

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
College of Education and Behavioural Sciences
Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies

**Investigating the Practices and Perceptions of English Teachers With
Regard to Reading Instruction Phases: The case of Two High Schools
in Hawassa Town**

By

Tamirat Girma Alemu



May 2011
Addis Ababa

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies of the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences of Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction

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ABSTRACTS

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the practice and perceptions of English teachers reading instructional phases. The general objective of the study is to explore how they implement the reading phases and specifically examine the tasks they use in pre, while and post- reading phases, and the problems they encounter in the process. The subjects of the study are grades 9 and 10 English language teachers and their students of two private high schools in Hawassa town, SOS Senior Secondary High School and Comboni Comprehensive School. More specifically, six language teachers who have been offering English language courses at grades 9 and 10 levels and two hundred seventy students of these teachers (forty five from each teacher) were the subjects of the study. These teachers and students were randomly selected by drawing lot. To achieve the purpose of the study, a questionnaire was prepared and administered to students. The other instrument used to collect data was observation. Reading class observation checklist was used to observe the reading lessons. Moreover, an interview was designed and administered to three randomly selected English teachers from both schools. The findings reveal that the attention paid to promoting the use of associating and creating visual images in the pre-reading stage seemed to be low. In the while-reading phase, practicing activities that foster student's abilities to draw conclusions and implications from texts lack enough attention. However, with regard to advancing the aims of the post- reading phase, evaluating and internalizing the texts read seemed to be done well. However, the use of mother tongue, students background, the wash back effect of tests and exams and lack of adequate textbooks have created difficulties for teachers to employ the phases of teaching reading in their classrooms.

CHAPTER ONE

Background of the study

Reading is one way of the learning process. It is perhaps one of the best means of acquiring adequate knowledge. Reading is an important skill one needs to develop to effectively engage in school and Higher education institutions. That is the main reason why learning institutions demand students to acquire reading proficiency in the instructional language. Commonly, students are required to possess effective and efficient reading skills to be successful in attaining their educational objectives. Similarly, English language teachers should help their students develop reading proficiency. Reading is a vital skill required to develop students' understanding of the English Language. It is really important that you get your students reading as soon as possible because this is a skill that will prove integral to their everyday lives should they ever choose to live in an English speaking environment. For example, if a student is travelling in another country they may need to be able to read a timetable, a road sign or even the instructions for their new bicycle. Among others, teachers' use of the three phases of reading may have an impact on the quality of the reading skill development lesson presented. Three phases of teaching reading are pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading.

A pre-reading phase is devoted to activities that activate student's background knowledge, create motivation and interest, and provide prior preparation to read a text. The quality of the pre-reading activities may determine the comprehensibility of the text to be read. During the pre-reading phase, students can be encouraged to do a number of things. The aims of the pre-reading phase are three-fold:

- .Arousing the student's interest in the topic of text;
- . Motivating students to read the text by providing a purpose for reading;
- . Activating students' existing background knowledge in relation to the topic and getting familiar with some language in the text.

In this way, the teacher can prepare them in terms of both schematic and language knowledge, and ensure purposeful reading. In fact, it is very important and crucial to activate student's

schematic knowledge in the first stage of reading in order to arouse their further interest in the text.

The while-reading phase or during reading activity draws the student's attention to the text on text and involves them in the thinking process. The activities here are directly prepared from the reading text and help the learners understand the writer's purpose, the text structure, and context. These generally aim to encourage students to be active as they read. The skills in this stage may include: skimming, scanning, reading for details, drawing inferences about the author's purpose and intension.

The post-reading phase is a follow-up of pre-reading phase and during-reading phase. The activities in this stage encourage learners to make use of the acquired information from the reading text to express their opinions and form ideas. Ideally, post-reading work could be integrated with the writing, speaking and listening skills. Post –reading activities can be used as the texts they follow, but ideally will tie up with the reading purpose set, so that students check and discuss activities done while reading and make use of what they have read in a meaningful way, for example, by discussing their response to the writer's opinions or by using notes for a writing activity. After that , a wide range of activities focussing either on the content of the text can be undertaken, for example debate, role-play, reading of contrasting text, or focussing on its language. At this stage many teachers want to build their students language competence by concentrating on some linguistic features.

To help students develop their reading abilities, material writers and teachers are responsible to design reading activities that engage students in communication with the text and their peers. These activities should be tailored to fit in to the pre, while and post reading phases. This paper, therefore, attempts to understand how language teachers use these phases to enhance students reading skills.

One of the major concerns of Teaching English is to enable students develop their skills of reading. This is so because the significance of developing the reading skills is tied with the needs of communication. Concerning this (Alderson 1984) says: It is common experience, at least of English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher; the most students fail to learn to read adequately.

1.1 Statement of the problem

English language is used as a vehicle to meet the academic demands of the secondary level of education. The failing standard of students language competence at all levels of schools and post secondary institutions has recently become an important area of debate. To this end, students need to be adequately competent in their language skills to successfully operate in their academic endeavour.

Students' language incompetence, however, has been decried by many stakeholders. For instance, mainstream subject teachers in secondary schools contend that students' poor command of the instructional language has become a serious communication barrier to the teaching and learning process. Rivers (1981:259) says that reading is the most important skill in any language class, not only as a source of information and pleasure activity, but also as a means of consolidating and extending one's knowledge of the language. Therefore, based on this author's view, it could be generalized that reading skill is the base to develop the other language skills, i.e. writing, speaking, and listening skills

One of the barriers that could deteriorate the quality of the aforementioned process is students' questionable competence in their reading skill. Addressing this problem, therefore, seems to be essential to identify factors that enhance or slow down students' reading skill which is one of the important language skills used across all the subjects offered in secondary schools.

Among other variables, the teaching methodology used in reading classrooms has a significant effect on students reading skill. In many instances, informal observation by the researcher of reading classes shows that teachers do not follow the appropriate phases of teaching reading. Thus, exploring what teachers and students practice in reading classrooms by focusing on the pre, while and post reading phases is worth considering:

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

This section of the paper outlines the general and specific objectives of the study. Section 1.2.1 states the general objective and section 1.2.2 describes the specific objectives of the study. The research questions are presented in section 1.2.3.

1.2.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore how teachers of English implement the reading phases in their classrooms.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this research are to:

- . Find out what activities teachers of English use in their reading classes;
- . Identify the problems teachers encounter in implementing the reading phases.

1.2.3 Research Questions

This paper attempts to answer the following research questions. These are:-

1. What activities do teachers use in (I.e. pre, while and post- reading phases)?
2. What kind of problems do instructors face in practicing the reading phases in their EFL classrooms?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The researcher hopes that the findings of this study may indicate ways in which English teachers at high school improve their methods in teaching reading.

Besides, the findings of the study may provide insights to curriculum developers, and material writers in the area. Language teachers training departments and institutes may also get some ideas about the current status of teaching reading in high schools.

1.4 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to two private senior secondary schools in Hawassa town. The rationale for taking private schools is that these schools relatively exhibit more conducive teaching and learning environment that may allow to practice the majority of the sub skills of reading than what the case could be in the government schools. This is believed to reduce possible teachers opinions that consider having no conducive teaching and learning environment as an excuse not to teach reading following appropriate procedures.

1.5 Limitation of the Study

Due to time and financial constrains, it was not possible to consider more than two private high schools for the study.

1.6 Organization of the Study

This paper has procured five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study particularly the statement of the problem, the objectives, the significance, limitation, delimitation and organization of the study. The second and third chapters with the review of the related literature and the methodology of the study respectively. The fourth one presents the data and its analysis and interpretations. The fifth chapter deals with the conclusion and recommendations. Following this, the bibliography and the appendix sections are provided

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

This chapter reviews literature related to this study. The chapter tries to illustrate briefly different theories and research findings that have relationship to reading skills.

2.1 What is Reading

Reading is by far believed to be the most important of the four skills for English language learners. A great number of scholars have been concerned with the process of reading for a number of decades. Nunan (1989:33) defines reading as a process of decoding written symbols, working from smaller units (individual letters) to larger ones (word, clause, and sentence) in order to arrive at meaning. In this process, readers try to look at and understand the idea of the graphic spirit in the absence of the writer. This concern has yielded many insights and much data, but not clearly stated empirically supported and theoretically unassailable definition of what reading is. Reading is a receptive language skill. It is psycholinguistic process in that starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which the reader constructs. There is such an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thoughts as language and the reader decodes language to thought.

Nuttall (1983), in Aebersold and Field (1975:5) also states that reading is like an infectious disease: it is caught not taught. (And you can't catch it from some one who hasn't got it...) According to Carrel, Devine, and Eskey (1988), reading is viewed primarily as a decoding process of reconstructing the author's intended meaning through recognizing a text from the smallest textual units at bottom (letter, words) to larger units at the top (phrases, clauses, inter-sentential linkages). They call this type of perception as a bottom-up process, which constitute, as the earlier form of understand reading.

For instance, the definition of Widowson. (1979) as quoted in Alderson and Urqhart 1984, the process of getting linguistic information via print "is useful corrective to more restricted

approaches. But as it stands in Alderson and Urquhart it is pointed out that it is probably too general and all embracing to be of much practical value.

For many foreign language learners, reading involves a specific need which has nothing to do with extending their command of language (Nuttal 1996:30). They read for meaning and the language is simply the vehicle to convey the message.

2.2 Reading Instructional Phases

A great number of scholars have said a lot about different lists of reading strategies (Faerch and Kasper, 1983; Wenden and Rubin, 1987). 'Reading strategies are of interests for what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with written text, and how these strategies are related to reading comprehension. Several empirical investigations have been conducted into reading strategies and their relationships to successful and unsuccessful second language reading'.

There are two types of reading strategies which are mainly studied by different scholars in the field; these are cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. Cognitive strategies are the strategies that help the reader extract meaning from reading text. This includes both top down and bottom up strategies. Metacognitive strategies are those strategies that help the reader to monitor or regulate cognitive strategies (Devine, 1988).

According to Carrell (1988), such traditionally recognized reading strategies are: Making contextual guesses about the meanings of the unknown words, skipping unknown words, skimming a text to get a general idea, scanning a text for specific pieces of information, tolerating ambiguity, making predictions, confirming or disconfirming, inferences, and identifying the main idea.

Mc Donough (1995:57) has developed a list of Metacognitive and Affective strategies as monitoring strategies. These are consciously changing the plan, holding, deserting a hopeless utterance, varying the reading rate, rereading, identifying misunderstanding, mistakes, skipping in a controlled fashion, self directed solution to a problem, questioning information in the text,

commenting a behaviour, monitoring comprehension, reacting to a text, and questioning meaning of clause, sentences or words.

In the Ethiopian context, some studies have been conducted on reading strategies and these include: Girma (1994) Mengesha (2003) and Tsegaye (2005). Girma (1994) studied the reading strategies employed by freshman students at Addis Ababa University and Mengesha (2003) studied teaching reading strategies in grade 9. Tsegaye (2005) studied reading strategy training in EFL class of preparatory one in focus.

2.3 Models of Processing Reading Phases

There are many different strategies that researchers have shown are effective in literature based instruction. These include scaffolding of instruction, modelling, cooperative learning, having choices, modes of reading, prior knowledge, and students response to literature. These will be discussed as follow:

2.3.1 Scaffold Instruction

This is one type of instructional strategy that deals with how individuals learn. At the beginning students need a great deal of help from the teacher till they are able to do by themselves. For this point; Janzen, (2002) has stated; Modelling consisted of the teacher talking aloud, elaborating and demonstrating the process in SPROM. (Skim, Purpose, Organization, Relation, and Main ideas). It involved the teacher demonstrating how to work the strategy. The steps involved in the acronym formed the Scaffolding activity. Gradually students learnt to work in groups followed by interactions with the tutor resulting in a joint analysis of text.

2.3.2 Modelling

Knowing the various strategies and skills involved in the process is a very important part for students to make the reading process easier. And this activity is one way of helping students to know the strategies and skills through demonstrating, response activities and discussion using the literature it self. Two features characterised the training procedures. Generally used for teaching writing across the curriculum. (Rothery,1990), the three phases of the General Teaching and Learning Cycle of Modelling, join Negotiation of Text and Independent Construction of Text

(Flowerdew,1993;Jhons,1997) formed the basis for training. Teacher modelling, advocated by Janez,(2002) and Grabe (2002b) was based on talking aloud and demonstrating strategy use. The three phases of the teaching and learning cycle were modified to Teacher Modelling, joint Analysis of Text and Independent Deconstruction of Text to reflect the reading focus.

2.3.3 Cooperative Learning

This instructional strategy is done through group discussion, and it is an effective way of instruction for students to learn and read. Students group each other with more experienced individuals and exchange information. Students learn to read, write, and think by having meaningful engagements with more experienced individuals (Wells, 1990).

2.3.4 Having Choice

This type of strategy is to give choice for students to decide what they want to read, how they read, and how they like to respond. Having choices in learning to read and write helps students meet their own individual needs (Johnston and Aligton, 1991).

2.3.5 Modes of Reading

Here, by changing the modes of reading, it is possible to create a different level of help for students to improve their reading ability. These activities are: read-aloud by the teacher, shared, guided by the teacher, cooperatively, or individually. The term modes o reading refers to the different ways of literature may be read- aloud by the teacher, guided by the teacher, cooperatively, or independently (Cooper, 1993).

2.3.6 Prior knowledge Activation

This strategy helps students to related things with the text to their prior knowledge and different teaching aids like, films, speakers, slides maps et can be used to activate their prior knowledge. Research on Schema theory and prior knowledge has clearly shown that students construct meaning by using their prior knowledge to interact with the text (Anderson and Pearson, 1984).

2.3.7 Response to Literature

Responses to literature are important to literature based instruction (Martinez and Roser, 1991). By encouraging and allowing students to respond to literature, we promote the active construction of meaning.

2.4 Reading Phases

Students need to develop thoughtful interpretations of what they read. They need to approach the tasks as active makers of meanings. Teachers can encourage students to become active participants in the classroom community by tailoring their instructional strategies and methods to the needs of their classes and the individuals in those classes.

There are three phases of reading strategies; pre- reading, while- reading, and post- reading. These will be discussed as follow:

2.4.1. Pre- reading Activities

This strategy is important for many reasons. First, to encourage the students to activate what they already know about situations, events, characters, and ideas in the text. Second, to provide important background information relevant to the selection in order to expand their knowledge. Thirdly, it helps to explain the conventions, techniques, and vocabulary employed by the writer and finally, it helps the student (s) to set purposes for reading. And here after the above four mentioned activities will be discussed respectively: In pre-reading stage, students will be Regarding to this stage Baker and Westrup (2002:63) states that before reading activities should be short and focused, i.e. five minutes is usually long enough.

2.4.1.1 Activation What Students Know

In this phase, teachers are expected to do more in assisting the students to activate what they already know regarding the ideas they are about to encounter. Scaffold instruction is a concept that has grown out of research on how individuals learn Brown, J.(1986). Students might use an anticipation guide a brief reading passage to capture their interest while building predictive

reading skills, connecting with their previous experiences, and establishing a purpose for reading.

2.4.1.2. Building Background Knowledge

It helps to build up student's background information to the new selection of idea which students are unfamiliar for it. Research on schema theory and prior knowledge has clearly showed that students construct meaning by using their prior knowledge to interact with the text (Anderson and Pearson, 1984).

Speakers, films, slides, new articles, maps and photos can be used to build students background information. KWL strategy can also be used to activate what students know and need to know before reading. Therefore, it helps to answer the following questions clearly; what do we know? What do we think we know? What do we need or what to know?

2.4.1.3 Determining Purposes and Strategy

It is well known that titles help a reader to predict what a particular work is about. So in this part teachers are highly expected to encourage students to use predictions to set a purpose of what they think the selection will be about. By giving students option to choose from in what they read, how they read, and how they respond to a piece of literature, we allow them to actively construct their own meanings (Matinez and Roser, 1991).

2.4.1.4. Understanding Key Vocabulary

If students do not understand the author's vocabulary, they will not understand the text. Memorizing vocabulary for a test or studying list of words isolated from the reading experience have virtually an effect on comprehension or an improving one's vocabulary (Nelson-Herber 1986). The selection of words for study has got the following three criteria and these are:

- ❖ The relation of a word to key concepts in the text.
- ❖ Students background knowledge.
- ❖ The potential for enhancing independent learning.

2.4.2 While- reading

In this phase there are different ways of activities for the first reading.

Sometimes teachers read it for the class, sometimes students read it silently or students read it aloud for the whole class. During reading, a reader has to predict what comes next to increase his/her comprehension ability. Reading to prediction, Harmer (1998:70), and Nuttal (1996:80,118) explain that trying to predict what comes next is a good way of seeing whether you have a clear top-down view of the text.

Students need to become engaged in the reading process, need to monitor their own comprehension, and they also need to know when the reading selection is making sense and when it is not. When reading any particular text, students need to employ several strategies. Modelling of specific strategies and skill is also provided by the teacher for those students who need it. This is done by using literature that has been read as models to show the use of strategies and skills. And teachers need to encourage students in the reading task and model appropriate strategies. This includes connection, predictions, making inferences, reflection and evaluation.

More recently, since the adoption of the idea of reading as interactive process, while reading activities have been used: these generally aim to encourage learners to be active as they read (Hedge 2000:210).

The while-reading phase or during-reading activity draws the students on text and involves them in the thinking process. The activities here help the learners understand the writer's purpose, the text structure, and context. When a student reads, it is better to read quickly and repeatedly than reading slowly and once. In connection to this idea, Aebersold and Field (1997:225) say that two or three quick purposeful will be more efficient and productive than one, slow, detailed reading.

Teachers are also highly recommended to use the following ways of teaching to help students make sense of the text: to demonstrate, how they make association, how they create visual images, how they check predictions, and how they adjust their reading rate to match purpose and material.

- What a reader understands about a text at any given time.
- The question the reader has.
- The reader's predictions about how the piece will unfold.

However, as to Hedge (2000:192), foreign language readers may have difficulties in processing texts which contain unfamiliar aspects of the English Language such as cohesive devices: as reference items (for example, 'they', 'these matters' 'the latter'); relative pronouns(for example, 'which' 'that'). During reading teacher can use the following activities to model and develop the strategies needed for effective readings.

2.4.2.1 Guided Reading Procedures

This part has got its own procedures after a purpose for reading has been set. First, they read an assigned selection to remember as much as possible, then they try to brainstorm everything they can remember individually or with peers. Finally, they check to the text for any additional information, and they organize their recollections for an outline.

2.4.2.2 Group Reading Strategy

Teachers should establish a positive, productive learning climate and provide group participation training. All students read a common selection. Students are divided in to group. Designated responsibilities for each group are as follows: (Paul, 1993, P.11).

Group 1: Rephrase the article in your own words.

Group 2: Identify questions that you would like to ask the author.

Group 3: Elaborate on the implications /consequences of the author's position.

Group 4: what assumptions is the author making? Evaluate these assumptions.

Group 5: what information does the author present and what more would you like to know?

2.4.2.3 Request (Reciprocal Questioning)

This part has got question and answer procedure from the teacher and students. After students and teacher read a determined selection of text. Students forward though provoking questions in return. Then students continue the questions asking process. When the question and answer method is used effectively, students feel that they are being personally addressed by the teacher. When responding students should speak not only the teacher, but also their peers. The questioning strategy advocated by Nuttal (1996) and modelled by the teacher for raising students' awareness through the use of 'WH' questions provided the bases for training. The purpose was to develop in students the habit of raising questions as such questions can trigger students' mental process and enable them to see connections between segments of a text.

Other strategies for students while they are reading include encourage them to make marginal notes on a selection, to underline key words and ideas, to outline and map key words and ideas, to summarize, or retell the selection to a partners. Students may choose to do a second or third reading to clarify and confirm their understanding and interpretation.

2.4.3 Post -reading

The post reading activities encourage students up on what they have read. For the information to stay with the students, they need to go beyond simply reading it to using it. Using it can involve answering questions, summarizing the main ideas, drawing conclusions, or applying the information to a new situation. Phase is a follow-up of pre-reading phase and during-reading phase. Students: activities can be varied such as writing, drawing, interview, discussion research. After -reading: Have I got what I wanted? If not, where in the text is it hidden? Can I get at it by looking on any words? If so, which? (Nuttall 1996:64).

Teachers should employ a variety of questions and activities that will provide students with an array of vantage points from which to reflect up on a text.

Generally after students have read a selection, it is important:

1. To motivate students to reflect what they generally understand and their first impression;
2. Promote them to move toward a more carefully reasoned response; and to understand the structure and significance of the text;
3. Ask students to make connections to the broader issues and world around them;
4. Ask students to extend their understanding and appreciation of the writers' craft.

2.5 The Role of the teacher in developing the learners reading skills.

In order to improve students reading achievement the role of the teacher has got many places.

One of the teachers main job, as suggested by Alderson and Urqhart (1984:63)

..... will then be to define learning objectives that is what it is the students can expect to learn from a text and to provide illustrative example of how these goals are to be met . Students should be encouraged to accept that there may well be different but valid interpretations arrived at on the way to these goals. Substantiating the possibility of different but valid interpretations of a text.

One of the teachers job is to make sure that the bridge is built between the specific and the general. And one way of helping the students to generalize his skills is to make sure that he reads a lot and has a lot of practice in using the skills with varied materials. Make learning to read easy which means making reading a meaningful, enjoyable, useful and frequent experience for children. (Smith Frank 1988, 138). This means a teacher is one of the most important person in the beginning reader's life and can make the difference between success and failure.

According to Smith Frank (1998) and Tharenivs (1999), teachers should themselves be responsible to help learners by making the teaching learning processes easier. Thus, teachers should always be willing to:

- Encourage pre-reading discussion to help readers activate prior knowledge or fill in gaps in background knowledge set the stage for critical reading.

In short, in this chapter, an attempt has been made to review the local and international literatures related to reading skills. Generally, the review emphasizes that reading is deriving meaning from the word combinations in the text by using different reading stages.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

This section presents the methodology used in the study. It describes the subjects, and the data collection instruments used in the study.

3.1 The subjects

The subjects of the study were grades 9 and 10 English language teachers and their students of SOS Senior Secondary High School and Comboni Comprehensive High School which are two private high schools in Hawassa town.

More specifically, six English language teachers who have been teaching English language courses in grades 9 and 10 levels and two hundred seventy students of these teachers (forty five from each teacher) were the subjects of the study. These teachers and students were randomly selected by drawing lots.

3.2 Data Collection Instruments

3.2.1 Students' questionnaires

Students' questionnaires were the major data collection instruments for this study. Students' questionnaire included eleven close-ended items. Its purpose was to find out whether or not teachers use the three phases of teaching reading i.e. pre, while and post reading phases and to elicit data about what kind of activities teachers use in each phase. They were also used to gather data about what kind of activities teachers use in each phase of teaching reading. In addition to these, they were used to identify problems teachers face using the reading phases.

Similarly, the students' questionnaire contained eleven close - ended items. Its aim was to triangulate the responses obtained from the students' questionnaire and to gather additional data on the study under-taken. This questionnaire was first written in the English language and translated in to the Amharic language so as to minimize the possible communication barrier that

might arise from the felt students' poor command of the English language. Researchers and students were used to assess the face and content validities of the items included in the

3.2.2 Interview

An open-ended interview was conducted with all the teachers considered in this study. The purpose of the interview was to identify problems teachers face while using the three phases of teaching reading.

3.2.3 Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were conducted two times while each teacher was handling reading lessons. The aim of these observations was to explore further data on the types of activities used in the three phases. A checklist was adapted from the relevant literature and to guide the observations made.

3.3 Analysis

The responses obtained from the questionnaire items of students were tabulated, described based on the total percentage of the responses secured for each item, interpreted and analyzed. Similarly, the responses of the teachers interview with the six items are described, narrated and interpreted. Regarding the classroom observation, a check list with three points to be observed was prepared with two columns for 'yes' or 'no' answers. Each point had their sub points under it.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussions

This part presents the results obtained from the student's questionnaires and the classroom observation. It also attempts to analyse the data provided and discuss the findings. It does this under each of the pre, while and post reading phases.

4.1 Responses of students concerning pre-reading.

Table1 presents students response the extent to which teachers attempt to meet the three purposes of pre reading phase while teaching reading. While analysing the responses such as 'always' and 'often' have been taken to mean positive response whereas response such as 'rarely' and 'never' have been considered to mean the opposite.

Table 1 Pre - Reading

Items	Scales				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Activating students background knowledge	39%	35%	8%	15%	3%
Introducing key vocabularies	43.5%	15.5%	7.5%	20%	13.5%
Helping students, to set purpose for a text they read.	55%	31%	0%	7%	7%

The most important purpose out of the three indicated in the table, according to the aggregated percentage responses (74%) provided by the students who said always (39%) and often (35%) was found out to be providing background knowledge. In the same manner, those who reported they did this sometimes accounted for 8%. However, the aggregate percentage for the responses who indicated rarely (15%) and never (3%). This seemed to show that teachers exert effort to help students process reading texts by providing background knowledge that could serve as a

framework to enhance reading comprehension. The findings, thus, seemed to depict that teachers help students activate what they already know before reading a text.

It could however be logical to argue that the response of students who said sometimes (8%) to the question may indicate that teachers do not necessarily promote all the purposes of this phase in every reading lesson which in turn implies a need to adapt purposes of a lesson, based on the nature of texts, students background and other factors.

Introducing key vocabularies in the pre-reading phase was also identified to be the other purpose. 59% of the teachers attempt to achieve in this phase. More specifically, the aggregate responses of students showed that 43.5%, 15.5 %, 20%, 13.5% and 7.5% of the teachers deal with key vocabularies in this phase respectively.

All of the students reported that teachers do help their students to set purpose for a text they read. Similarly, students favourable response (55%) which is the highest positive response, provided by the students, out of the four purposes considered in the study seemed to back up what students reported to do in item 4. This also goes in argument with the aggregate percentage responses forwarded by students (86%) who said always (55%) and often (31%).

4.1.2 Observation Pre-reading

4.1.2.1 Activating What Students Know

The majority of the teachers observed have incorporated questions that would activate students' previous knowledge about the topic of the reading passages. Two of these teachers, for instance, have added their own questions for the said effect for the pre-reading activities presented in the text book deals on the other purpose of this phase. Even though advancing all the aims of this phase may not be a necessary condition for all texts, the attempt made to meet this purpose is commendable.

4.1.2.2 Activating Students' Background

It could be worth noting that all of the teachers were mainly focusing only on electing what student already know about the topic to be read. They could however extend this activity by asking students, to identify what they want and need to know from the passage. This might help students to address their identified needs and wants from the text which, in turn, might serve as a source of motivations to read the text.

4.1.2.3 Introducing Key Vocabulary

The results of the observed teaching sessions have attested that there was only a teacher who presented key vocabulary of a text in the pre- reading phase. Although many researchers agree on such activity, the techniques used to present this vocabulary seemed to be questionable because the teacher was only telling the students the dictionary definitions of the identified key words devoid of context and examples.

4.1.2.4 Setting Purpose

It was learnt from the observations that the teachers considered in this study used three activities to help students set purpose for the text they read. One of them was to ask students predict what the text they read would be about. Accordingly, students' predictions of the content of the passage were made to be based on the title of the passage. One of the teachers who used this activity in two of the class- room sessions used the following procedure.

T: Good morning students.

St: Good morning Teacher.

T: yesterday, we discussed about Wild animals and today, We are going to do some reading activities. So open page 101.

T: (read the title) this is the topic of the passage.

Students, what do you think the passage is going to be about.

S. Some students raised their hands.

T. Gave chance to two of them and said ok. The passage we are going to read is about Democracy. It deals with freedom.

Similarly, another teacher used explanation to help students set purpose. Unlike the previous teacher, he did not invite the students to predict about what they would be reading. He simply

read the title of the passage to the students and informed them that the text they would read is going to be about.

On the other hand, the third teacher followed the following steps to help students, identify purpose for their reading.

T. Good afternoon students

S: Good afternoon teacher.

T Our lesson today is reading. Go to page 71 please.

Have you found the page? You have 5 minutes to read the title and the first paragraph of the text. Read both and you will tell to the class what information you expect to find in the passage.

As can be deduced from the results of the questionnaire and the observation, teachers seemed to advance the impotence of helping learners set purpose for the text they read through different activities. Unlike the value attached to the purpose of the activities, the results of the observation seemed to cast a cloud over the practices used by some of the teachers. For instance, the first two teachers quoted above were observed giving a way some detailed information about the passage while they were trying to help the students determine the purposes of their reading. The information they gave them in this stage, thus, seemed to affect what students would have done in the while reading phase. Since some of the information they gave to the students could be used to answer the while reading tasks , one could be logical if he/she speculates that what these teachers have done is questionable to help meet the purpose of the activities i.e. setting purpose for reading.

Unlike the observations described above, there were some sessions that disregarded the pre - reading activities presented in the text. Thus, the students were directed to do the while reading activities without doing the pre-reading once. This could imply a number of drawbacks some of these could be problems associated with time constraint, teachers and students motivation and background to excute and value pre-reading activities. Whether or not the nature and the content of the reading passage really need pre-reading activities to process and digest the text could also be another case in point.

4.2 Responses of Student's concerning while-reading.

Table 2 While Reading

Items	Scales				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Helping students to understand the text structure.	15.5%	15.5%	37%	18.5%	13.5%
Helping students develop Inference skills.	54.5%	16.5%	10%	8.5%	10.5%
Helping students to understand the writer's purpose.	64.5%	17.5%	5.6%	5.7%	6.7%
Helping students, to understand the specific information and gist of a text respecting	16.5%	6.5%	26%	23.5%	27.5%

Among the purposes of the while reading activities undertaken by the sampled students, helping students to understand the text structure was less emphasized as compared to the other purposes of this phase considered in this study. Specifically, the percentage responses of students who attested they do this always (15.5%) or often (15.5%) was added to be 31%). Similarly, those who said sometimes were (37%). On the other hand, the percentage for the response of the students who indicated rarely (18.5%) and never (13.5%) was found to be (32%).

The next less emphasized purpose was figured out to be helping students develop inferencing skills. This sub skill of reading which is very crucial to interpretate texts and identify meanings from texts is not used. The percentage for the students who said always (54.5%) or often (16.5%)

was added to be (71%). In the same manner, those who reported they did this sometimes accounted for (10%). It was found out the aggregate percentage for the responses who indicated rarely and never are (8.5%) and (10.5%) respectively. This seemed to show that teachers exert effort to help students develop their skills of interpreting texts and identifying meanings from texts.

The focus given to help students understand a writer's purpose, according to the percentage responses of the students who favorably responded to the issue by indicating always (64.5 %) or often (17.5%) was added to be 82%. As many researchers in the area agree, Jazen,J(2002) understanding a writer's purpose and text structure is highly interwoven. For instance, understanding the structure of a text i.e. whether it is narrative, argumentative descriptive could help to activate the format schemata which, in turn, may guide students to deduce the general intent of the writer.

On the other hand, the most dominantly promoted purpose of the activities alone in this phase was found to be helping students understand specific information and the gist of a text. The percentage responses of students who positively responded that teachers help students to identify the gist of a text and specific information were found to be 16.5% and 6.5% respectively, which is the least focused purpose from what has been investigated in the paper.

4.2.1 Observation: while reading

The observations made on the while reading phase revealed more or less the same roles played across the teachers under this study. Instances in point could be the following:

- In the pre-reading activities, all of the teachers in their respective classrooms requested the students to read the questions under this phase and then to read the passage silently and answer those questions;
- After giving some minutes to the students to read the passage and answer the questions, teachers read out each of the comprehension question in turn and invite

their students to provide answers. One of the worth nothing points observed while the above activity was under play was time constraints that affected students, not to finish the activates assigned completely which in turn made most of the teachers to give answers to questions that students have not attempted.

- The feed back given to students was mainly indicating that an answer forwarded was correct or wrong. If an answer was wrong, the teachers provide the correct once.

What is more, the observations made revealed variations in focus among the purposes the teachers intended to meet in this phase. Among the five purposes under question in this study, none of the teachers was observed to use activities that were aimed at developing students' skill of understanding the writer's purpose and structure of a text.

4.3 Responses of students concerning post- reading.

Table 3 Post Reading

Items	Scales				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
To direct learners to evaluate this work in relation to their plans.	24.5%	17.6%	19%	16.4%	22.5%
To give learners time to discuss their difficulties in reading and find solutions.	34.3%	23.7%	19%	12.5%	10.5%
To allow learners to make decisions or choices about reading activities.	24%	41.8%	17.8%	5.8%	10.6%
To advise (apprentice individual learners or groups about their progress.	37.5%	28%	5.5%	15%	14%

The percentage for the response of the students who said always (24.5%) or often (17.6%) to the question whether or not teachers direct learners to evaluate their work in relation to their plans was aggregated to be (42.1%). In the same manner, those who reported they did this sometimes accounted for (19%). The percentage for the response of students who said rarely (16.4%) and never (22.5%) was found to be (38.9%). Among the purposes of the post-reading activities undertaken by the sampled students, directing learners to evaluate their work in relation to their plans was less emphasized as compared to the other purposes of this phase considered in this study. This seemed to show that teachers exert less effort to help students evaluate their work in relation to their plans.

The second most important purpose of the four indicated in the table was found out to be giving learners time to discuss their difficulties in reading and find solution. According to the aggregated percentage response (58%) provided by the students who said always (34.3%) and often (23.7%). In the same manner, those who reported they did this sometimes accounted for (19%). However, the aggregated percentage (23%) for the response who indicated rarely (12.5%) and never (10.5%).

Allowing learners to make decisions or choices about reading activities in the post-reading phase was also identified to be the other purpose. More specifically the aggregated responses of the students show that (24%), (41.8%), (17.8%), (5.8%), (10.6%) respectively. The most important purpose out of the four indicated in the table, according to the aggregated percentage responses(65%) provided by the students who said always (24%) and often(41%) was found out to be allowing learners to make decisions or choices about reading activities. The findings, thus, seemed to depict that teachers help students to make decisions or choices.

The other most important purpose of this phase is advising (appreciating) individual learners or groups about their progress. The percentages for the response of the students who said always and often are (37.5%) (28%) respectively. Similarly, those who said sometimes were (5.5%), on the other hand, the percentage for the response of both groups who indicted rarely (15%) and never (14%) was found to be (29%). This seemed to show that teachers exert effort in advising (appreciating) individual learners or groups about their progress.

4.4 Problems instructors' encounter while employing the three reading phases

All the instructors have participated in an open ended interview. The interview questions (see appendix D) and some of the excerpts given to each questions are discussed below:

4.4.1 Results of the Interview

As it has been stated in the previous section, an open ended interview that focused on problems teachers face while employing the three phases in their reading lessons was conducted. The results of the interview revealed the following four problem areas.

4.4.1.1 Lack of Adequate Text Books

All of the interviewed teachers reported that lack of adequate text books has affected the language teaching and learning process in general and more significantly the reading lessons. A teacher reacting to this problem said:

On average, students share one book for five. It is also common to find some students who possess books missing classes or forget to bring their text books. Thus, how would it be possible to encourage independent reading and to employ the three phases of teaching reading effectively.

The problem stated above seems to affect the while reading activities much than it does to the pre and post reading activities. This is because the while reading activities are mainly dependent on the information presented in the text. On the other hand, the pre and post reading activities may not necessarily be developed directly from a reading text though they should be highly related to content presented in the reading passage.

4.4.1.2 Students Background

The majority of the interviewed teachers underlined that student's educational background is one of the problems that has been affecting the quality of teaching reading. Elaborating this point a teacher said:

The majority of the students had been doing reading activities which do not have pre and post reading tasks thus they do not buy the idea that pre reading activities help to process to text to be read effectively. Convincing some of these students is not an easy thing.

It was also reported by a teacher that:

It is a common practice to find students who are puzzled when they are required to do reading comprehension questions with out reading a passage. They unusually like to skim a passage to find answers .

As it can be inferred from the reports of the first two teachers, students back ground has seemed to have an effect on the activities done in the pre- reading phase. This is because some of the students are not aware about the link between the pre and the while reading activities. As it is

stated above, some of them are surprised to be asked questions with out reading a text though such questions are necessary to activate relevant schemata which are necessary to effectively do the while reading tasks.

Another teacher added that:

Some of the students in grades 9—10 do not posses the necessary reading skill that they should have developed in the lower level. Thus, it is sometimes meaningless to require them do tasks such as inference and reference etc.for these kinds of questions require a relatively higher level of reading skill.

As it was pointed out by the second teacher, if students start skimming a passage while they are required to think or brainstorm about what they know about the topic of reading, the purpose of the pre-reading tasks will have no value.

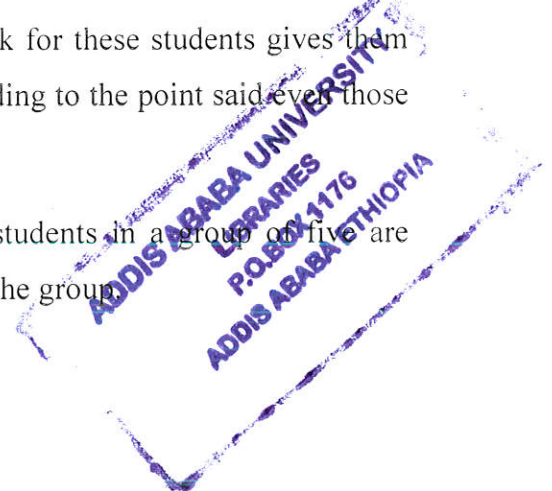
The report of the third teacher seems to be related to the reading skill abilities of students. The teacher seemed to have a point that it would be difficult to require students do inference and reference questions, if they do not adequately possess the lower level sub reading skills such as identifying specific information, etc. These types of questions, however, could be simplified so as to go in line with the reading ability of students who do not meet the expected competence in the skill.

4.4.1.3 Use of Mother Tongue

The majority of the interviewed teachers underscored that students frequently use their mother tongue when they are assigned to do tasks in groups.

One of these teachers commented that some of the students who use their mother tongue in group discussions are usually observed deliberating on issues that are not related to the activities they are supposed to discuss. He also went on saying that group work for these students gives them time to have fun with their friends in a class. Another teacher adding to the point said even those groups that use the target language do the same fun.

Another teacher, adding to the point said about two to three students in a group of five are passive participants who are dominated by the other members in the group.



The aforementioned issues seem to imply that the problems observed with regard to using mother tongue in group discussions have shown possible effects as the pre and post phases of teaching reading. As it has been discussed in the review of literature, one of the techniques employed to meet the purpose of the pre and the post reading phases is group work activities. Thus, the effect of mother tongue in group discussions seems to be higher in this phase than the while reading phase for the activities under this phase are mainly done individually.

4.4.1.4 The Washback Effect of Exam

A teacher said the majority of the students learn to pass exams. He specifically said:

If they think (students) what they are required to do as a class or home works are less related to the exams they would have no interest to exert effort. This seems to be a strong position of grade 10 students who do take General School Leaving Certificate Examination .Their focus of attention is highly taken to activities that help them score good grades in this exam.

As it can be learnt from the teacher's account of this observation described above, the students seemed to be highly motivated to do activities that may have a direct relation to tests or exams that they would encounter. Since reading tests and exams are mainly dependent on the information presented in texts ,text related pre and post reading activities considered important for tests and exams .

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary and Conclusions

As it has been pointed out in the review of literature, the intents of pre- reading activities are to stimulate students' interest on introducing and activating relevant schemata about a text to be read. The most dominant activities used by the teachers considered in the study seemed to focus on meeting the following purposes of the pre- reading phase of teaching reading. These are introducing the objectives, activating prior knowledge and setting purpose for a text. On the other hand, the attention paid to promote the use of associating and creating visual images in the pre reading stage seemed to be low.

Among the reading sub skills that could be enhanced in the while reading phase, identifying the gist of and specific information from a text seemed to be emphasized by subjects of this study. However, helping students develop inferencing and referencing sub skills of reading were reported to be challenging. Students background to language in general and reading activities in particular have been considered to be one of the challenges to deal with tasks that develop the aforementioned sub skills. In addition to these, practicing activities that foster students' abilities to draw conclusions and implications from texts read have also seemed to be exercised less due to the same factor.

With regard to advancing the aims of the post reading phase, evaluating, and internalizing the texts read seemed to be done well.

From the findings of the study, it may tentatively be concluded that the language teachers sampled in the study from the two high schools attempt to employ all the three phases i.e. pre, while and post reading phase in teaching reading. However, the use of mother tongue, students background, the wash back effect of tests and exams and lack of adequate text books have created difficulties for teachers to employ the phases of teaching reading in their classrooms.

5.2. Implications

The results of this study seemed to imply the following points:

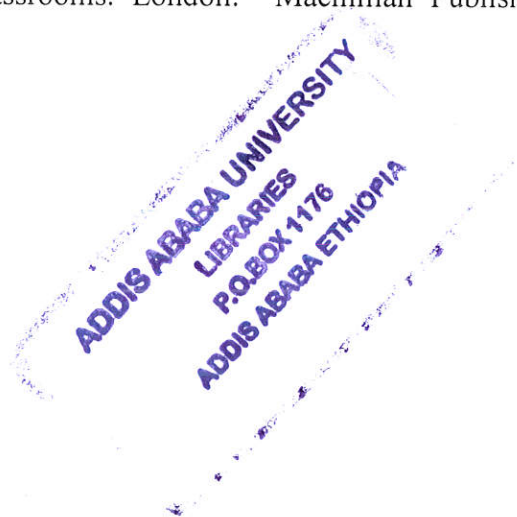
- Since the process of language teaching and learning is so dynamic, teachers need to do their level best to overcome challenges that may affect the quality of the said process;
- Unlike some factors that seek the involvement of other stakeholders, teachers, themselves, need to employ their own strategies that would faster the quality of the process;
- Curriculum and syllabus developers together with language teaching departments need to find mechanisms in which the contemporary problems and realities of language teaching in general and teaching reading in particular could be improved;
- While selecting reading texts for teaching both teachers and material writers need to consider students background. Since background information play pivotal role in enhancing and slowing down the reading comprehension process;
- Learning and teaching should aim at helping students develop deeper than surface knowledge, which in other words mean acquiring adequate language skills to function effectively in the language in varied contents. This calls for teaching language practice not to focus learning on teaching for test or exam.

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Comboni and Comprehensive High Schools

APPENDIX A

STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Students

This questionnaire is designed to gather information about roles teachers play to promote (encourage) learner in developing reading ability in English classes. Please genuinely indicate how often the teacher does the following practices indicted bellow

A = Always O = Often S = Sometimes R = Rarely N = Never

NO	Items	Circle your ratings				
		A	O	S	R	N
1	The teacher activates what students know					
2	The teacher encourages learners in activating students back ground					
3	The teacher helps learners introducing key vocabularies					
4	The teacher helps students to set purpose for a text they read					
5	The teacher helps students to understand the text structure					
6	The teacher helps students to develop inference skills					
7	The teacher helps students to understand the writers purpose					
8	The teacher helps students to understand the specific information and gist of a text respecting					
9	The teacher direct learners to evaluate their work in relation to their plans					
10	The teacher give learners time to discuss their difficulties in reading and find solution					
11	The teacher allow learners to make decisions or choices about reading activities					
12	The teacher advise (appreciate) individual learners or groups about their progress					

ኤስ ኦ ኤስ እና ኮምቦኒ አጠቃላይ ሁለተኛ ደረጃ ት/ቤቶች

Appendix B

የተማሪዎች መጠይቅ

ውድ ተማሪዎች

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዓላማ የተማሪዎችን የንባብ ችሎታ ለማዳበር መምህራን ያላቸውን ክፍተቶች አስተዋፅኦ ለማወቅ /ለማጥናት/ ተብሎ የተዘጋጀ ነው። ስለሆነም መምህራኑ የሚያደርጉትን የማስተማር ዘዴና እገዛ በተመለከተ በቅን ልቦናና በታማኝነት ከታች የተመለከቱትን ጥያቄዎች አንድ-ትሞሎ በአክብሮት እጠይቃችኋለሁ።

ሥም መጻፍ ግዴታ አይደለም።

1. ሁልጊዜ 2. በተደጋጋሚ 3. አንዳንዴ 4. ከስንት አንዴ 5. በጭራሽ

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	እውነታውን አክብቡ				
1	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች የሚያውቁትን ነገር እዲያሳዩ ያደርጋሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
2	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች ልምዳቸውን በማያያዝ ንባቡን በግል መረዳት እንደሚችሉ ያሳያሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
3	አስተማሪው/ዎ ለተማሪዎች ወሳኝ ለሆኑ ቃላት ማብራሪያ ይሰጣሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
4	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች የንባብ ምንነትና ምክንያት ከንባባዊ ድርጊቶች ጋር በማመሳሰል ተማሪዎች ከማንበባቸው በፊት እዲያቅዱ ያበረታታሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
5	አስተማሪው/ዎ የንባብ ዓላማን ያብራራሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
6	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች በሚያነቡበት ጊዜ አስቀድመው ንባቡን እንዲገምቱ/እንዲተነብዩ/ ያደርጋሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
7	አስተማሪው/ዎ ለተማሪዎች የፀኑፊውን ዓላማ ያብራራሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
8	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች ካነበቡት ፅሁፍ ውስጥ በአጠቃላይ ምን እንደተረዱ መግለፅ እዲችሉ ያሳያል?	1	2	3	4	5
9	አስተማሪው/ዎ ተማሪዎች የንባብ ስራዎቻቸውን ከአቅዳቸው ጋር በማያያዝ አራሳቸውን እንዲገመግሙ ያበረታታሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
10	አስተማሪው/ዎ ጊዜ ሰጥተው ከንባቡ ውስጥ ስላጋጠሙ ንባባዊ ችግሮች እርስ በእርሳችን በመወያየት መፍትሄ እንድንፈልግለት ያደርጋሉ?	1	2	3	4	5
11	አስተማሪው/ዎ ለተማሪዎች በንባባዊ እንቅስቃሴ ወቅት የመረጥነውን ወይም የራሳችንን ውሳኔ እንድንሰጥ ያደርጋሉ? በቤት ሥራ፣ የክፍል ስራ እና ሌሎች የሙከራ ክንዎኔዎች ላይ።	1	2	3	4	5

Comboni and SOS Senior Secondary High School

Appendix C

Teacher's interview

1. What kind of strategies do you use in your English teaching classes?
2. Is there any situation which affects you to implement the reading strategies?
3. Do you model other strategies by using different other texts not given in the text book syllabus? Why?
4. Have you ever used your own way of reading strategy?
5. What do you comment about the prescribed reading strategies in the syllabus?
6. How much attention do you give to reading strategies in your reading classes?
7. Does reading strategy have a great role in developing students reading ability?
8. What are the reading problems of your students?
9. Do you effectively use the three phases of reading strategies (pre- reading, during-reading and post- reading)?
10. Do you always allocate time for students to read the reading passage in the class room or to read it at home? Why?
11. What skills and strategies do you think could benefit the students reading ability?
12. What strategy can you most easily implement in your reading class?

Comboni and SOS Senior Secondary High Schools

Appendix D

OBSERVATION CHECK LIST

Location: 1 Comboni High School (Hawassa)

2 SOS (Hawassa)

Subject Observed: English

Class room situation

.Number of attendants -----Male-----Female-----

.Number of students expected to the particular class -----

Item	Yes	No
Class room performance		
Silent reading		
Oral reading		
Other /specify		
Learners participation		
Asking/answering		
Group discussion		
Pair discussion		
Other/specify		
Over all situations:		
.Learners satisfaction/reaction to the teaching		
.Teachers knowledge on what is in the passage		
.Teachers readiness to the class		
.Teachers building new information in students past experience		
.Creating opportunities for students to engage in learning in the class room		
.Implementation of the three phases of reading activities (pre-reading, during-reading and post-reading		
. Set purpose of reading		
. Set previewing		
.Set questions after reading		
. Ensure time on text		
. Explicitly target specific reading outcomes		
.Teach strategies for developing proficiency with specific outcomes		

Declaration

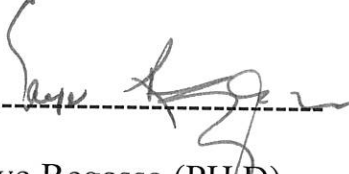
I, the under signed, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Tamirat Girma Alemu

Date-----

Confirmation

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as
thesis advisor



Taye Regassa (PHD)

Advisor

Date-----

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College of Education and Behavioural Sciences
Department of Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies

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Regard to Reading Instruction Phases: The case of Two High Schools
in Hawassa Town**

By
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