involvement in independent concept formation by creating skill-based conditions is a question of much Primary concern still to be worked on for

the Second - cycle Primary level. This is based on the rationale that, expository materials do need special attention even in the very use of organizational Patterns (Herber, 1970). Sheer flow of contents does in one way grant smooth reading to learn and comprehend.

4.2.2. Presentation and Analysis of Interview Responses given by Zone Experts

A. Presentation of interview responses from zonal inspectors

The ideas raised and analyzed below have been extracted and partially quoted from the responses, which the respectively sampled zonal educational experts gave to the interview questions:

1. The Procession of Afan Oromo subject- text reading in an attractive and achievable way?

Here, the experts at the zonal level were asked the general pace of material- Pupil tie in a methodologically inviting nature. In their replies, the experts said that, both in their temporal follow-up and in the provision of subsequent inspections they found that students' text consumption was limited and not given due attention. Asked to cite any priority that has been given to improve reading skills in subject- areas they said that, there has never been such dealing with target issue of skills.

2. The Extent to which Text Materials suffice the pupils' Demands

The zonal experts' responses, in this respect, have been variable. While in two of the zones materials have been asserted to be meagerly accessible, only in one of the zone, it has been said sufficient. For instance, information gained from zonal experts of East Wellega and West Wellega

delineated that textbooks could not suffice the requirement while the reverse was found to work in the case of Western Shewa. An overall, similar reaction was reported on the lack of texts in all the three zones for the subject Civic Education.

4. Mechanisms so far employed to solve implementation Problems that come behind teachers' "Insufficient" training in guiding pupils' subject reading skills.

The general reform agenda so far emphasized has been the diversion of the traditional approach of providing lecture-notes to students, as stated by the experts. Where shortages were felt, temporary training programs were devised to raise the teachers' awareness on the "ideals" of learner-centered approach. Very recently, the routine plan of SPM has been introduced in every corner, and that has come to be a guiding principle for lesson-Planning and implementation.

However, no special training has been given for teachers to pay attention to pupils' independent subject- area reading skills, even though the primary bases of academic information given at every school are found in the textbooks. Regarding zonal supervisory follow-up of the suitability of teaching-learning plans for the learners' subject area reading, more emphasis has been on the provision from the teachers' side.

In that, little attempt has been made on the pupils active roles in reading some of the responses sensed like in the quotation below:

In our plan, we do not treat reading skills as different matters. They are just a part of the language skills. The follow up in subject- areas holds how far teachers can cover the portions that have been given to be done in a given time duration...

5. Special training options designed to compensate for shortcoming in Pre-service training, based upon the subject-area teachers' requests, specifically on reading skills development

Generally, the bottom (grass root) arrangement of teachers' training did not take the real sense of media-sensitivity, as the response from zone experts denoted. This has also been the same in the case of reading skills development in subject areas given at the respective levels under research. No further action has been said to be planned besides the routine principle of distributing text materials.

Every form of training, when held, has been done according to broad spectrum and top-bottom orders. Such specific cases as the development of subject-content reading skills have still been in question. No frequent has the action been, too.

B. Analysis of the Zonal Experts' Responses

It is obvious that subject-area reading requires a wide range of activities that go far beyond the realm of literal memory formation. It also surpasses sheer getting of textbooks by the pupils. The presence of materials being one thing for the pupils, the extent to which learners can properly

interpret, develop new ideas and apply those ideas in practical situations remains a grinding question.

In this research, too, the first question addressed to the zonal experts has been the one questioning the achievability of text- items through reading.

Nevertheless, the experts replied that no heed has been there regarding the significance of subject - area-reading skills. Added to that trouble have been the insufficiencies of textbooks.

When matters are seen deeply, it becomes clearer that, content and processes of the respective level have not been entertained well. Moreover, the learners' independent act of concept formation has never been given any attention. This indicates that, the fusing matter between teachers and students, and students and materials is almost nullified. In that respect, the whole issues to be raised about the improvement of learning and reading achievement lack any due ground.

4.3. ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION GATHERED THROUGH DOCUMENT SURVEY

An Overview: This document survey included assessment and suggestive remarks set by the researcher based upon criterion for textbook evaluation that had been extracted from the works of three scholars: Herber (1970), Lewy (1977) and Mash (2001). In this treatment, Mash's points were thoroughly made use of, as most recent and inclusive items (the whole dealing being qualitative). In the process of this survey, social studies textbooks and teachers' guides for grades 7 and 8 have been looked into depending upon the researcher's exposure.

4.3.1. Analysis of Grade 7 and 8 Textbooks and the respective Guides thereof

1. Statement of the Rationale for the Development of the Textbooks

For both texts, no rationale has been set if not for the objectives that have contemporarily been given to qualify attainment of coverage for each chapter.

The text for grade seven, for instance, begins with the meaning of Geography, as an expression. But, there is no reason clearly set for the verification of the presentation. It doesn't point out what is expected of the learner- to read it all, some, or just take a pinch of heed which can lead up to successive readings to follow.

The fact dictates, however, that even in a daily lesson plan, there is an urge to state the students' roles, and one such a role must shine from the students' text reading. Text reading, for that matter, is an amalgam of content and process. The reader, as s/he is reading, goes through the process of identifying the expository material with its composures, which may indicate relationships, differences, summarizations and details, etc (Herber, 1970). However, the text for grade 7 and 8 Social Studies lacks that rational basis.

Moreover, the very external patterns, one of which is the content outline, are not clearly stated, and therefore, it is confusing to indicate the underlying features of sub-topics.

2. Provision of Explicit Details of the Approach

As seen in the text survey, details of the points have been given but not details of activities. Item breakdown is not properly set. For instance, under the topic "The Meaning of the Geography", both literal and technical definitions of the term have been attempted to be given. The technical definition, though states the commonplace reference, does not indicate the underlying parts of the text. Before it completes one, it soon skips to the other point. Here, readers cannot have chances for analytic envisage.

It appears wiser to exemplify some of the confusions also:

The Definition for Geography, in its modern and scientific sense, has been given as **"the study of Phenomena that have some effects upon the surface of the earth."** Two conditions make the realization of reading challenging, in here. One is that the very definition has not been given in bold so that pupils can make quick reference.

The other lack of details; details of the phenomena have not been given alongside the definition so far set. Where details seem to have been given, there prevails lack of enumeration and ordering both in the out line and in the successive pages. What is more, the very presentation is just informative, not participatory since no due formative activities have been seen in operation except for the literal revision questions given at the end of each unit. In grade 8 social studies textbook, too, no difference has been seen with respect to the rationale for the chapters and the presentation of details in the first two chapters. Nevertheless, in the succeeding other chapters the details have duly been set for texts.

3. Consistency of the approach

The approach for the presentation of text content is mostly informative and so, in all the chapters, and does not seem to have been changed any more both texts.

4. Clear Statement of objectives for the Textbook

For every one of the chapters of the two texts, objectives have been indicated in the teachers' guides but not in the text chapters. This very design has overlooked the significance of informing readers about what they achieve, should they read the given extract. Here, the objectives themselves do not widen the reader's expectation by denoting means of achieving the intents. Generally, objectives of the lessons for both texts of the respectively taken social studies items have been given with more or less pedantic concern. However, no indicators have been set as to how to achieve the intended objectives. This is a real barrier to reading as Readence, et.al (1989) state by saying that, text items have to have the mediating role players such as introductory directions, transitional phrases, and clear illustrations.

5. Inclusion of Details of the sequenced Issues

To treat this matter, the researcher went through a certain survey of the outline of the texts. In that, he found out that, the texts had jumbled sets of items. Let alone the details of sequenced issues, even the grand head points haven't been set properly.

The ideas in the list are distorted both logically and chronologically. Logically the arrangement diverts from treating the nearer items, say

Ethiopia. That is what May (1990:289) asserts; "In the social studies... the teacher is usually trying to help children identify with the problems, values, and life styles of different people." Simply reading about these people in a textbook will not accomplish the aim." Social studies textbooks, because of their wide coverage, tend to be somewhat shallow and explanatory", as the same writer states. So, children cannot identify with the people unless additional guides are there for more practice. From the above analysis and the reference so far made, it is clear that the very items in the purposively taken texts are not identified with what is found proximate. Chronologically, even the events haven't been stated sequentially.

But, such a problem emanates from lack of emphases to the construction of meaning, and hence, lack of pupils' personal involvement in a lifelike manner (Reinhartz & Beach, 1997:273). These writers state also that, social studies texts even though they have heavy dose or packages of items, have the reputation of being boring and meaningless to students, not because of the information but because of the way the subject is taught and the ancillary materials that are used. The same urge the curriculum to be presented in a dynamic way such that, it can reflect the pupils' experiences better. To start the outline with something afar, and to expect the pupils to experience events in everyday teaching and learning is an itching problem and a striking parade to a real, progress in the realm (Smith, 1990, Reinhartz & Beach, 1997, and March, 1997). Regarding the issue in question, the very sequence of items in the texts doesn't allow quick reference and grasping of issues, and hence lack of coherence in

reading. The same setback is manifest in Grade 8 textbook, too. That is, the part regarding "World History" has not been outlined in the right logical order. The following extract has been given as a brief example:

- 1) The Beginning Of Modern history: The Enlightenment
- 2) Modern Ethiopian History
- 3) Africa during the Era of Imperialism
- 4) Liberation struggle and Liberated Africa
- 5) Modern World History

Note: That, these points could be arranged for smooth reading as 1,5,3,4,2. These are only a part of the problem -items found in the text outlines for both texts.

In the above list of points, the sequence may appear viable if global cases come first and then African cases follow, and the Ethiopian cases appear under the African situation.

Nevertheless, in the observed cases given above, no consideration has been given to such an ordering.

Moreover, successive chapters and the underlying issues haven't been set numerically. Here, scholarly works like those of Herber(1970), Burns and others (1999), Ruddel (1997) and Lapp and Flood (1983) delineate that, where text outlines are distorted, lack of confidence prevails in reading because they are the basic signposts for discovering the body of the writing. It is the researcher's belief also that, the distortion in the sequence of the items of the subsequent texts leads to the distortion in the comprehension of the points so far read.



6. Statement of details for the scope of the Materials

Details, in here, may imply clarifications that are required to be given to facilitate ease of exploiting text items. For this very case, three issues have been given for analysis: Guides, practices and summaries. Guides, as Readence and others (1989: 131-139) indicate, can be those meant for introducing each chapter to activate the readers' thoughts and opinions about a topic by forwarding aimed misconceptions which readers will err out as they go about reading in steps. Anticipation Guide is one of such guides frequently used in much expository writings, as in vast content-areas. The other form of guide takes the form of graphic organizers and the organizations of texts, which both introduce new items and provide a simultaneous exposition to text items, and enrich independent reading. Thus, a graphic organizer of the text that reflects the structural pattern will function as a road map of important concepts (Ibid, 139). This is pattern guide. The other, still, is content process guide that delineates the way contents given in the text are to be processed by the readers, and this can verily be of considerable effect if provided in a clear and workable fashion.

Such a guide can also indicate the scope of comprehending the items. From among the guides so far provided in the texts under consideration, however, only pattern guides have duly been provided such that headings, examples and maps that are inevitable for the statement of details have been given. The rest two guides have not been given. Practices have also been given at the end of chapters. Those, however, are just referents to the literal points in the passage, and do not allow readers to dig for complex

matters by reading analytically. Summaries have not been provided. But, sufficient examples, pictures and diagrams have been given with no due illustrations, and hence, their appropriateness for the very case is, still, questionable. Generally, little emphasis has been given to scope because the items that are given in both texts are of a considerably broad and skipping nature.

7. Clear Statement of Conceptual Linkages and sequences

Conceptual linkages are hard to imagine in the two texts under survey because, in each chapter, at least three separate headings have been given. In Grade 7 social studies, for example, chapter one has the opening sub-topics on Geography, History and civics.

In chapter two, climate, plants and population -increase have been given, and so vast divisions are there that meaning extraction would be very complex since rational linkages are not provided.

5. Comprehensibility of contents

Reading through comprehension is the business of hunting for meaning; it is not just telling a story that has so far been in the textbook. It also surpasses a correct word calling (May, 1990:115). Schemata formation, a vital part of the pupils' reading, is realized only when the reader knows what to know and interpret (Ibid, 35).

Cushenbery (1985:73) states also that, every content area is unique with respect to the kinds and types of study skill abilities that are required. In

the area of social studies, the learner needs to be able to read for details as well as scan for a few main ideas. Other times, it will be necessary for the reader to read maps, graphs, charts, and tables, and remember certain pieces of data, which are presented in the graphic aids. Nevertheless, in the textbooks under assessment, two conditions have been found to be barriers. One such a condition lies in the absence of due linkages among consecutive points. The other barrier is in the absence of due illustrations for maps and figures, in a more lifelike and workable manner. In Grade 7 social studies, for instance, there is a part under the definition of the term Geography where there is found a part denoting the essentials of studying Geography.

The text denotes the basics to be in two forms -the basics of knowing one's environment, and that of knowing other environment than one's own.

However, this does not indicate deep cases for such a study and the rationales behind. The other setback, though the text content is well to the point, is observed in the part given for the Development of Geography, as a study stream. The fact denotes the advent of Geography as a study stream. The advent of geographical studies has also been indicated to have begun by different kinds of people, but there are no parts denoting about the whereabouts of those people either on the map or in the form of annotated biographies.

There are also extracts of maps provided for explanatory purposes but the absence of linkage between the past and the present features appears to be a damaging cleavage. The coded language of the maps, by itself, appears to

be hampering. The color attributes for maps are quite loose such that even the brightest reader cannot give any meaning to the provided features (pages 2 through 15).

In Grade 8 textbook, the question in map reading is one of color identification, which according to the requirement lacks clear depiction since such colors are not found plainly. Here, from the very objective situation in the classroom, it could be clear that various kinds of maps are not found easily because they are commercially found. So far, those that are provided in the text lack the gestalt of setting general location first, and then going to the specific locations. Cases related to details of the content are due subject specialists, and hence, the analysis on the content reading liability goes this far in this research.

Whatever the doses, the readability of the items hasn't been considered in the production of the text, and the implementation, too, lacks due technical readiness from the teachers' side.

8. Readability of the Texts

Text readability, in spite of having no accurate tool for indicating a perfect level of reading, is an approximate indicator of how far text items are comprehended well. In this analysis of Grade 7 Social Studies textbook, categories were formed of the chapters where in syllables; words and sentences were the units. Notwithstanding the existence of different formula, Fry's formula of readability estimate has been used in this analysis, with reservations on taking it as the last resort. Accordingly, three

100-word passages were selected from the beginning, middle, and end of each of the texts. Then the total number of sentences in each 100-word passage was counted to the nearest tenth estimate.

From that, the total number of syllables in each 100-word sample was counted. Then, it was averaged. The same procedure followed for the sentences. When the assessment had been over, the average figure indicated that, both texts had a very high readability request such that the levels for which the texts have been produced and the readability level of the items did not match. In the analysis of sample units, it could be found out that the average number of sentences for Grade seven social studies as seen against the syllables and checked for ease of reading was found to be much greater than the level at which it was to be given.

The same case was observed in Grade 8 social studies readability analysis, too, since the average number of sentences and syllables indicated a readability index requesting very high performance. It has been clear from the above analysis that though the items above are only a part, the likelihood of judging text production in Oromia to be very loose in its consideration of pupils' ability to read to learn is justifiable. However, this should, in no way, get confused with **readability of the language**. The language used in writing the texts is very plain and clearly set. Yet, the feasibility of the expressions is highly overshadowed by the complex nature of the expressions. While Fry's readability formula indicates the above purposively taken data, it is the researcher's reaction to add that, the text

features such as cover attractiveness, typing script, spacing, and emphatic references like those given in bold, and clarity of illustrations need, still, a close scrutiny. This is from the observed fact that the typescripts used in the texts are tightly set, and the spacing does not seem to be receptive. Where figures have been given in a bright manner, the illustrations lack pertinence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

This research aimed at investigating the status of reading skills development in subject areas with specific reference to comprehension in Afan Oromo among primary school children. The basic questions of the research involved the investigation of the nature of reading programs so far designed, factors affecting reading skills development in subject areas and remedial activities so far made to alleviate the seta backs in subject reading. Here, descriptive survey method of research was used.

Data for the investigation were gathered from 270 teachers and 225 students of the second cycle level specifically those teaching and learning at grades 7 and 8 were the target referents. Complementary references were also made to 3 regional curriculum experts and 9 zonal experts. Questionnaire, observation checklist, interview and document survey were data gathering tools. After data had been collected through the above tools, they were interpreted through the medium of percentage. Qualitative treatment was also used for analysis. From the data presented and analyzed data, the researcher has summarized the findings as follows:

5.1.1. The cases of teachers' training and implementation of planning across subject-area reading skills development has been open to question since teachers lacked the necessary base for such an undertaking. So, they (haven't) yet realized that where there are print media of instruction, such

as textbooks, there must initially be strengthened independent study skills, for which reading skill training is inevitable. The chains of involvement in classroom activities are highly teacher-centered and more informative than creative.

5.1.2. Though the teachers had the impression to add points about reading in the lesson plan that all attempt could no more go far beyond notes that were produced for lecturing purpose. The problem was lack of the necessary textbooks and teachers' guides. Even where textbooks were found, they could not suffice the population demanding them. Here, both technical and material factors have inhibited reading skills development.

5.1.3. In the schools that have been targeted so far, the student's personalized subject-area reading and group reading practices were not initiated well. This has been because; they have never been given the option to work on their own, since teachers have taken teaching as their own centers of gravity.

5.1.4. More attention was given to classroom tests and hence reading was bound to teachers' notes alone. Teachers on the other hand, resorted to lack of ample time to adjust condition for the students' reading because of child boom and heavy workload.

5.1.5. Most of the remedial activities in operation have been too general to help teachers activate pupils' endeavor for independent concept formation, and have been seldom with the strategic concern of developing reading skills development in the subject areas.

5.1.6. Difficult terms in Afan Oromo subject area texts and too vast borrowed words with no glossary to express them have been of considerable effect as indicated by the respondent data.

5.2. CONCLUSION

From the data gathered above and the analysis given so far, and the convergent summary of findings, it has been clear that reading skills in Afan Oromo subject-areas have been at literal level. This, in effect, is indicative of the reality that the whole work of teaching has been teacher and subject-centered than otherwise. Unless this condition of pupil passivity is changed, the overall expense in textbook production will just remain an expense in vain because the use of materials does not activate the learners.

In that, literal level of reading is just a normal state of reading, not one to take as a lasting mechanism because both for the coverage of text items and the extension of the capacity for deep inquiry, interpretive and creative skills have to be dealt with. From the pronged treatments, it has also been known that, every form of pupils' reading has been delimited to notes prepared by the teachers. Moreover, using practical feedback for formative purpose is unthinkable in such cases since the target beneficiaries, the students, are not active.

To improve this condition, far more endeavor is required to make reading skill effective at the second-cycle level, and more specifically, at grades

seven and eight. The rationale is that the very reliance on print media dictates the ultimate presence of due reading skills, and this goes to be special in dealing with expository teaching materials.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following points have, therefore, been recommended by the researcher to be starting steps:

5.3.1. Further training must be provided by teacher training colleges and other responsible bodies regarding content-area reading skills for the respective teachers in order to facilitate their professional quality and the implementation of plans. This can be adjusted in both pre-service and in service channels.

5.3.2. The joint faction of textbooks and teachers' guides must be reassessed, and subject- area textbooks should have starting (pre-assessment) activities that can aid for the identification of the pupils' readiness. New and technical terms in Afan Oromo subject texts books have to have denotative definitions for which case glossaries are inevitable. For the materialization of this matter regional curriculum experts have to hold action research and work on grass root feedback channels to bring changes.

5.3.3. Above all, textbooks have to be available for all the students, and a special reading program through which pupils can produce their own notes for independent formation of concepts must be there.

5.3.4. Activities that are designed for assessing classroom participation must be designed in such a way that, they can facilitate pupils' use of both intensive and extensive reading strategies. Otherwise, most of what students are destined to do will highly be delimited to classroom involvement alone.

5.3.5. Training programs in the teacher-training colleges should be inclusive of crucial points about subject-area reading skills;

5.3.6. Further research is recommended to follow regarding the subject-specific readability level of Afan-Oromo content-area text-materials.

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APPENDIX-ONE

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES COLLEGE OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Questionnaire presented for teachers

Direction I: The following questions have been meant to collect research information regarding the status of reading skills development in subject-areas teaching and learning given in Afan Oromo. Your genuine responses will enrich the objectiveness of the data; hence, supply your responses duly.

Thanks in advance!

Endalew Fufa

N.B.: Don't write names

B) Questions: - Part 1: Regarding Training less, lesson planning and implementation

1. In your pre-service and in-service training sessions have you taken any courses on subject-area reading skills?

a. Yes, b. no, c. unknown

2.If your response is (a), cite courses you have taken.

3.If (b), cite the setbacks you have encountered in your subject area provision.

4. In preparing lesson plans, cite points you enclose about pupil's reading for independent concept-formation

5.As users of textbooks as sources of academic information, which of the following activities do you enclose in activating subject –reading skills?

- a. Home-take reading assignment
- b. Notes on main ideas alone

- c. Reading exercises sequentially checked
- d. Personalized extensive reading purposively arranged
- Others _____.

6. What does this contribute to the pupils' reading skills in subject-areas?

- a. To grasp textbook focuses alone;
- b. To digest points that are more likely to appear on tests
- c. To practice whatever they are reading.

7. Cite what you employ to identify pupils' reading levels.

Part II. Material Efficiency

8. Does each pupil get texts of all subjects?

- A) Yes B) No

9. If (A) to what predictable ration?

- A) 1:1 B) 1:2 C) one text to many

10. Is there teachers' guide for every subject?

- A) Yes B) No

11. If (A) cite the type of guide each provides about subject reading.

12. Do directions in the teachers' guides' printout where students should read to learn?

- A) Yes, B) No,

13. If your response is **yes** what are those points?

14. If (B) comment on the problem that any accompany reading to learn.

15. Do pictures and the pupils' reading well?

- A) Yes, B) No,

16. If (A), Comment on the value of text pictures on enriching the contemporary reading.

17. If (B) Comment on the problem that may accompany that short age.

18. Are text scripts suitable for reading?

- A) Yes, B) No,

19. If (A), comment on the degree to which it facilitates pupils' active reading.

20. If (B), or 'No', in which of the following is the shortage manifest?
A. Smallness of the font
B. Misspelling
C. Barred view of the scripts
Others,
-
21. Do directions in the students' text coincide with those in the teachers' guide?
A. Yes, B. No
22. Comment on the effect that coincidence has on subject reading.
-

Part III: Questions Regarding the Pupils' Roles in subject

23. Reason none of the extensive sources of information, if any that further enrich pupils' subject reading.
-
24. Which of the following practices does enrich pupils' private reading most?
A. Self-imitated reading
B. Group reading
C. Reading for examination
25. If there are no options for pupils' personal (Private) reading, which of the following, do you think has tilted the shortage?
A. In sufficiency of texts
B. In sufficiency in text contents
C. Lack of follow-up on the pupils' concentrated effort due to overpopulation (could boom) in each class room
D. Pupils' lack of confidence to take notes on their own.
26. If Pupils mostly read during and for fear of examinations, comment on the degree to which such a reading can sustain consistency of skills in reading
-
27. What means do you employ to check for pupils' readiness for reading?
A. We present passages and generate related question for practice purposes
B. We give reading tests and check for comprehension.
C. We don't check for such a readiness.
28. Comment on options pupils have to read privately and present their works in class, _____ if _____ any.
-
29. Comment on the general appropriateness or inappropriateness of texts to enrich pupils' effort for practical envisage.

Appropriateness of texts

Inappropriateness

30. Then which of the following can be the generic source for the pupils' subject area reading problems?

- A. Lack of consecutive reading experiences
- B. Lack of any due attention to reading
- C. Lack of any due contact with the necessary materials

31. Comment on suggestive solution that the learners (pupils) cited for their subject area reading skills to be efficient (future)

Part IV: Medium- Oriented Questions

32. Which usage and use is indicative of Afan Oromo Word features in subjects?

- A. Very Complex
- B. Unfamiliar
- C. Very Plain

33. Where problems are felt comment on how solutions have been sought so far

APPENDIX TWO

Questionnaire Presented for the Sample Students

Direction I: Below are research questions related to reading skills development. Your responses to these questions are expected to make this work complete and meaningful. So, supply your responses clearly and genuinely.

Thanks in advance!

Direction II: To give answers to the following questions, read thoroughly and select or supply the right responses.

1. Do you like to read text books
 - A. Yes
 - B. No
2. If yes, which subject text do you like to read most?
 - A. Mathematics
 - B. Science
 - C. Social studies
 - D. Aesthetics.
3. What is your rationale for liking that subject? I like to read that subject because
 - A. it is easy to read and understand directly;
 - B. it holds points that readily appear on tests;
 - C. it has enough exercises that activate me to read more;
 - D. my teacher gives me enough practice options and checks my work every day.
4. If No, what is your reason for not liking reading?
 - A. Lack of textbooks
 - B. Complexity of contents
 - C. Lack of enough directions from the teachers
 - D. Lack of direction about specific reading tasks
 - E. Lack of specific reading time
 - F. Giving no considerations to private reading endeavors.

5. What are your problems on taking notes on your own?
- A. Lack of practice and experience to read and take notes.
 - B. Lack of reading interest
 - C. Problem in the depth of contents to be covered
 - D. Too much borrowed words and expressions that hinder the initiation to read in depth
6. Which content reading aspect is most difficult for you to handle in your reading?
- A. Comprehending new words
 - B. Grasping long and complex expressions
 - C. Assembling highly divergent concepts
 - D. Analyzing very abstract pictures and illustrations
 - E. Working on questions of which answers are unpredictable.
7. Do you present, in class, a part of what you read based upon your reading plan?
- A. Yes B. No
8. If your response is (A) or **yes**, cite the pivots of your reading and the presentations you have held so far.
- _____
9. Finally, suggest things to be done for your reading skills to improve.
- _____

APPENDIX THREE

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

No	Question Options	Response Options	
		Yes	No
1	Do students take their books with them to the classroom to read?		
2	Do they read as their teachers tell them so?		
3	Do they answer questions that are related to their reading? Do they argue on complex points?		
4	Do they present what they have read in groups?		
5	Do they ask questions on what they haven't understood, while Reading?		
6	Do they take private notes while reading?		
7	Do they summarize what they read broadly?		
8	Do they interpret what they have read?		
9	Can they produce or add related ideas depending upon their		
10	reading? (From their experience) Do they have extensive reading plans?		
11	Are they given home-take reading assignment?		
12	How does the teacher follow the materialization of home-take reading up?		

APPENDIX-FOUR

Interview to Regional Curriculum Experts

1. Have there been hand in hand reading skills development along with subject areas materials provision? Can you comment on the process?
2. Have text materials been prepared in such a way that they can lead pupils to independent concept formation?
3. How about the ration impact? Where formal channels of distributing text materials, go sort of are maters there some contingencies to do so? In what form?
4. Are commercial routes? Are there free publishers in Oromia?
5. Are there extensive reading channels? In what form?
6. Are there dialectal barrier in Afan Oromo textbook exploitation? What mechanism have been you using to ease the matter?
7. After all, do you think there may be an overall emphasis to skill sensitive training (such as of reading skills) in subject-areas?

APPENDIX-FIVE

Interview to the Zone Experts

1. Is the procession of Afan Oromo textbook reading attractive in subject areas? What priority has been given in due course?
2. Do you think teachers help pupils read independently?
3. Are there sufficient materials to be read?
4. What mechanisms do you employ to solve problems that come behind teacher insufficient training?
5. Is reading skills development in subject areas taken as one of the strategies to be given due attention? To what degree of accomplishment?
6. Have special training option been designed to compensate for teacher professional barrier to guide learner to reading in subject areas? How frequent has that been?
7. Is Afan Oromo fitting for the enrichment of reading skills development? What target examples can you provide?
8. Are teacher encouraged to make learners read independently to form concepts? How can you explain this further?
9. Finally , what do you suggest about such a research?

APPENDIX-SIX

Textbook Evaluation Checklist

1. Is the rationale for the development of the textbook stated?
2. Do author provide explicit details of the approach?
3. Is a rationale provided for the approach?
4. Is the approach consistent throughout the book?
5. Are objectives for the textbook plainly stated?
6. Are objectives of the units clearly stated?
7. Are details of the sequenced issues included?
8. Are details of the scope of the materials included?
9. Are conceptual linkages clearly stated?
10. Are linkages and sequences justified?
11. Are textbook contents comprehensible to students?
12. Is the language readable to the reader(s)?
13. Are ways of integrating subject concept clearly stated?
14. Are alternative activities given for the reader to do in step?
15. Are specific details provided regarding the time through which *to cover each lesson*
~~to cover each lesson?~~

Yes	No	Uncertain

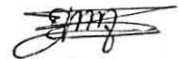
APPENDIX SEVEN

A Table Denoting the Readability Index of Grade 7 and Grade 8 Social Studies Text Items.

Grade	Sample Units	Text page	Words	Sentences	Syllables
Grade seven	-Population Issues	89	100	7.3	
	-Sources and Development of Man	101	100	8	
	-The Development of Capitalist Economy	175	100	8.5	
				Aver = 7.93	
Grade Eight	Sample Units	Text page	Words	Sentences	Syllables
	-Natural Environment and Society	44	100	8	197
	-African Liberation Movement	115	100	14	184
	-The Liberated Africa and OAU	123	100	12	173
				11.33	184.6

Declaration

I, hereby, declare that this thesis is my original work that I have done under the guidance of Dr. Elias Nasir. All relevant sources and informative bases have been duly acknowledged



Endalew Fufa