



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**TEACHER INTENTION AND LEARNER  
INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNING TASKS**

**By  
Neguse Lilay**

**JULY 2007**

**TEACHER INTENTION AND LEARNER  
INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNING TASKS**

**BY  
Neguse Lilay**

**A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING  
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE  
(TEFL)**

**JULY 2007  
ADDIS ABABA**

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND LITERATURE  
(GRADUATE PROGRAMME)**

**TEACHER INTENTION AND LEARNER  
INTERPRETATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
LEARNING TASKS**

**By  
Neguse Lilay**

**Approved by**

---

**Advisor**

---

**Examiner**

---

**Examiner**

## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, graduate student here by declare that, this thesis is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in any other university and other university and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

**Name:** Neguse Lilay

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor:** Dr. Teshome Demisse

**Place:** Institute of Language Studies, Addis Ababa  
University

**Data of Submission:** 16/07/2007

## **Abbreviations**

<b>EFL:</b>	English as a Foreign Language
<b>ESL:</b>	English as a Second Language
<b>FL:</b>	Foreign Language
<b>S:</b>	Student
<b>SL:</b>	Second Language
<b>SLA:</b>	Second Language Acquisition
<b>T:</b>	Teacher

## **Symbol(s)**

<b>L<sub>2</sub>:</b>	Second / Foreign language
-----------------------	---------------------------

## **Acknowledgements**

It is with tremendous psychological satisfaction to say that at the forefront of all the people to whom I would like to express my gratitude is my advisor, Dr. Teshome Demisse. Throughout the study, all his invaluable comments, suggestions, feedback, easy approach and advice combined in one seed of genuiness was a crucial stepping-stone that led me to the completion of this study. Without his constructive advisory efforts, this study would not have come to a success.

I am indebted to all of my friends who, in the course of the study, acted in various possible ways to boost my moral. My gratitude also goes to my relatives for their encouragement and caring spirits.

Finally, I would like to thank Gebriela Yigletu who patiently typed the research paper.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Acknowledgements .....	i
List of tables.....	v
Abbreviations .....	vi
Abstract .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	3
1.3. Objective of the Study .....	4
1.4. Significance of the Study .....	4
1.5. Limitations of the Study .....	5
1.6. Definitions of Terms .....	5
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	
<b>REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>6</b>
2.1. Tasks in Language Classroom .....	6
2.1.1. Definition .....	6
2.1.2. The Classroom Setting .....	7
2.2. The Purpose of Tasks .....	9
2.3 Tasks for Teaching Language Skills .....	10
2.3.1. Listening .....	11
2.3.2. Speaking .....	11
2.3.3. Reading .....	11
2.3.4. Writing .....	12
2.3.5. Grammar .....	13
2.3.6. Vocabulary .....	13

2.4 The Basis for Teacher Intention .....	16
2.4.1 Teacher Training Background .....	16
2.4.2 Teaching Style .....	18
2.4.3 Teachers' Role of Task Manipulation .....	20
2.5 The Basis for Learner Interpretation .....	21
2.5.1 Learner Perception/Assumption of Tasks .....	22
2.5.2 Task Familiarity .....	24
2.5.3 Learning Style/Strategy .....	25
2.5.4 Task Authenticity .....	26
2.6 Previous Studies .....	27

### **CHAPTER THREE**

<b>METHOD OF THE STUDY</b> .....	29
3.1. Subjects .....	29
3.2. Instruments .....	31
3.2.1. Questionnaire .....	31
3.2.3. Interview .....	38
3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures .....	39
3.3.1. Data Collection Procedure .....	39
3.3.2. Data Analysis Procedure .....	40

### **CHAPTER FOUR**

<b>PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA</b> .....	41
4.1. Analysis of the Data .....	41
4.1.1. Analysis of Teachers' Responses .....	41
4.1.1.1. Responses to the Questionnaire.....	41
4.1.1.2. Data from the Classroom Observations .....	47
4.1.1.3. The Interviews .....	50
4.1.2 Analysis of Students' Responses .....	51
4.1.2.1 Responses to the Questionnaire.....	51
4.1.2.2. Data from the Classroom Observations .....	58
4.1.2.3. The Interviews .....	58

4.2. The Comparison: Teachers' Intentions and Learners'	
Interpretations .....	61
4.2.1. Responses to the Questionnaires .....	61
4.2.2. The Classroom Observations .....	66
4.2.3. The Interviews .....	67

**CHAPTER FIVE**

Conclusions and Recommendations .....	69
5.1. Conclusions .....	69
5.2. Recommendations .....	70

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**.....71

Appendices

Appendix A.....	75
Appendix B .....	79
Appendix C .....	83
Appendix D .....	86
Appendix E.....	87

## List of Tables

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table 3.1:</b> Names of schools, number of sections, total number of English language teachers and students, sample students, and location .....	31
<b>Table 3.2.1.A:</b> Categories and distribution of statements for teachers and students .....	33
<b>Table 3.2.1B:</b> The meaning of categorizations of statements for teachers and students .....	35
<b>Table 3.2.1C:</b> Categories and distribution of positive/negative statement numbers for teachers and students .....	36
<b>Table 4.1.1.A:</b> Frequency and percentage of teachers' responses .....	42
<b>Table 4.1.1.B:</b> Frequency and percentage of teachers' responses according to the preferred values .....	43
<b>Table 4.1.1.C:</b> Frequency table of teachers' responses to the statement/s of each category in A/D .....	44
<b>Table 4.1.2.A:</b> Combined frequencies and percentages of students' responses .....	52
<b>Table 4.1.2.B:</b> Combined frequencies and percentages of students' responses according to preferred values .....	53
<b>Table 4.1.2C:</b> Frequency table of students' responses to the statement(s) of each category in A/D.....	54
<b>Table 4.2:</b> The comparative data between teachers' and students' responses .....	60

## **Abstract**

*This study is about language learning tasks. It attempted to find out whether English language teachers' intentions match learners' interpretations of English language learning tasks in grade 11. It also set out to assess the possible problems that create a gap between the two parties.*

*Questionnaires, classroom observations and interviews were used to collect data in three general and preparatory government high schools in Addis Ababa. Based on the data, analysis was made and the teachers' intentions and the learners' interpretations compared accordingly.*

*The findings indicated that in certain areas both the teachers' intentions and the students' interpretations of the tasks seemed to match positively. However, in several issues of the classroom practices, both parties have mismatched. And when the seemingly positive matches were deeply looked into by crosschecking the various data obtained, they showed essential disparity. The teachers indicated that they explain the purpose of tasks and their significance to other subjects. Moreover, they indicated that they simplify difficult language, contextualize tasks. However, the students indicated that they face difficulty in reading and understanding other subjects. They also indicated that the writing skills activities are not intended to help them for their academic writing. Besides, they indicated that the various English language skills activities are not up to enabling them to develop their communicative ability.*

*It is therefore suggested that the English language teachers be committed enough to use the different activities for teaching the language in ways that solve the students' problems of speaking, reading, writing, etc.*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Nowadays, there is a growing need for learning different languages. This is because as people and their needs develop, there arises a necessity for acquiring other languages besides their own as Stern (1983:20) put it, that “Individuals growing and living in given societies require, to varying degrees, new languages (second languages) after they have learnt their first language”.

More practically, due to the sophistication in international political, socio-cultural as well as economic, educational and technological relations of peoples in today’s world, the teaching/learning of different languages has become of paramount importance. “In any case, language is central to peoples’ lives” (Miller, 1973: 177). In this regard, it can be said that the English language, having been accepted as “lingua franca”, (Finocchiaro and Brumfit, 1993: XV), is the most advantaged or is the most widely used languages in the world.

As Ethiopia can in no way be alienated from the current activities and movements of the world community, the English language with a foreign language status, is taught in all its schools, from primary level up to higher institutions.

For the process of teaching/learning of the English language to achieve its goal, there should prevail an atmosphere of understanding between the contractual partners, i.e., the teacher and the learner, in the classroom. It is when intentions of language learning activities of the teacher are duly interpreted by the learners that language ability can develop. But this may not happen. In other words, teachers’ and learners’ perspectives may not always match. In

support of this, Kumaravadivelu (1991:99) states that both “Teachers and learners bring with them their own perceptions of what constitutes language teaching and learning”.

Also, other literatures such as Tadele’s (2006:2) say that “Research findings on learners’ and teachers’ views about classroom activities have also proved that there can be considerable discrepancies of opinions between learners and their teachers”. For example, Nunan (1988:93) describes “That there are clear mismatches between learners’ and teachers’ views of language learning.” The researcher believes, relying on the experience he has, that such discrepancies or mismatches are prevalent in the Ethiopian language learning context the reflection of which is the presence of inadequacy or inability in English language in the high schools. Furthermore, this specific Ethiopian high school situation can be related to the saying of Widdowson (1972) as:

The problem is that students and especially students in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in their ability to actually use the language, to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in spoken or written mode (P. 15).

So, in order to try to change the current trend, Lier (1996), cited in Tadele (2006:3), suggests that “Bringing the gap between teachers and learners’ perceptions play an important role in enabling students to maximize their experiences”. Moreover, a statement by Kumaravedivelu (1991:98) emphasizes that “... the narrower the gap between teacher intention and learner interpretation, the greater is the chance of achieving desired outcomes”.

Thus, given the foreign language status of English in Ethiopia and upon sensing inadequacies, exploring teacher intention and learner interpretation of

classroom tasks/activities can be important for the improvement of the teaching/learning process. It is therefore having this in mind that the researcher is set to conduct a study at three general and preparatory government high schools in Addis Ababa, namely:

- Yekatit XII General and Preparatory High School,
- Menelik II General and Preparatory High School and
- Dejazmach Wondirad General and Preparatory High School.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In Ethiopia, English is taught in schools starting from primary right to the higher institutions having two purposes, as a subject up to the end of the first cycle of primary school and as a medium of instruction from the second cycle of primary school and on wards (to higher education). However, high school students' English is inadequate or students are not proficient enough. It may be a common experience to see, or specifically as to the day to day experience of the researcher, that high school students are below expectation in using the language effectively for their academic purposes or for their other social contexts. This indicates that the English language teaching/ learning process is not on the right track and therefore instructional practices need to be remedied.

The real problem may amount from the day to day foreign language classroom where teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks/activities happen to mismatch.

Thus, by exploring teachers' intention and learners' interpretation of language learning tasks/activities, this study hopes for providing insights into narrowing the gap between them.

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

Generally, the researcher aims at exploring mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks. The specific aim of the study is to answer the following questions:

1. Do teachers clarify/explain the reasons why they assign students to perform tasks/activities?
2. When engaging students in the English language activities, do teachers clarify their significance to other subjects?
3. Do teachers make their instructional intentions easily understood by their students?
4. Is there a mismatch between teachers' intentions and learners' interpretations of language learning tasks?
5. What are the problems that go against the teachers' intentions and students' interpretations of language learning tasks?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

In light of the prevalent the students' inadequacy of English language in the high schools, exploration of mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks/activities can improve the practice of teaching English as a foreign language. Similarly, scholars in the field of teaching say that it is important to understand contradictory intentions and interpretations of classroom participants in order to facilitate desired learning outcomes in the classroom. And the outcome from the study can help practitioners in the profession to sensitize themselves as teachers to the exact demands made by language-learning tasks.

Furthermore, this study, by just giving it a due attention may make a contribution for further studies into the case of teacher intention and learner interpretation of language-learning tasks/activities.

### **1.5. Limitations of the Study**

In the researcher's belief, it would have been better to extend the number of samples and schools for the study. However, owing to the constraints of time and resources, the study is limited to 10 teachers and 102 students and only 3 general and preparatory government high schools. The researcher also felt that this study couldn't have been carried out within a short period of time, and would require more time, resources as well as more schools and samples.

### **1.6. Definitions of Terms**

The Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1993, 10<sup>th</sup> ed.) defines the following terms as such:

- Intention: what one intends to do or bring about.
- Interpretation: conceiving in the light of an individual belief;  
judgment
- Manipulation: to change something by certain means so as to serve one's purpose.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Tasks in Language Classroom**

##### **2.1.1. Definition**

Scholars in the field of English Language Teaching define ‘task’ in different ways. For example, Cooks (1996), in Ellis (1994:595), defines task as “...a piece of work or an activity, usually with a specified objective, undertaken as part of an educational course, or at work”. To indicate that language learning tasks are reflections of peoples’ daily experience, Long (1985) cited in Block (1994:484), says that “...by task is meant the hundred and one things people do in every day life, at play, and in between” the plays or activities. More elaborately, Breen (1987) gives the following definition:

“Task” is therefore assumed to refer to a range of work plans which have the overall purpose of facilitating language learning-from the simple and brief exercise type to more complex and lengthy activities such as group problem solving or simulations and decision making (P. 23).

In relation to the practice of language in a formal classroom, Cameron (1997:346) says that a “...task is taken in a fairly broad sense as being a classroom event that has coherence and unity, with a clear beginning and an end, in which learners take an active role.”

Another definition that shows the partnership of both the teacher and learners with the working material in between them goes as such:

I equate tasks with instructional questions which ask, demand or even invite learners (or teachers) to perform operations on input data. The data itself may be provided by teaching material or teachers or learners (Wright, 1987:48).

“Tasks refer to activities that teachers assign to attain particular learning objectives” (Richards and Nunan, 1990:11).

With the understanding of the varying definitions given to the term “task”, it is important to use it interchangeably with “activity” or “exercise”. This is because in the Ethiopian context, learners are made to engage in such classroom activities or exercises fit enough to the wide-ranging definitions given.

### **2.1.2. The Classroom Setting**

As language learning tasks /activities are means to an end, the classroom is an inevitable place of theatre bringing both the teacher and the learner together. Especially where the status of English is that of foreign language, only the classroom remains to be a mini-world or a sample environment even though “Some argue that, given the nature of the L<sub>2</sub> classroom as a formal setting, it is not an environment conducive to language development” (Lier, 1988:20).

In another role of the classroom setting in language learning, Breen (1987:36) states that “Classroom and task continually relate to each other”. The essence of this is that tasks are “viewed as a way of bringing the real world into the classroom” (Abebe, 2006:8).

Besides, in societies where the English language has little ground for informal learning, the classroom and the social environment outside it are often assigned mutually exclusive role: the former for learning about the language and the later for practicing it.

Language use in any given society does not operate in a fashion of anarchy; it operates on accepted norms and procedures. And thus as the classroom is a representative of the wider environment, it is “An aspect of ‘social organization” (McDonough and Shaw, 1993:225). Here the classroom as being an aspect of social organization refers to the patterns of carrying out the teaching/learning process. That is, rather than simply lecturing on the language, the teacher can follow means of pairing or grouping or any other facilitating means, which give life to language use in relation to the environment outside. The following idea is connected with the formal classroom’s being as means of bridge to the wider environment:

The classroom does not operate in a vacuum, and this patterning is closely related to the role relationship of teachers and learners, and of learners with each other; and thus by extension to the nature of the school and to the whole educational, even socio-cultural, context (McDonough and Shaw, 1993:226).

Furthermore, these scholars argue that even though the classroom is clearly not the same as real-life, part of its function is to replicate it.

From all these literatures, we can understand that the classroom setting has its own value in language teaching/learning process. And particularly, it is to emphasize that when teachers and learners engage in the process, it should be with bearing the classroom in mind as a place where learning tasks/activities are modeled after (taken as a model for) the real world outside it. The consequence of failure to do so as such would therefore imply denying (losing) the link between language learning in the classroom and the social context or nature of that particular language thereby failing to achieve the desired outcome.

## **2.2. The Purpose of Tasks**

In the general sense, “Teaching English as a foreign language is closely tied up with a desire to achieve a goal or goals” (Tadele, 2006:14) while on the specific aspect, tasks can be said to be fragments or pieces of this particular language designed to lead learners in a step by step procedure to the overall development or ability in that language.

The literature says that in essence, “Classroom task development has the potential to reveal ourselves to us and thereby help us enable them to take on the challenge of discovering a new language as their own” (Breen, 1987:45). Also, Long (1981, 1985) cited in Bygate (1999: 35-36) “Proposed that the most important role for tasks is to confront learners with language problems in the act of communication”.

In the process of learning, any target language cannot be learned at merely a limited period of time. Let alone any planned or formal second or foreign language, even one’s mother tongue cannot be acquired over night. It is therefore “An impossible objective to teach the whole of a language to a learner” (Corder, 1970:145) unless it is graded and sequenced in order to achieve a gradual development in that language. By this, we can take the understanding that tasks /activities/exercises are systematic treatment of language learning and must be seen as goal-directed in the sense of bringing about changes in behaviour or knowledge both in the short term, i.e., “during a lesson and during a course” (Wright, 1987: 34) or over the long term period, i.e., in the life of the language learner.

Tasks can also embody language learning “tests which are important part of every teaching and learning experience” (Madsen, 1983:3). So, it is important that tests be taken as part of the process of developing learners’ language

ability. Generally, “Tasks appear to be an ideal construct to link the fields of SLA and language pedagogy (Pica 1997; Ellis, 2003) in Slimani-Rolls (2005:196).

### **2.3 Tasks for Teaching Language Skills**

Obviously, with the issue of teaching/learning in any given language, the skills to be mentioned are listening, speaking, reading and writing. In addition, there are language areas such as grammar and vocabulary. “The immediate goal of language study is to increase knowledge of the language system so that the longer-term aim of improving productive and receptive skills can be achieved” (Harmer, 2001:154). Also, (Skehan, 1996) cited in (Abebe, 2006:10) argues that “Tasks should be the unit of language-teaching and are vital part of language instruction”.

In this regard, we can consider tasks as skills-based step-by-step treatment of the process of teaching/learning the language. This is to mean that specially in formal EFL classrooms, variety of tasks are instrumental in teaching/learning the language skills as each one has its own nature and ways of approaching to teaching it. Without these skills-based systematic samples of tasks, the target language, unlike the mother-tongue which is learnt informally, cannot be learnt or acquired.

And hence the need for tasks. Moreover, every task has goals or solutions and individuals’ personal goals may be activated by tasks. Thus, “Teachers and learners are engaged in an activity that is very dependent on goals” (Wright 1987:46). This immediate scholar goes on to say that “Tasks usually have subject matter or skills inherent to them” (p. 46). So, according to him when tasks are used in teaching/learning language skills, we have reasons or purposes embedded in them. The following section is about language skills to be taught using different tasks/activities.

### **2.3.1. Listening**

According to Atkins et al (1995:106), “People do not listen merely to practice language skills, but they do so for social purposes or to transfer or exchange information and is a process of active interpretation and integration of incoming knowledge with prior knowledge and experience”. Exemplifying the reasons for listening, McDonough and Shaw (1993:127) list such items as “Listening to the radio, news, a play, conversation with neighbours, friends, a lecture, an announcement, etc”. So, the instructional intention of the listening exercises of the English language teacher should help the students satisfy their desire or need to develop such abilities.

### **2.3.2. Speaking**

As opposed to the natural setting where we may not be formally instructed as we should act to speak, the EFL classroom demands language learners to follow ways that help them develop the speaking skill in the target language. This being the driving purpose (motive) for speaking, it can involve “expressing ideas and opinions; expressing a wish or a desire to do something; negotiating and/or solving a particular problem; or establishing and maintaining social relationships and friendships” (McDonough and Shaw, 1993:152). Thus, students should be allowed to engage in such tasks so as to simulate the natural environment. When assigning the various speaking activities in the text book, for example, introductions, conversations, debates, descriptions of people, things etc., the teacher’s intention should be to meet the students’ expectation of developing their communicative ability.

### **2.3.3. Reading**

This skill is simply “A process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written” (Williams, 1984:2). Just by deducing from the general

understanding that language is used for purposeful communication, people read either for pleasure or information, i.e., “In order to find out something or in order to do something with the information they get” (Grellet, 1981:4). In addition, Williams (1984:7) explains that “People generally do not read unless they have a reason for reading, i.e., they have a need for some kind that can be satisfied through reading. Nuttal (1982:2) lists some examples as “Telephone directory, time table, notices, statistics, letters, instruction leaflet, application form, etc”. Specifically, “In situations like that of Ethiopia where English is used as a medium of instruction starting from grade 7, reading is by far the most important of the four skills” (Getachew, 1996:1). Accordingly, “Learners need to develop their reading ability so as to comprehend the text books and notes they receive in the different subjects they study” (Atkins et al, 1996:39). Thus, the teacher should make effective use of the various techniques of reading (skimming, scanning, etc.) to get his or her students’ reading skills developed. These reading skills activities should be intended by the teacher to help the students solve possible reading problems they have in other subjects.

#### **2.3.4. Writing**

Writing skill involves the encoding of a message of some kind (Byrne, 1988:1). In contexts where English is taught for academic purposes, writing is used for “note making (from written texts) and note-taking (from what is said), expanding notes into paragraphs, writing descriptions (e.g. of processes), writing definitions, writing instructions and labelling illustrations” (Atkins et al, 1996:120). In this case, the teacher needs to engage students in various writing activities with serious follow up and provision of feedback. This is reinforced further by the fact that “If students are to develop writing skills they need to work on writing skills activities in class under the teacher’s supervision as well as writing out of class” Atkins et al (1996:111). The intention of the teacher in

doing all these is to enable the students to meet the demands of different forms of writing, be it English or other academic writing.

### **2.3.5. Grammar**

For the convenience of relating tasks with the teaching of grammar, it is important to define grammar. And so, Ur (1988:1) says that “Grammar may be roughly defined as the way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning”. On this basis, learners in an EFL classroom need to learn grammar for communication in general and achieving their academic purposes in particular. As to its teaching, (Harmer 2001:12) warns that “If grammar rules are too carelessly violated, communication may suffer, although, creating a ‘good’ grammar is extremely difficult”. As an example of a ‘good’ grammar teaching, Kumaravadivelu (1993:16) reports about an outcome of his study that “A certain teacher made her class communicative by encouraging learner participation and by introducing grammatical items within a communicative context”. From all these, we can understand that grammar learning tasks, for example, the different forms of tenses, grammar rules, etc., should be treated seriously and in meaningful contexts.

### **2.3.6. Vocabulary**

According to Richards et al (1985:307), vocabulary refers to “a set of lexemes, including single words, compound words and idioms”. So, like the other language skills, vocabulary is one field that learners in an EFL classroom need to deal with.

And with regard to the teaching of vocabulary tasks, Atkins et al (1996:30), argue that since “The whole of the English language is a huge network of lexical sets consisting of related words, the teaching of vocabulary should be in relation to each other rather than on random basis” and “Words very seldom

occur in isolation” (Wallace, 1982:30). Similarly, (Harris, 1952) cited in Stern (1983:133) argue that “Even though thoughts are communicated in words, (Miller, 1973:177) language does not occur in stray words or sentences, but in connected discourse”. All these indicate that in order to create or develop whole-language system for use by learners in their academic and communicative venture, vocabulary tasks such as meaning, word formation, spelling rules, etc., should aim at achieving desired outcome.

Common sense has it that in our day to day lives in our environment, we rarely use language skills in their isolated fashion. And neither can normal communication be achieved or thought of using language skills in isolation. As far as the EFL classroom is said to be a representative sample/unit/scheme of the broader environment, language learning tasks should be communication-oriented and integrated. In this respect, McDonough and Shaw (1993) state the following:

By giving learners tasks which expose them to these skills in conjunction, it is possible that they will gain a deeper understanding of how communication works in the foreign language as well as becoming more motivated when they see the value of performing meaningful tasks and activities in the classroom (P. 202).

Emphasizing on the crucial role of integrating the skills in teaching English in the Ethiopian context (Atkins et al, 1996:225) point out that “The purpose of teaching English as a foreign language in our high school situation is primarily to help students cope with their academic work, which involves them in a lot of listening, writing, reading and some speaking in English”.

Not only for academic work, which is a short term purpose, but also for wider use in the environment, i.e., a long term purpose, as “Language cannot be studied in isolation from the communicative intentions of language users and the context within which they use language” (Stern, 1989:133). So, to achieve

all these, the classroom teacher should convey his intentions of learning tasks with rich clarifications, inter-subject associations, ample examples, feed back, tireless follow ups and flexible approach. Arguably, these would amount to alleviating the problem of misinterpretation of language learning tasks by students.

## **Teacher Intention and Learner Interpretation of Language Learning Tasks**

### **General**

In the EFL setting, there is the presence of both the teacher and the learners, having the teaching and learning roles respectively. A role is defined as the function or position that somebody has or is expected to have in an organization, in society or in a relationship, example, the role of the teacher in the classroom (Hornby, 2000). According to Wright (1987:24), “Teachers and learners have beliefs and attitudes about each other when cast in these roles”. This scholar also says that, although both actors are as mutual contributors to the process, there is but a power relationship that exists between teachers and learners in which power is not shared equally (Wright, 1987). This is because of the fact that “Since teachers may be expected to have a set of language learning goals that they may choose not to reveal explicitly to learners” (Cameron, 1997:347) as “Thinking, by all definitions, is a covert activity, witnessed only by the person engaged in it” (Miller, 1973:173). On the other hand, the goals that learners perceive for a task may not match the goals teachers actually present to them. Goals here are taken as the intentions of the teacher and how learners perceive or understand them. However, “Language learners will inevitably interpret a task, make it their own and, in essence, do with it what they please” (Block, 1994:473). However, Rod Ellis is quoted as saying that “Learners’ interpretation will be not necessarily in the way in which teachers intended” (Kumaravadivelu, 1993:4). These two conflicting phenomena or experiences may emanate from their own respective grounds.

## **2.4 The Basis for Teacher Intention**

The practical intention of an EFL teacher is to be reflected during a classroom encounter with learners when dealing with language learning activities. It can be argued that teachers' intention is directly related to their pedagogic beliefs, which can play an important role in many aspects of teaching, as well as in life. "They are involved in helping individuals make sense of the world, influencing how new information is perceived, and whether it is accepted or rejected" (Borg, 2001:186-187).

Moreover, another scholar (Bush, 1984) cited in (McDonough and Shaw, 1993) referring to the teachers' role in an EFL classroom, reminds that,

A role is not tidy and objective, but that 'in practice the role-occupant brings to the position his or her values, perceptions and experiences and these will interact with other expectations to determine the way the part is played' (P. 287).

So it may be possible for the following situations to influence teacher intention of language learning tasks.

### **2.4.1 Teacher Training Background**

It can be assumed that teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning are based on their teacher training, without which there is no declaration of a professional teacher, background. In relation to this, Wright (1987) describes as follows:

The 'school of thought' or discipline in which a teacher is trained or the group among whom he cuts his teeth as a practitioner will undoubtedly influence his ideas about teacher and learner roles. This set of beliefs and attitudes is likely to be reinforced by views about the role of teaching materials, including text books, in the language classroom (P. 76).

It is possible or sound to say that the inquisitive nature of young school learners' experience and teacher-instilled beliefs then can psychologically sustain well into adulthood classroom practices. In relation to this, Freeman (1992) cited in Tadele (2006:23) says that "Teachers' beliefs about learning may be based on their training, their teaching experience, or may go back to their own experience as language learners" there by imposing their intentions upon their current learners.

Also, Borg (1999) explains that,

Teachers' language education or training background influence their beliefs and classroom activities/practices. For example, a teacher who had learnt foreign language successfully through grammar-translation methods was willing to incorporate elements of such methods into his generally communicative approach to L<sub>2</sub> teaching (P. 26).

To exemplify this, the following experiences, which may be traced back to the training background or related to some rigidly held personal trends, can be helpful, i.e., teachers may:

- treat the tasks out of context,
- carelessly 'throw away' the language knowledge they have to the students without stabilizing or assuring whether their intentions have been matched with the students' understanding,
- focus on one particular skill, meaning teaching without integrating the skills, etc.

### **2.4.2 Teaching Style**

A teacher's intentions of language learning tasks can be determined by his or her teaching style which "is inevitably going to be influenced by his or her beliefs and attitudes" (Wright, 1987:62) and these themselves in a slippery slope relation might have been attributed to experiences of schooling, training or a stereotyped teaching experience.

The EFL classroom is the place where the teacher exhibits his or her partnership roles. In the field of language teaching, such scholar as Larsen-Freeman (1986) says that,

The teacher is a facilitator of his students' learning. As such he has many roles to fulfil. He is a manager of classroom activities. In these roles, one of his major responsibilities is to establish situations likely to promote communication. During the activities he acts as an advisor, answering students' questions and monitoring their performance (P. 131).

Another one (Perrot, 1982) in a related sense about what the teacher's role should be for effective/desired outcome, indicates the following:

... that the effective teacher is one who is able to demonstrate the ability to bring about intended learning goals, the two critical dimensions of effective teaching being intent and achievement. Without intent, the pupil's achievements become random and accidental rather than controlled and predictable (P. 4-5).

Rather, it should go far beyond this according to Selinger and Shohamy (1989:154-155) who say that "An effective teacher is one who has the knowledge of the subject matter, is familiar with the latest teaching methods and pedagogy, and has a good relationship with students".

Therefore, we can hold the belief that in order to be effective (in terms of achieving our intentions to the desired outcome), as the following scholars say that,

ESL/EFL teachers can consider their own teaching styles and can also identify the students' learning styles. Without this knowledge, clashes which we call "style wars" frequently affect students' learning potential and their attitudes towards English and toward learning in general (Oxford et al 1992: 439; Ellis, 1989:260).

Accordingly, we can deduce that the positively expected role of the teacher can be damned by the incompatibility of styles which otherwise should have been remedied by the efforts (endeavours) of the teacher. The ultimate result would thus/perhaps be making teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks to run against one another. To alleviate the problem of "style wars" the teacher need not only have the knowledge of the language. He or she has to add more spice (such as studying how best students can learn the language, easy approach, accepted discipline, etc.) In support of all these, for example, a research finding by Ulichny (1996) cited in Borg (1999) goes as such:

A teacher planned her lesson with reference to her principles about L<sub>2</sub> teaching and the nature of L<sub>2</sub> reading. During the lesson, the teacher modified her plan on the basis of unexpected difficulties which the students had understanding the text she selected; to help students cope, she modified her approach and engaged in practices which did not reflect her principles (P. 24).

This can be taken as an ample instance that "Teachers change their own styles and strategies to provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of different learning styles" Oxford et al (1989:452) if they are committed enough to see their job succeed.

### **2.4.3 Teachers' Role of Task Manipulation**

It seems obvious that the EFL classroom teacher, especially in the Ethiopian context, is not a direct participant in the design of language learning tasks and neither do EFL learners have the say on what and how they should learn. The absence of such opportunity can possibly be an element that contributes to the mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks. In a relative notion, the literature on pre-designed tasks (Breen, 1987) says that,

Perhaps one of the most common experiences we have as teachers is to discover disparity between what our learners seem to derive from a task and what we intended or hoped the task would achieve. Whilst the objectives of the task will have been reasonably precise, actual learner outcomes are often diverse, sometimes unexpected, and occasionally downright disappointing (P. 23).

In such classroom situation or lest such situation occur, “The English teacher has an important role in preparing students to face this challenge” (Atkins et al 1996: 227). This means that the co-participatory role of the teacher is the basis for exhibiting his or her intentions on how tasks should be shaped to suit learners’ understanding or properly interpreting language learning tasks. In addition, Cheung (2001:58) says that “Teachers need to understand what students already know about the idea or concept, to be learnt, to be able to ‘connect’ the learning to the students’ present understanding”. And “As teachers, of course we are more familiar with the language and with relatively more realistic learning objectives” (Breen, 1987:45). To this end therefore, “It may be possible, for example, to authenticate a task to learners through careful explanation of its rationale” (Guarento and Marley, 2001:351). And this can be suggested as a kind of manifestation of teacher intention.

Thus, an understanding can be taken that the classroom teacher, by just using his or her more opportune position than his or her learners', can manipulate or adapt pre-designed language learning tasks for easiness and suitability at least through "oral explanation" (McDonough and Shaw, 1993:92). As "He or she is also a guide to the process of discovery and understanding (Wright, 1987:72). Because when the teacher guides the process, his or her intentions are given meaning along with. So, with the intention of building up on the students' language ability, he or she should act as an intermediary between the tasks and the students. Further more, "We can not assume that all students perceive the purpose or intent of any given classroom task" (Mickelson, 1962) cited in Bassano (1986:17). From this we can say that it is the responsibility of the teacher to shape tasks in a way suitable for students' understanding. And above all, every bit of the language teacher's intentions and efforts should bear a desire or concern to develop the language ability of his or her students.

## **2.5 The Basis for Learner Interpretation**

"All tasks require learners to do something to interpret, to make sense. Instructions on task are typified by action verbs: 'read', 'replace', 'fill in', 'memorize', 'speak', 'change', 'translate' 'find out', etc." (Breen, 1987:31).

It can be convincing that in one way or another, "Learners will inevitably interpret a task" (Block, 1994:473). But the way learners interpret tasks on given instructions may not match with those intentions of the language teacher. Of course "Task objective should serve immediate opportunities for progress in something which the learner regards a lack in their current knowledge and abilities, *but even though this is the case* (my italics), the content of a language learning task always confronts learners with an inherent ambiguity" (Breen, 1987:28).

In the Ethiopian context, as much as we can say there can be certain bases for teacher intention of language learning tasks, learner interpretation of these same language learning tasks could not be baseless; they could have their own logical ground some of which can be the following.

### **2.5.1 Learner Perception/Assumption of Tasks**

Breen (1987) argues that,

Learners' interpretation of a task is shaped by their assumptions about what they themselves should contribute; their view of the nature and demands of the task itself; and their personal definitions of the task situation, that is, any language learning task will be reinterpreted by a learner in his or her own terms (P. 24).

The same author also discusses learners' language efforts in relation to language learning goals. He says that "Learners will invest effort in any task if they perceive benefit from it" (P.24). This can be related to the learners' objective orientation of the task, i.e., learners' prospective assumptions, which refer to knowledge and ability which learners define as representing worthwhile progress towards their longer-term goals in learning the language.

Of course, it can be a common belief that there are learner differences. But whether or not there are learner differences, learners' prospective assumptions and their investment effort can produce either kind of learners in the process of language learning. Accordingly, researchers found that,

Good language learners treat language as a system by making effective crosslingual comparisons, analysing the target language, and using reference books, monitoring their L<sub>2</sub> performance and try to learn from their errors by asking for correction when they think these are needed (Ellis, 1994: 546).

Some learners may lack such efforts, which probably influence their overall understanding of language learning tasks at their level. In addition, Wenden (1986) has to say the following:

Based on their previous educational experiences, some approach the learning of a language as they would biology or history, for example. In other words, they view it as a content course, and when their language course does not provide them with new information about the language, they may become impatient and bored (P. 9).

Both ways can show us that the perceptions/assumptions of language learners cast their shadow on how they interpret language learning tasks even though the teacher as a guide along with the pre-designed tasks are there. When coming to the Ethiopia context, a research by Girma (2003) cited in Tadele (2006: 12) reveals that “Students consider English language learning as learning and memorising grammatical rules and forms and then answering grammar exercises”. This can mean that using the language is not their major concern and as a result, for example, “A student unwilling to speak in the target language is doomed to failure since willingness to try to speak itself is a basic assumption of nearly any language class” (Wadden and McGovern, 1991:124). This willingness to speak in the target language should also apply to other skills of listening, reading, writing, etc.

In this regard, Wenden (1986: 9) advises learners to “Realize that learning a language means being able to use it as well as knowing about it, and that at a certain point it is no longer a matter of knowledge but of meaningful practice”. This can be taken as an emphasis that learners should engage in doing more practice on the classroom activities. Students should also support their practice with asking for clarifications and explanations. However, if students fail to engage in congested activities (because of their perceptions), they will not

develop the interpretative or understanding power of any task the consequence of which will be overall deficiency in the language.

### **2.5.2 Task Familiarity**

There is a growing recognition that “Given what is known about the facilitating effects of familiar schemas on foreign language acquisition, it is most natural for learners to rely on their already established schematic knowledge” (Alptekin, 1993:136). Among the co-participants, i.e., the teacher and the learners, the prevalence of mental process may not be prone to controversy. On the side of the learners, interpretation of language learning tasks can rely on familiarity and experience. Even pedagogically, a start from the familiar/known to the unfamiliar/unknown seems to be conventional.

Cheung (2001:58) discusses the need that “Teachers start teaching from what students already know, or what they are to some extent familiar with”. Like wise, to use an advice of Bassano (1986:15), teachers should “Begin where the students are and more slowly”. The issue of task familiarity is also related to making tasks contextual as failure to observe as such or using unfamiliar contexts can possibly result in hindrance to the interpretation of language learning tasks “... regardless of how much explanation is provided” (Alptekin, 1993:137). Research results show that “Shared task familiarity has provided the basis for interaction” (Bygate, 1999:45). In other words, “Being explicit about the purpose of the task seems to be beneficial” (Borg, 1999:24) In the Ethiopian context on the other hand, many high school students say that “The English their teachers use and the English used in their textbooks is just too complex for them to follow listening texts” (Atkins et al, 1995:107). This can be an example where students are encountered with unfamiliar situations of language and materials related to learning tasks.

### **2.5.3 Learning Style/Strategy**

In the EFL classroom, it is not only the teacher with all his or her intentions that desired language learning outcome is expected. But also his co-participants do engage in language learning tasks with their own learning styles or strategies. According to Oxford (1992:235-241), “Learning styles are the general approaches to learning or problem solving, while language learning strategies are the specific behaviours or actions often consciously used by the students to improve or enhance their learning process”.

It is therefore important to study the specific learning strategies of language learners because of the fact that there can be a partial dependable contribution to either success or failure of desired outcome in the process of language learning. In other words, the study of learners’ opinions about language learning constitutes an important area of inquiry, as it is reasonable to assume that their ‘philosophy’ dictates their approach to learning and choice of specific learning strategies (Eliis, 1989).

McDonough and Shaw (1993:243) say that when “Learners engage in the process of comprehending and producing language they use a range of strategies that are probably shared by all language users, whether learning a foreign language or using their mother tongue”. These scholars in their discussion further point out that,

It is clear that some learners work better in groups whereas others prefer to work alone. Some learners have a preference for a particular time of the day, and for many the place of study can be very important, be it in class, in the language laboratory or at home (P. 243).

Accordingly, we can see that learning preference may influence learners’ interpretation of tasks. However, “Most language teachers are not aware of their

students' learning strategies, or how these strategies result in particular kind of errors" (Oxford, 1989:243). It is therefore possible to conclude that in such situation, there would be "style wars", something that need to be alleviated in order that according to some research suggestions (Weshe, 1981; Hartnett, 1985) in Ellis (1989:251), "Learners do better when their learning style matches the instruction". And this can be achieved by deliberate planning and acting.

Study results show that certain language teachers consciously adopted instructional styles significantly different from their own learning style, i.e., in an effort to match the learning style of their learners. The potential benefit of this can be to narrow the gap between intention and interpretation of language learning tasks on both sides. For more elaboration, both teachers and learners can have their respective styles of teaching and learning. For possible harmony of teacher intention and learner interpretation of tasks, much efforts are expected from both sides: the teacher in trying to discover how best his or her students can learn the language, and the students in working hard to know how best they can understand their teacher's instructional intentions.

#### **2.5.4 Task Authenticity**

As to McDonough and Shaw (1993), authenticity is a loose implication of the world outside the classroom in the selection of language material and of the activities and methods used for practice in the classroom. It can be taken as conventional that in the EFL classroom, tasks/activities are means for an end in language learning and they need to be authentic.

The literature say that "With the on set of the communicative movement a greater awareness of the need to develop students' skills for the real world has meant that teachers endeavour to stimulate this world in the classroom" (Guarento and Morley, 2001: 347).

More specifically, these immediate authors also point out that “A task might be said to be authentic if it has a clear relationship with real world needs. From this, the potential of the authentic learning task situation could be communication and how best to communicate both in the formal classroom setting and out side (p. 347).

Also Breen (1987:36) says that “The situation of the task, *a reference to whether authentic, inauthentic or else* (my italics), will influence learners’ perceptions both of the task itself and how they should contribute to it”. Learner contribution to the classroom can be assumed or recognized as the angle from which learners interpret language learning tasks, which depending on their authenticity, may bridge the gap between the classroom knowledge and an effective capacity to participate in real language events. To connect this task authenticity through classroom interaction Breen (1985), in Guarento and Morley (2001:350), gives an example in which students work in pairs and groups, and discussing, evaluating and reporting on the usefulness and appropriateness of teacher feedback and different kinds of homework tasks.

Jordan (1983:139) reports about his experiences of designing a communicative syllabus in the Chinese context that “The first assumption was that students require linguistic input which is authentic yet not beyond their comprehension”. Observing or taking into consideration this balanced authenticity, it may alleviate the problem of prevalent mismatches.

## **2.6 Previous Studies**

Even though the researcher tried as hard as possible, he could not find any research on this very topic. However, there were studies on teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks in other areas than Ethiopia.

The study by Kumaravadivelu (1991:104-107) focused on the conceptual linguistic features of *too* and *enough*, and the integrated communicative skills of reading, speaking, listening, and writing. The participants were two intermediate-level English as a second language classes. The classroom interaction on a paired activity basis was audiotaped and transcribed. The interactional analysis of primary and secondary data showed instances of mismatch between teacher intention and learner interpretation of classroom aims and events.

Another study by Kumaravadivelu (1993:14-17) also showed similar finding. This time on a grammar contextualization scheme, he reports that the communicative nature of one of the episodes in comparison was strikingly different from that of the other, particularly with regard to learner response. In both cases, there were mismatches. These studies were merely instances. However, the results have become of interest to the researcher, and as Breen (1987:24) said, since “Any language – learning task will be reinterpreted by our learners in their own terms”, in order to conduct a study on teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks in the context of selected Grade 11 students along with their English language teachers in Addis Ababa. The researchers’ perspective of looking into teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks is through such inquiries of whether the teacher explains, clarifies, engages students in meaningful and contextual activities, provision of feedback, simplifying tasks, etc.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHOD OF THE STUDY**

As already indicated in chapter one, this study was intended to explore mismatches between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks. To carry out the study, the method chosen was a descriptive one because this is used to describe a phenomenon without having to conduct an experiment (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989). The instruments, used in this study, are mainly questionnaire, observation and interview. These instruments, seemed to be appropriate to collect data for studying teachers' as well as learners' classroom actions or practices. The descriptive elements of the study are included in both the quantitative and qualitative researches. Because of some numerical terms, it becomes quantitative, and because of using reports of what has happened and what is happening (comparing teachers and students through observations and interviews), it becomes qualitative (Ababayehu et al, 1999).

#### **3.1. Subjects**

Teachers and students of three general and preparatory government high schools were chosen as subjects of the study. The reason why the researcher happened to opt for these schools was due to the fact that two of them are located in the vicinity of Addis Ababa University, Main Campus, whereas the third one was for its being very near to the researcher's residence.

Apart from this, these schools, which totally consisted of 51 sections, were chosen from among ten general and preparatory government high schools. And out of the three schools, only teachers and students of grade 11 were focused

on. The total number of English language teachers and students in grade 11 of the three schools was 12 and 2952 respectively.

As to the proportion of participation, all the English language teachers in this grade level of the three schools, were included in the study. 12 questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and 100% were filled in and returned. On the side of the students, representative selection was made. The representative selection made was based on simple random sampling “Whereby each element in the population is given an equal and independent chance of selection” (Kumar, 1996:158). Accordingly, from the list of students in 51 sections the first and the last occurrences, i.e., making a total of 102, were taken as samples (See Table 3.1). I believed this number would represent the whole student population. So, 102 questionnaires were distributed to the students; 100% were filled in and returned.

**Table 3.1. Names of schools, number of sections, total number of English language teachers and students, sample students, and location**

No.	Name of school	Number of sections	Sample students	Total number of teachers	Total number of students	Location /District/
1.	Yekatit 12 General and Preparatory High School	20	40	4	1197	Gulele
2.	Menelik II General and Preparatory High School	24	48	6	1137	Arada
3.	Dejazmach Wondirad General and Preparatory High School	7	14	2	618	Yeka
<b>Total</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2952</b>	

**Key:** Each section is represented by 2 samples.

### 3.2. Instruments

In this study the main data collection instruments used were questionnaire, observation and interview.

#### 3.2.1. Questionnaire

In order to collect data on the phenomena, which are not easily observable, for example, motivation and self-concepts or actions, questionnaires are mostly used in second language acquisition (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989). Just to mention some advantages of questionnaires:

- They can be distributed to a large number of subjects simultaneously,

- They are less expensive to administer, and
- The data collected from the same questionnaires are uniform.

A number of techniques are used to collect data through questionnaires. The Likert scale is one of them and using this technique individuals respond to statements between two extremes on a continuum representing their ideas (opinions), concepts, actions or attitudes. Thus, “The Likert scaling technique assigns a scale value to each of the five responses” (Best and Kahn, 1993: 247).

The advantage of the Likert technique of scale construction is that it is the most widely used method of summated ratings because it is easy and takes much less time to construct. In addition, it uses fewer statistical assumptions.

For the purpose of developing appropriate instruments, especially in the case of the questionnaires, for the main study, a pilot study was carried out among 10 high school English language teachers who teach grades 9-12 at Yekatit 12 General and Preparatory High School. But only 10 grade 11 students of this school were made to participate in the pilot study. The questionnaires were prepared separately, i.e., for the teachers, and the students. But both were designed in a way suitable for comparison between them. On each side, sixteen close statements and two open questions were developed despite minor modifications that were made. The pilot study was carried out with the purpose of trying out the instrument (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989).

And finally, two type of questionnaires, each consisting of sixteen closed statements (A1) and two open questions (A2), were given to the subjects (samples). Questionnaire Type I, written in English, was given to all grade 11 English language teachers of the three schools. Questionnaire Type II, written in English and then translated into Amharic, was given to 102 sample students of grade 11 of the three schools.

## A1. Closed Statements

For ease of comparison between teacher intention and learner interpretation, statements in each type of questionnaire were generally categorized or organized on equal number (amount of statement/s ) basis for matching as can be shown in the following table.

**Table 3.2.1.A Categories and distribution of statements for teachers and students**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Statement numbers for teachers</b>	<b>Matching/ mismatching</b>	<b>Statement numbers for students</b>
1	2	→	2
<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	→	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>12,14</b>	→	<b>12,14</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>4,5,6,7,8,9</b>	→	<b>4,5,6,7,8,9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	→	<b>13</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>13</b>	→	<b>3</b>
7	10,11,15,16	→	10,11,15,16

**Key:** *The shaded part indicates the main issues*

The above categorization was needed for the reason that in some of the cases two or more statements may essentially be the same. And the categories that consist of more than a statement are represented as follows: category 3=3<sub>1</sub>, 3<sub>2</sub>; category 4=4<sub>1</sub>, 4<sub>2</sub>, 4<sub>3</sub>, 4<sub>4</sub>, 4<sub>5</sub> and 4<sub>6</sub>, each standing for a single statement. In addition, only the main categories, which are shaded in the Table, are related to the main issues of the study's review around which teachers' intentions and learners' interpretations of language learning tasks are to be compared. That is, on the one hand, the teachers' categories of statements are supposed to show their views/perceptions or practical intentions. On the other hand, the

students' categories of statements are supposed to show their views/perceptions or expectations from their teachers and how they interpret tasks. Moreover, it is to try to look into each party's practices, and the views each party has on the other. Another noteworthy point in the categorization is that some statement numbers (for example, numbers 3 and 13) don't seem to match as the others do. They may show oddity. But in spite of their far apart placements and numerical differences, the substances to be matched against each other have similar notions.

Thus, the following Table, just relative of Table 3.2.1A, deals with the meanings of such categorizations.

**Table 3.2.1B The meaning of categorizations of statements for teachers and students**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Statement's/ statements' meaning/s for teachers</b>	<b>Matching/ mismatching</b>	<b>Statement's/ statements' meaning/s for students</b>
1	The desire of the English language teacher	→	The interest (readiness) of the students to develop their English language ability
2.	<b>The perceptions (beliefs) the English language teachers have on English language learning tasks</b>	→	<b>The perceptions (beliefs) students have on English language learning tasks.</b>
3.	<b>Task difficulty and familiarity in the view of the English language teachers.</b>	→	<b>Task difficulty and authenticity or familiarity in the view of the students.</b>
4.	<b>The English language teachers' own saying of classroom practices.</b>	→	<b>The English language teachers' classroom practices as viewed by the students.</b>
5.	<b>The English language teachers' follow up and provision of feedback.</b>	→	<b>The English language teachers' follow up and provision of feedback in the view of the students.</b>
6.	<b>Students' classroom practices as viewed by the English language teachers.</b>	→	<b>The students' own saying of classroom practices.</b>
7.	The relationship of tasks and tests /examinations as viewed by the English language teachers.	→	The relationship of tasks and tests/examinations as viewed by the students.

But, for ease of calculation and comparison specific arrangement of the positive and negative statements has been done for both the teachers and the students as follows:

**Table 3.2.1C Categories and distribution of positive/negative statement numbers for teachers and students**

Category	Statement numbers for teachers		Statement numbers for students	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
1	2	-	2	-
2	1	-	1	-
3	12,14	-	-	12,14
4	4,5,6,7,8,9	-	4,5,9	6,7,8
5	3	-	13	-
6	-	13	3	-
7	10,11,15	16	11,15	10,16

**Key: Corresponding statements in each category**

**Category Teachers' Statement Matching/ Students' Statement  
mismatching**

2	+1	=	1	→	+1	=	1
3	+3 <sub>1</sub>	=	12	→	-3 <sub>1</sub>	=	12
"	+3 <sub>2</sub>	=	14	→	-3 <sub>2</sub>	=	14
4	+4 <sub>1</sub>	=	4	→	+4 <sub>1</sub>	=	4
"	+4 <sub>2</sub>	=	5	→	+4 <sub>2</sub>	=	5
"	+4 <sub>3</sub>	=	6	→	-4 <sub>3</sub>	=	6
"	+4 <sub>4</sub>	=	7	→	-4 <sub>4</sub>	=	7
"	+4 <sub>5</sub>	=	8	→	-4 <sub>5</sub>	=	8
"	+4 <sub>6</sub>	=	9	→	+4 <sub>6</sub>	=	9
5	+5	=	3	→	+5	=	13
6	-6	=	13	→	+6	=	3

This Table was designed to show the researcher's approach for obtaining information. It seems common that any person including teachers and students can have both positive and negative opinions towards something. As the Table

shows, almost all of the teachers' statements are made to be positive because of the fact that, from experience, people including teachers tend to put themselves more positive than others. But the students' statements are made to be almost equal in number to show learner differences.

## **A2. Open Questions**

Regarding the two open questions in each type of questionnaire, the purpose was for immediate cross-check the information obtained from the closed statements of the two sides which were designed to inquire whether they match each other or not. Besides, they were aimed at giving both the teachers and the students chance to respond in a descriptive manner (See Appendices A and B/C).

### **3.2.2. Observation**

According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989:162), "Observations have always been considered as a major data collection tool" to study language teaching and learning process in the classroom. Therefore, the main purpose of the classroom observation in this study was to get supplementary mechanism of looking into the classroom practices of both the teachers and the learners. There was not a checklist prepared for the observation, as it is possible to record things in note form (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989), but it served to check the results of the questionnaire and to see what problems were in the live classroom.

Five classroom observations (also to have been considered as joint sessions of both the teachers and the students) were made, two before the questionnaire and three after the questionnaire. Two teachers T1 (School I) and T7 (School II), who also participated in filling in the questionnaire, were observed twice each while a teacher

T11 (School III) was observed once. When making each observation, I took a position that did not create any problem to the process of teaching and learning. The observations were made on teachers' being selected voluntarily and the classroom on random basis.

### **3.2.3. Interview**

Using interview as a data collection instrument “permits a level of in –depth information gathering, free response, and flexibility that cannot be obtained by other procedures” (Selinger and Shohamy, 1989:166). Semi-structured and specific interview consisting of four core questions (See Appendices C and D) determined beforehand were used in the study.

So, interviews were held with three voluntarily selected teachers (T1, School I; T7, School II and T11, School III), who participated in filling in the Type I questionnaire. This instrument aimed at obtaining information on their intentions of language learning tasks and what problems they face against these intentions. From among those who filled in the Type II questionnaire, five voluntarily selected students S<sub>1</sub> and S<sub>2</sub> (School I; S<sub>3</sub> and S<sub>4</sub>, School II and S<sub>5</sub>, School III) were interviewed in order to obtain information on the situation of their interpretation of learning tasks and problems that may hinder the process. The technique used in this instrument was voluntary sampling because it helps to “collect information from the subjects (samples) that are conveniently available and willing to cooperate for providing information” (Koul 1994) cited in Lakachew (2003). This study has used a summary method for reporting the information from the interviews.

The interviews were made based on four main questions that developed on to other related questions, which helped me to explore detail information about

the process of English language teaching and learning. All in all, eight interviews' were made. That is, three for teachers, one from each school; five for students, two each from the two schools and one from the third school were interviewed. And the situation in which the interviews took place was face-to-face using tape recorder and the information was transcribed and summarised.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

#### **3.3.1. Data Collection Procedure**

Generally, after selection of a specific design for my study, the next step was to collect data for the study. Because without collecting data, no research can be carried out and more importantly the procedure of collecting data is decisive for the success of any research.

Thus, this study has considered multiple procedures of collecting data from the subjects (samples). The study was carried out in three districts of Addis Ababa, namely, Arada, Gulele and Yeka. Out of the ten general and preparatory government high schools in Addis Ababa, three of them were chosen for the study. In an effort to try the questionnaires out, a pilot study was conducted among English language teachers and grade 11 students at Yekatit General and Preparatory (government) High School. Then, questionnaire (Type I) that consisted of sixteen closed statements and two open questions (See Appendix A) was distributed to all the English language teachers of grade 11 in the three schools. Out of the twelve teachers, three were observed and interviewed on voluntary basis. Additionally, a questionnaire (Type II) that consisted of sixteen statements and two open questions was distributed to 102 students in 51 sections of the three schools (See Appendix B/C). Out of the 102 students, only five students were interviewed on the basis of voluntary selection.

### **3.3.2. Data Analysis Procedure**

After all these, organization of the data followed, and the technique used for comparison in this study as mentioned previously was the Likert scale. As to the procedure regarding the statements, first, both the teachers' and the students' responses were organized using the frequency table, which "usually includes the actual count for each category and the relative or percentage count for each category" (Frey et al, 1991:25). Second, each party's responses were sorted out or reported separately and then for each category comparisons made between them in another section.

The response values preferred in the analysis were the combined agree (A) and disagree (D) on either part, taken as the two extremes, of the continuum. For "If the Likert-type scale is used, it may be possible to report percentage responses by combining the two outside categories: "strongly agree" and "agree"; "disagree" and "strongly disagree" (Best and Kahn, 1993: 247) The analysis of the relevant information obtained from the open ended questions, observations and the interviews of both the teachers and the students were reported in summary and quotation forms. Then the Amharic version of the students' information was translated into English and compared with that of the teachers' English version.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA**

This section deals with the presentation and interpretation of the data collected using different types of instruments and procedures, which were described in the previous chapter. The following step will be to analyze those data. Generally, it consists of presentation of the statistical results obtained.

#### **4.1. Analysis of the Data**

##### **4.1.1. Analysis of Teachers' Responses**

Reference could be made to chapter three that three instruments were used to collect data from the teachers. Accordingly, the analysis of these data is made here forth.

###### **4.1.1.1. Responses to the Questionnaire**

###### **A.1 Responses to the Statements**

First of all, here below is the full distribution of the responses (frequencies) and percentages of the five scales. This helps to check the five scales' full percentage make up.

**Table 4.1.1.A Frequency and percentage of teachers' responses**

Scale values	5		4		3		2		1		Total	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1	7	58.33	5	41.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100
2	8	66.67	4	33.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100
3	8	66.67	4	33.33	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100
4	7	58.33	5	41.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100
5	5	41.67	6	50	1	8.33	0	0	0	0	12	100
6	7	58.33	5	41.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	100
7	7	58.33	3	25	2	16.67	0	0	0	0	12	100
8	6	50	5	41.67	1	8.33	0	0	0	0	12	100
9	6	50	5	41.67	0	0	1	8.33	0	0	12	100
10	5	41.67	6	50	1	8.33	0	0	0	0	12	100
11	0	0	6	50	4	33.33	2	16.67	0	0	12	100
12	1	8.33	5	41.67	5	41.67	1	8.33	0	0	12	100
13	2	16.67	4	33.33	3	25	3	25	0	0	12	100
14	0	0	5	41.67	4	33.33	3	25	0	0	12	100
15	2	16.67	7	58.33	3	25	0	0	0	0	12	100
16	3	25	4	33.33	3	25	2	16.67	0	0	12	100

**Key:** SA=5; A=4;U=3;D=2;SD=1

These data were obtained by tallying the teachers' responses to the statements from which the frequencies of the responses and their percentages were calculated for the preferred scale values. But since the scale values preferred in this study were the combination of the strongly agree/agree (A) on the one extreme and the disagree/strongly disagree (D) on the other of the continuum of the Likert scale, the teachers' responses to each statement are considered separately. The center is the undecided value (U) even though not necessarily a

mid-point. So, below is the frequency table according to the preferred scale values.

**Table 4.1.1.B Frequency and percentage of teachers' responses according to the preferred values**

Scale values	Strongly agree/agree		Undecided		Disagree/strongly disagree		Total	
	5/4		3		2/1			
Item	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1.	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
2.	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
3.	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
4.	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
5.	11	91.67	1	8.33	0	0	12	100
6.	12	100	0	0	0	0	12	100
7.	10	83.33	2	16.67	0	0	12	100
8.	11	91.67	1	8.33	0	0	12	100
9.	11	91.67	0	0	1	8.33	12	100
10.	11	50	1	8.33	0	0	12	100
11.	6	50	4	33.33	2	16.67	12	100
12.	6	50	5	41.67	1	8.33	12	100
13.	6	50	3	25	3	25	12	100
14.	5	41.67	4	33.33	3	25	12	100
15.	9	75	3	25	0	0	12	100
16.	7	58.33	3	25	2	16.67	12	100

**Key:** A=5/4; U=3; D=2/1

It is worth remembering that the statements were categorized as per the issues raised or discussed in this study and to make the comparison easier and meaningful (See Table 3.2.1 A, B and C). So, the following frequency table shows the teachers' responses to the statements in each category.

**Table 4.1.1.C Frequency table of teachers' responses to the statement(s) of each category in A/D**

Cate gory	Number of responses for positive statements		Percentage		Number of responses for negative statements		Percentage	
	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
1.	12	0	100	0				
<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>3<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>8.33</b>				
<b>3<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>41.67</b>	<b>25</b>				
<b>4<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>4<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>91.67</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>4<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>4<sub>4</sub></b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83.33</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>4<sub>5</sub></b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83.33</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>4<sub>6</sub></b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>91.67</b>	<b>8.33</b>				
<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>				
<b>6</b>					<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>25</b>
7 <sub>1</sub>	11	0	91.67	0				
7 <sub>2</sub>	6	2	50	16.67				
7 <sub>3</sub>	9	0	75	0				
7 <sub>4</sub>					7	2	58.33	16.67

**Key:** A= Agree; D= Disagree

It can be worth noting that the difference of the frequency and percentage values that occur between the agreement and the disagreement might have gone to the undecided values (Refer to Table 4.1.1 B).

As discussed previously, the intentions of the teachers are to be valued between the two extremes (A and D) of the scale on the continuum. But as the frequency table above shows, the report on the responses is as follows. For example, as can be seen from the table, category 2, which corresponds to a positive statement 2, 12 teachers (100%) responded in agreement. This shows that teachers believe the purpose of classroom activities is to enable students to develop their English language.

Category 3<sub>1</sub>, corresponding to positive statement 12 shows 6 agreement (50%) against 1(8.33%) disagreement indicating that teachers have the belief that the current English language textbook for grade 11 is prepared to suit the language needs of the students. Category 3<sub>2</sub> doesn't show any value of either strongly agree or strongly disagree. But corresponding to a positive statement 14, shows a result of 5(41.67%) agreement against 3(25%) disagreement. This appears to be reflecting the teachers' belief that most of the tasks of the English language textbook are familiar to the knowledge and context/situation or language level of the students.

To take another instance, category 4<sub>1</sub>, which equals a positive statement 4, responses of all the 12 teachers show (100%) agreement. This is an indication of teachers' practices in clarifying the helpfulness of the English language skills to other subjects.

Category 4<sub>2</sub> that corresponds to a positive statement 5 indicates responses of 11 agreements (91.67%) implying that teachers plan and act to discover how best the students can learn the English language.

In category 4<sub>3</sub> with an equal status to a positive statement 6, the result shows 12(100%) agreement. This result of the teachers' shows that in time of language difficulty, they give explanations to the students.

Category 4<sub>4</sub> corresponds to a positive statement 7 whose result shows agreement of 10(83.33%) against none disagreement the implication of which is that teachers intend to solve the students' reading problems by using the different techniques of reading.

Category 4<sub>5</sub>, which equals a positive statement 8, indicates an 11 point (83.33%) agreement against 1(8.33%) disagreement showing much effort of the teachers in developing students' ability in various writing activities of note-making, note-taking, descriptions, etc. Similarly, category 4<sub>6</sub> the equal of which is a positive statement 9 gives 11 (91.67%) agreement against 1(8.33%) disagreement. This result may mean that teachers use the different language skills activities for developing the communicative ability of the students.

Category 5, corresponding to a positive statement 3, shows a full agreement of 12 (100%). This shows that in the teachers' belief, learners are not willing in doing more practice on any of the skills-based tasks/activities.

The response for category 6, corresponding to a negative statement 13, shows agreement of 6 (50%) against 3 (25%) disagreement. This is an agreement of the teachers' that most of the tasks in the English textbook are familiar to the knowledge and context/situation or language level of the students.

## **A2 Responses to the Open Questions**

As these type of questions were intended to cross check the closed statements in the questionnaire, they were analysed accordingly. All the 12 teachers filled in the two open questions and various forms of expressions that reflected their practices were given. So, to the first open question "As an English teacher, how do you intend or give instructions to your students for doing tasks/activities?", 10 teachers (83.33%) clearly responded that they do their best to develop the language ability of their students. In summary, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8,

T9 and T11 said that as English language teachers, they give detailed explanations, sufficient clarifications, and examples; make tasks easily understood; evaluate the activities every time and encourage students.

On the Contrary, two-third of the teachers (75%) has explicitly explained several problems that go against their intentions (referring to the second open question). So, T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9 and T11 had to list down the following problems:

1. There is negligence by the students to bring text books to class
2. Students have no goal
3. Students' lack of interest in the language
4. Students are not willing to do tasks and to participate in class
5. Poor background and low ability in English language
6. Lack of teaching materials
7. Desperation

Especially, T8 put the problems as such:

The problems are a) students don't participate without mark, b) some of them don't come to class regularly, c) even if they come, some of them don't do what they are told to do, d) some of them don't have the interest to learn, but they want to copy from the active students.

#### **4.1.1.2. The Classroom Observations**

From the observations made, only the main points are taken as part of the analysis in accordance with the questions raised in the study. The option taken for the observation in this study was through note writing. First of all, almost in all the three schools observed, the teachers used different text books, i.e., one of them used the old text book (School II), the other used the new (School I), and the last one used both (School III). In another case, two of the teachers taught based on the text books, and the third one happened to open

the plasma and simply follow. Also, there was no a teacher's guide to the new book. This was a sort of confusion that went on through out the year, I was told of informally though. Each observation lasted for one period.

With these things in mind, the actual observations, both before and after the questionnaire, were as follows:

- In those twice observed classes, in school I and II, section 16 and 22 respectively, the situations were more or less the same, meaning, no introduction to arouse the interest of the students, no sufficient reminder about the previous lessons except saying that home works were given.
- Some of the lessons were given in almost preaching-style in these schools. For example, lessons on 'word formation', 'used to' and 'would' and 'win and beat'.

Thus in School I, T1 entered the class during the first observation and asked 'wh' questions right from the start to the end to get answers for a previously given assignment. The students simply mentioned the letters of the answers and that was all; no further clarifications and examples on word formation, the topic of that day (May 11, 2007). On the second observation (May 18, 2007), on the topic of simple past tense using 'used to' and 'would', the teacher entered the class, gave dry explanation of the rule with no sufficient examples what so ever.

With regard to T7, School II, section 22, was observed. During the first observation on April 18, 2007 under the topic "Journey into Space", he entered the class and ordered the students, "Look at your passage". He went on to ask questions on the passage, simply in a fashion of confusion, i.e., no orderly atmosphere prevailed in the class, etc. The topic was suitable to relate it to other subject issues such as space science and technological development, etc. At least he could have aroused the students' interest to use the language by bringing some related information to class, just having made himself prepared

ahead, but to no avail. On the second observation of this same teacher on May 25, 2007, he entered the class (writing the topic “Win and Beat” on the board), said, “Find your place”, and again, “I have given you short notes on ‘win’ and ‘beat’ ”, he said. And after giving few examples, so to mention his limited effort, he decided to do exercises on the topic given in the text book. The question and answer scenario went on, and every time a student gave a right answer, the teacher took his pen out from his pocket, asked the roll number of the student, and tallied a mark.

As the same process went on like this, the class was not really managed, and that teacher simply read the questions in his book with his place confined very near to the black board, not noticing what happened in the middle and back seats. In such situation, some students asked in very low tone for the right answer from others whom they thought would know better than them and raised their hands to deliver or declare them to the teacher. The teacher then accepting such answers and as usual, he tallied marks for such students. Here, the system of giving marks by the teacher and the students’ tactics of getting marks appears to match, but even though such kind of practice is observed in a single class of a school, it can have negative influence on English language development.

Observation on T11 in School III, section 3, was in no way different from the rest except that it was on plasma. This one was made on May 30, 2007 with the topic on ‘conditionals’. The plasma transmitted its topic, with almost no time given for the teacher; the time came to an end. And with the so called remaining few minutes for revision, the teacher happened to talk almost nothing on the conditionals except saying that the portion for the year was incomplete and that students should try to cover it on their own, which may be an indication of denying the students assistance from the teacher.

#### **4.1.1.3. The Interviews**

In principle, the use of this instrument is to get information from the samples for checking the other instruments. So, this study has attempted to extract information about teachers' intentions or endeavours and possible problems they face in matching them with that of their learners' understanding of language learning tasks.

Three teachers, T1, T7 and T11, one from each school, were interviewed based on four core questions, which developed further into other follow up questions. Almost all teachers happened to respond to the questions positively. That is to say that with their own voice, they said they explain, clarify, relate the significance of the English language learning tasks, simplify difficult language, contextualize things, encourage students in learning the language, etc. Uniformly, all what teachers voiced was the theoretical advantages of the language skills, contextualization, simplification, etc. But as already witnessed in the questionnaire and observations, all these were hypocrisies. For example, T1(School I) said as follows:

Researcher: "Ok, how do you express their (students') interpretations?"

Teacher: "The same is true to all skills, but whenever I see the students' of course they are not satisfied I can say they are not satisfied even myself I am not satisfied ... with what I am doing because my students are not able to capture or catch up with what I am doing..."

T11 (School III) added more as such that "The majority of the students have difficulty in properly interpreting the intentions of tasks forwarded by the teacher."

## **4.1.2 Analysis of Students' Responses**

Reference could be made to the previous discussion that three instruments were used in collecting or gathering data from the students. Accordingly, the analysis of these data is made here forth.

### **4.1.2.1 Responses to the Questionnaire**

#### **A.1 Responses to the Statements**

Primarily, here below is the combined distribution of the responses (frequencies) and percentages of the five scales the importance of which is to check the full percentage make up of the scales'.

**Table 4.1.2.A Combined frequencies and percentages of students' responses**

Scale values	5		4		3		2		1		Total	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1	16	15.69	49	48.04	25	24.51	9	8.82	3	2.94	102	100
2	60	58.82	28	27.45	9	8.82	2	1.96	3	2.94	102	100
3	9	8.82	26	25.49	37	36.28	12	11.76	18	17.65	102	100
4	8	7.84	52	50.98	29	28.43	3	2.94	10	9.80	102	100
5	4	3.92	43	42.16	38	37.25	8	7.84	9	8.82	102	100
6	53	51.96	16	15.69	25	24.51	7	6.96	1	0.98	102	100
7	38	37.25	27	25.49	19	18.63	14	13.73	4	3.92	102	100
8	27	25.49	18	17.65	33	32.35	17	16.67	7	6.86	102	100
9	13	12.75	12	11.76	41	40.20	12	11.76	24	23.53	102	100
10	30	29.41	38	37.25	28	27.45	4	3.92	2	1.96	102	100
11	17	16.67	28	27.45	16	15.69	18	17.65	23	22.55	102	100
12	24	23.53	15	14.71	21	20.59	25	24.51	17	16.67	102	100
13	25	24.51	14	13.73	29	28.43	26	25.49	8	7.84	102	100
14	24	23.53	16	15.69	24	23.53	23	22.55	15	14.71	102	100
15	17	16.67	17	16.67	9	8.82	28	27.45	31	30.39	102	100
16	32	31.37	20	19.61	32	31.37	11	10.78	7	6.86	102	100

**Key:** SA=5; A=4; U=3; D=2;SD=1

These data were obtained by tallying the students' responses to the statements from which the frequencies of the responses and their percentages were calculated for the preferred scale values. But since the scale values preferred in this study were the combination of the strongly agree/agree (A) on the one extreme and the disagree/strongly disagree (D) on the other of the continuum of the Likert scale, the students' responses to each statement are considered

separately. The center is the undecided value (U) even though not necessarily a mid-point. So, below is the frequency table according to the preferred scale values.

**Table 4.1.2.B Combined frequencies and percentages of students' responses according to the preferred values**

Scale values	Strongly agree/agree		Undecided		Disagree/strongly disagree		Total	
	5/4		3		2/1			
Item	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
1.	65	63.73	25	24.51	12	11.76	102	100
2.	88	86.28	9	8.82	5	4.90	102	100
3.	35	64.31	37	36.27	30	29.41	102	100
4.	60	58.82	29	28.43	13	12.75	102	100
5.	47	46.08	38	37.25	17	16.67	102	100
6.	69	67.65	25	24.51	8	7.84	102	100
7.	65	63.72	19	18.63	18	17.65	102	100
8.	45	44.12	33	32.35	24	23.53	102	100
9.	25	24.51	41	40.20	36	35.29	102	100
10.	68	66.67	28	27.45	6	5.88	102	100
11.	45	44.12	16	15.69	41	40.19	102	100
12.	39	38.23	21	20.59	42	41.18	102	100
13.	39	38.24	29	28.43	34	33.33	102	100
14.	40	39.22	24	23.53	38	37.25	102	100
15.	34	33.33	9	8.82	59	57.84	102	100
16.	52	50.98	32	31.37	18	17.65	102	100

**Key:** A=5/4; U=3; D=2/1

As can be seen in Table 3.2.1 A, B and C above, the categorization of the statements was necessary for comparison and noticing the data easily as shown in the following table.

**Table4.1.2C. Frequency table of students' responses to the statement(s) of each category in A/D**

Category	Number of responses for positive statements		Percentage		Number of response for negative statements		Percentage	
	A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D
1	88	5	86.28	4.90				
2	<b>65</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>63.73</b>	<b>11.76</b>				
3 <sub>1</sub>					<b>39</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>38.23</b>	<b>41.18</b>
3 <sub>2</sub>					<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>39.22</b>	<b>37.25</b>
4 <sub>1</sub>	<b>60</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>58.82</b>	<b>12.75</b>				
4 <sub>2</sub>	<b>47</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>46.08</b>	<b>16.67</b>				
4 <sub>3</sub>					<b>69</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>67.65</b>	<b>7.84</b>
4 <sub>4</sub>					<b>65</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>63.72</b>	<b>17.65</b>
4 <sub>5</sub>					<b>45</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>44.12</b>	<b>23.53</b>
4 <sub>6</sub>	<b>25</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24.51</b>	<b>35.92</b>				
5	<b>39</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38.24</b>	<b>33.33</b>				
6	<b>35</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>34.31</b>	<b>29.41</b>				
7 <sub>1</sub>	68	6	66.67	5.88				
7 <sub>2</sub>	45	41	44.12	40.19				
7 <sub>3</sub>	34	59	33.33	57.84				
7 <sub>4</sub>	52	18	50.98	17.65				

**Key:** A= Agree; D= Disagree

Reference can be made to Table 4.1.2.B that the difference of the frequency and percentage values that occur between the agreement and disagreement might have gone to the undecided values.

So, in accordance with the study's focus, categories 2 up to 6 were analyzed. As can be seen from the table above, category 2, which corresponds to a positive statement 1, shows agreement of 65 responses (63.73 %) against 12 (11.76%) disagreement. This shows that students believe the purpose of classroom activities is to enable students to develop their English language.

In category 3<sub>1</sub>, equalling a negative statement 12, the students' responses of 39 agreement (38.23%) against 42 disagreement (41.18%) indicating that the current English language text book of the students in grade 11 is prepared to suit the language needs of the students. Category 3<sub>2</sub>, which equates a negative statement 14 shows the agreement of 40 (39. 22%) against 38 (37.25%) disagreement. This result of the students' shows that most of the English language activities in their text book are not familiar to the context and language level of the students.

Category 4<sub>1</sub>, corresponding to a positive statement 4, indicates 60 students (58.82%) agreement against 13 (12.75%) disagreement. With this result students understand the helpfulness of the English language skills to other subjects. The result of category 4<sub>2</sub>, which equals a positive statement 5, shows agreement of 47 (46.08 %) against 17 (16.67%) disagreement implying that students try to know how best they can understand their teachers' instructional intentions.

When coming to category 4<sub>3</sub> the equal of which is a positive statement 6, shows agreement of 69 (67. 65%) against 8 (7.84%) disagreement. This indicates that in time of language difficulty the English language teacher doesn't explain the tasks with ample examples.

In category 4<sub>4</sub> that corresponds to a negative statement 7, the result shows agreement of 65 (63.72%) against only 8 (7.84%) disagreement implying that even though students engage in different reading skills activities, they still have difficulty in reading and understanding other subjects.

The result for category 4<sub>5</sub>, corresponding to a negative statement 8, shows agreement of 45(44.12%) against 24 (23.53%) disagreement. This may mean that writing skills assigned by the English language teacher do not intend to develop the writing skills, which are useful for academic purposes. Category 4<sub>6</sub> with a status of a positive statement 9, shows a disagreement result of 36 (39.29%) against 25(24.51%). This can show that the different skills' based activities the teacher assigns are not intended to develop the communicative ability of the students.

In category 5 the equal of which is the positive statement 13, 39 students (38.24%) responded with agreement against 34 (34.33%) disagreement implying that the English language teacher gives feedback to every exercise.

Lastly, category 6 corresponding to the positive statement 3 shows agreement of 35 (34.31%) against 30 (29.41%) disagreement. This agreement reflects the classroom practices of students, meaning that they do more practices on the English language exercises.

## **A.2. Responses to the Open Questions**

As the open questions were filled in by the students in Amharic, they were translated into English and presented. So, in this section, their free responses were discussed. These helped to cross check the responses given to the closed statements.

As described previously, all 102 sample students filled in the two open questions in the questionnaire. Both suggestions and problems were freely given or pointed out. However, since the suggestions incline to reflect general problems, the opinions given are discussed as just relevant ones to the issues of the study.

Even though the wordings of the great majority of the students slightly differ from one another, their thematic content remain essentially the same. For example, S1 (School I) said that teachers should teach the language in ways that are understandable for students. He went on saying that the language used in the text should not be difficult and also that English language teachers should be efficient and skilful in the language they teach. S2 (School I) on his part said that “teachers strictly follow up both classroom works and home task assignments”. Likewise, S36 (School I) said that “A teacher should fulfil the criteria for being efficient and also should consider the students’ level of understanding”.

On the issue of language use for communication, S41 (School II) suggested that “the language teacher let the students engage in more speaking practice”, S42 (School II) added that “There is the absence of explanation or clarification on difficult tasks and when teaching, the teacher should be serious”. And surprisingly, S44 (School II) had to say the following:

Basically, it is difficult for me to say that English teachers have adequate knowledge of the language. Even if they have it, they are extremely weak in passing it to the students, and what surprises me more is that the English language teachers themselves give instructions in Amharic in English classes.

On the issue of facilitating learning, S51 (School II) forwards the following opinions: “The teacher should have the interest to know how the students can understand the language, explain the activities seriously, allow student-student

and student-teacher interaction creating good relationship with the students”. Besides, S89 (School III) advised that “the teachers facilitate that all the tasks in the text be done and when necessary enough examples given”. S98 (School III) pointed out that other supplementary materials be used by the teacher in order that their ability develop”. Moreover, observing the importance of matching the style of teachers and students, S99 (School III) suggested that “teachers help the students’ understanding of the language even by changing their style of teaching”. S102 (School III) expressed emphatically the presence of less interest on the part of the English language teachers.

#### **4.1.2.2. The Classroom Observations**

As the classroom observations were made in joint sessions, the students’ observed behaviours were described together with that of the teachers in the comparison part (Section 4.2.2.).

#### **4.1.2.3. The Interviews**

The interviews were made in order to have some insight into probable discrepancies in the responses to the questionnaire and to lay the ground for making comparison between teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks. The interviews were based on four main questions, but in the process other related questions developed out of them. So, out of the text of data transcribed from the interviews, the most relevant of them were quoted in the following discussion.

All in all, five interviews were made. Some of the students were so excited to the extent that I had to encourage them to speak or express their opinions without fear. But most of them did respond freely, which even became means of generating other questions very relevant to the study.

Therefore, even though some of the interviewees such as S3 (School II) started with positive responses, through the process, she expressed the presence of discrepancies, especially that students work only for marks and not for actually developing their language ability. S1 (School I) also assured this by saying “Now, after frequent disruption (to refer to sometime when no teacher was assigned to them, students’ attention is for marks, not for knowledge of English language. This can be related to T8’s (School II) comments that students don’t participate with out mark.

Not only this, but also proved, during the observation, that a language teacher’s (T7, school II) actual practice of giving marks for receiving answers. S2’s (School I) voice said that “We do exercises for the sake of doing them” and not for something that goes beyond that, i.e., to relate it to other subjects or situations. He went on saying that “The language teacher doesn’t give enough examples, and doesn’t simplify tasks either. Nor does he explain their significance to other subjects. According to his words, this implies that they face serious problem of reading and understanding other subjects, “also enough examples are not given”, he said.

S4 (School II) on his side, witnessed with hot temper that they are told or ordered “to skip the writing activities altogether and the teachers’ approach lacks clarity. As to S5 (School III), “Most students don’t do the classroom activities”. This means that the teacher does not follow up these students. Apart from this, she said “The teacher deals only with those who are willing, other wise he does not encourage the others either to answer or to ask on difficult language issues”. These two situations seem to agree or match, but both of them are negative contributors to the teaching/learning process.

**Table 4.2. The comparative data between teachers' and students' responses**

Teachers'									Students'								Matching/ mismatching
Category	Number of responses to positive statements		Percentage		Number of responses to negative statements		Percentage		Number of responses to positive statements		Percentage		Number of responses to negative statements		Percentage		
	A	D	A	D	A	D			A	D	A	D	A	D	A	D	
2.	12	0	100	0					65	12	63.73	11.76					Match
3 <sub>1</sub>	6	1	50	8.33									39	42	38.23	41.18	Match
3 <sub>2</sub>	5	3	41.67	25									40	38	39.22	37.25	Mismatch
4 <sub>1</sub>	12	0	100	0					60	13	58.82	12.75					Match
4 <sub>2</sub>	11	0	91.67	0					47	17	46.08	16.67					Match
4 <sub>3</sub>	12	0	100	0									69	8	67.65	7.84	Mismatch
4 <sub>4</sub>	10	0	83.33	0									65	18	63.72	17.65	Mismatch
4 <sub>5</sub>	11	0	83.33	0									45	24	44.12	23.53	Mismatch
4 <sub>6</sub>	11	1	91.67	83.33					25	36	24.51	35.29					Mismatch
5	12	0	100	0					39	34	38.24	33.33					Match
6					6	3	50	25	35	30	34.31	29.41					Mismatch

**Key:** Match= both teachers' and students' have positive perceptions or practices.  
Mismatch= both teachers and students differ in their views or practices.

## **4.2. The Comparison: Teachers' Intentions and Learners' Interpretations**

### **4.2.1. Responses to the Questionnaires**

#### **A.1. Responses to the Statements**

As category 2 can be seen from the comparative table, both teachers' and students' perceptions, on the purpose of tasks, seem to have matched. This can imply that when dealing with language learning tasks in the classroom, both parties have somehow suitable ground, i.e., for the teachers to intend that tasks can help develop the English language ability of the students, and for the students to interpret these teacher intentions accordingly. In both aspects of the positive matching (Pica, 1997; Ellis, 2003) in Slimani-Rolls (2005) say that in the perceptions or beliefs of the teachers, tasks/activities are important for developing SL/FL acquisition process. Similarly, Wright (1987) points out that students can view tasks/activities as means of developing their language ability during a lesson or a course.

In category 3<sub>1</sub>, the teachers seem to reflect a border line agreement that the current English language text book is prepared to suit the language needs of the students. On the students' side, too, there is a slight indication (almost equal agreement and disagreement) that the kind of language used in their English language textbook doesn't create a problem of understanding.

The students' result for category 3<sub>2</sub> shows that most of the tasks to which they are assigned are not contextual/familiar and don't consider their language level. Though the issue of language level in part, should be seen in relation to the students' responses of not having problems of understanding. In addition, in category 3<sub>2</sub>, there is a mismatch, i.e., the two parties are in conflict on the issue of task familiarity, context and language level.

Cheung (2001) says that students should be allowed to practice on tasks to which they are to some extent familiar with. Thus, the absence of such opportunity, as the students' responses tend to suggest, can have a negative effect on the development of English in our high schools.

Category 4<sub>1</sub> is also another point of a positive match, the issue being about clarifications on the significance of tasks to other subjects. Atkins et al (1996) say that in the context of the Ethiopian high schools, teaching English as a foreign language is to help students cope with their academic work/purpose. So, by implication of this result, it is possible to be convinced that these teachers can give clarifications on the helpfulness of the English language skills, which the students practice on, to other subjects and may comply with what Wright (1987) points out that the teacher is a guide to the process of discovery and understanding. According to their responses, the students, too, say they understand their teachers' clarifications on the significance of tasks to other subjects.

On the issue of harmonizing language learning, (category 4<sub>2</sub>) both the teachers' and students' efforts of understanding each other seem to match. These efforts can be related to what Breen (1987:27) says that "Learners will invest effort in any task if they perceive benefit from it". Category 4<sub>3</sub> intended about giving explanations to students when they are encountered with difficult language. In this category, both parties are on mismatch. Despite teachers' own saying about their practices, the students' responses seem to deny that in time of difficult language, teachers do not give ample explanations and examples. Breen (1987) believes that teachers are more familiar with the language than students, *for example*, the content of language learning task always confronts learners with an inherent ambiguity. So, failure to provide, or be ready to give explanations and examples can impede the process of language learning. Reading skill development was the focus of category 4<sub>4</sub>. Teachers reflected their

intentions of using the different techniques of reading to solve the problem of reading students have. But here, the intentions of the teachers to solve the reading problems of the students seem to have not complied with their understanding of those intentions. Students say that even though they are made to engage in different reading skills activities, they still have difficulty in reading and understanding other subjects.

In fact, when it is by far the most important of the four skills (Getachew, 1996), this mismatch implies failure to achieve the objective of reading skill development as Atkins et al (1996:39) say that “Learners need to develop their reading ability so as to comprehend the text books and notes they receive in the different subjects they study. This can be related to the students’ saying that they do the exercises for the sake of doing them, may mean that no sufficient English language skill is attained for use in other subjects.

The other area of mismatch is category 4<sub>5</sub> in which teachers appear to strongly reflect their efforts of helping their students develop writing skills ability. On the contrary however, there is an indication that teachers fail to relate the writing skills tasks to academic purpose/works. As Atkins et al (1996:11) say, “If learners are to develop writing skills they need to work on writing skills activities in class under the teacher’s supervision as well as writing out of class”. Even though “Teaching and learning is a contract between two parties for which they need to agree the terms, ...teachers need to understand student wants and expectations just as they are determined to push their methodological beliefs” (Harmer, 2001:95). If this trend is not to be followed by teachers, then tasks are done for the sake of doing them and the outcome being nothing.

As may be understood each skill has its own contribution to a wholly developed language for communication. The teachers’ self concept or practice might have depended on this linguistic truth so as to reflect it in category 4<sub>6</sub>. In

situations such as Ethiopia's, the formal classroom remains to be highly opportune setting where to practice communicating in English. Accordingly, students may have their own expectations that can be satisfied with various tasks as, for example, Long (1981, 1985) in Bygate (1999:35-36) "Proposed that the most important role for tasks is to confront learners with language problems in the act of communication". However, the result that reflects the practice of the teachers in this regard seems to suggest that the teachers do not assign the different skills-based tasks with the intention of developing the communicative ability of the students.

When coming to category 5, there is a positive match as to the data. That is, the teachers engage the students in more practice activities with feedback, which in their belief helps to develop the students' language skills. The students on their part seem to admit/understand this intention.

Lastly, to category 6, where there is a mismatch. In this respect, the teachers believe, though on borderline, that students are not willing in doing more practice on the language activities. This mismatch is an essential factor that can make language development some how unthinkable. In fact, if students are not willing in doing more practices on the activities, what sort of language ability can be achieved would be questionable. Furthermore, if teachers themselves witness students' unwillingness, then deductively, who are the students to whom the teachers engage in more practice with feedback (a reference to category 5 above)? It is also possible to raise other relevant questions. In the belief of the teachers, the purpose of classroom tasks is to enable the students' language ability (refer to category 2). And according to their agreement to category 3<sub>1</sub>, these tasks are prepared to suit the language needs of the students. Then what would be the reason for teachers' testimony against their students' unwillingness? And is it to such students that clarifications, explanations and other efforts of planning and acting are made

for achieving the language development goal of the students? When seen in this perspective, it appears that all the positive matches could be baseless.

## **A2. Responses to the Open Questions**

The comparison of both parties was made in summary and exemplifying quotations to which reference could be made to the teachers' and students' responses to the open questions compiled previously. In the summarized information, teachers say they give detailed explanations, sufficient clarifications and examples; make tasks easily understood, evaluate the activities every time and also encourage students. But the success of all these may be questionable in that these teachers themselves list down several problems (P. 7points 1-7), which make their own saying of positive self-concepts and practices.

On the contrary, their students say that teachers are not efficient and skilful (S<sub>1</sub>, school 11). This same student also said the teacher should teach the language in ways that are understandable to the students and the language used in the text book should not be difficult. All these may mean that if a text is difficult, let teachers manipulate it to their language level and hence, narrowing the gap between them. S<sub>36</sub> (school 1) said, "A teacher should fulfil the criteria for being efficient and also should consider the students' level of understanding". S<sub>86</sub> (School III) advised, "Teachers facilitate that all the tasks in the text be done and when necessary enough examples given". In the same school, S<sub>99</sub> also suggested that teachers help the students understand the language even by changing their style of teaching. If teachers are ready to do as what this student says, it will count in favour of teachers' efforts of making their students understand their instructional intentions. This is also related with simplification and other similar efforts. Last, but not least, S<sub>102</sub> in school III, exposed the presence of less interest on the part of the English language teachers.

Therefore, based on all these, it seems apparent that the teachers' intentions of language learning tasks do not match with how students' interpret or understand them. Moreover, when all these are seen in relation to the generalized meanings of the categories (Table 3.2.1B), there are inconsistencies of both teachers' and students' views/perceptions or classroom practices. For example, if there is a match in a certain category, there is a conflicting view against it in another one. Not only this, but also each party's views and practices themselves happen to clash with one another.

#### **4.2.2. The Classroom Observations**

In all the three schools, it can be said that the kind of a language teaching/learning atmosphere one would expect was not observed. For example, a teacher might use the topic of the day for opening a sort of discussion, so as to encourage the students to bring their own experiences to class, etc.

The topics observed were on 'word formation', 'past tense', 'conditionals', 'win and beat' and a passage 'Journey into Space'. All might not be convenient, but using some of them, for example, 'Journey into Space', the teacher (T7) could have opened a related topic for discussion. But common to all was doing the text exercises like a 'dry subject'. Similarly, I didn't observe any student asking for explanation or clarification or asking a question either except for very few students engaging in trying to answer the exercises. The same situation might not have been experienced in the previous sessions, but during those observations made, both the teachers and the students seem to have understood each other's situation, which can be taken as negatively influencing the process of teaching/learning English.

### **4.2.3. The Interviews**

According to the information obtained, most of the teachers say that they do their job properly and in ways that help their students develop the language ability. However, T1 (school I) admits that he is not satisfied with what he does in teaching English. He also says his students are not satisfied either, they are not able to catch up with what he does, a mutual dissatisfaction, which according to T5 (School III) may be the reason for most students not to do classroom activities.

T11 (School III) says that the majority of the students have difficulty in properly interpreting the intentions of the tasks forwarded by the teacher. This saying seems to be related to what S<sub>2</sub> (School I) voices as,

The language teacher doesn't give enough examples, and doesn't simplify tasks either. Nor does he explain their significance to other subjects.

Another point against the teacher's positive self-concept or action, in the words of T<sub>5</sub> (School III), is that he deals only with those who are willing and doesn't encourage the others either to answer or to ask on difficult language issues. Both the teachers' and the students' practices appear to match positively. But this positive ness is not a reflection of a positive contribution to the process of language teaching and learning.

Of course, in the absence of all these problems, there can be a big probability of having difficulty for students to properly interpret teacher intentions. But where is the instrumentality of the English language for achieving our academic goals?

To add more, S<sub>4</sub> (School II) said they are ordered by their teacher to skip the writing activities. The purpose of learning writing in the Ethiopian context is to use it for note making, note-taking, expanding notes (Atkins et al, 1996). With

such goal already set, the English language teacher should not have intended to lead his or her students into skipping those tasks of language. And such experience may be one of the factors for the students' unwillingness to do more practice.

In summary, all of the teachers' self concepts they reflected, especially in the questionnaires and the interviews, lack strength and consistency to match with those of the students' due understanding.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Conclusions and Recommendations

### 5.1. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the data collected through the different types of instruments, this study has arrived at the following conclusions.

- Generally, even though the English language teachers are positive on almost all of their self-concepts and classroom practices, the students' views/perceptions on their teachers' classroom practices seem to be mismatching. And thus,
- Most of the English language tasks are not familiar to the knowledge and context of the students.
- When the students are encountered with difficult language and unfamiliar tasks, the English language teachers lack effort to help them with explanations and clarifications using ample examples.
- The different techniques of reading used by the English language teachers have not been found to enable the students to read and understand other subjects.
- The teachers' intentions of writing skills for the development of academic writing are not compatibly interpreted by the students.
- The listening, speaking, reading and writing skills as well as the language components of grammar and vocabulary task intentions are not interpreted by students as means of developing their communicative ability.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

On the basis of the conclusions obtained from the study, the following recommendations are given:

- Consideration is needed that almost the only setting for practicing the English language is the classroom. So, teachers should always make themselves ready to evaluate their classroom practices against their students' views and expectations so as to narrow the differences between them.
- To alleviate the students' problem of reading and understanding other subjects, the English language teachers should exert much emphasis on every reading related activity to the effect that students do more practice on the different techniques of reading.
- When the English language teachers engage the students in the writing skill activities, they should bear in mind that students are aware of using them to develop the writing ability needed for their academic work.
- With the understanding that language is used for communication, the English language teachers should use every English language skills' or components' activities/exercises for the development of the communicative ability of the students. In time of language difficulty and task unfamiliarity, teachers are needed to simplify, clarify or adapt tasks.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abebayehu Aemero et al (1999). "Research in Education: (Ed Ad 312)" Unpublished Distance Education Material for In-Service Trainees. Addis Ababa University.
- Abebe Gemechu (2002). "Task-Based Approach." Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa University.
- Alptekin, C. (1993). 'Target-language Culture in EFL Materials'. **ELT Journal** 47/2: 136-143.
- Atkins, et al (1995). **Skills Development Methodology I**. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- Atkins, et al (1996). **Skills Development Methodology II**. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.
- Bassano, S. (1986). 'Helping Learners Adapt to Unfamiliar Methods'. **ELT Journal** 40/1:13-18.
- Best, J. and Kahn, J. (1993). **Research in Education** (7<sup>th</sup> ed). New Delhi: Prentice Hall India.
- Block, D. (1994). 'A Day in the Life of a Class: Teacher/Learner Perceptions of Task Purpose in Conflict'. **System** 22/4473-486.
- Borg, M. (2001). 'Teachers' Beliefs'. **ELT Journal** 55/2: 186-187
- Borg, S. (1999). 'Student Teacher Cognition in Second Language Grammar Teaching'. **System** 27/1,19-31.
- Breen, M.(1987). 'Learner Contributions to Task Design'. **Lancaster Practical Papers in English Language Education** vo/7 23-46. London: Prentice Hall.
- Bygate, M. (1999). 'Task as Context for the Framing, Reframing and Unframing of Language'. **System** 27/1, 33-48.
- Byrne, D. (1988). **Teaching Writing Skills**. London: Longman Group Limited.
- Cameron, L. 1997. 'The Task as a Unit for Teacher Development'. **ELT Journal** 51/4:345-351.

- Cheung, C.H. (2001). 'The Use Popular Culture as a Stimulus to Motivate Secondary Students: English Learning in Hong Kong. **ELT Journal** 55/1: 55-6.
- Corder, S.P. ( ). **Introducing Applied Linguistics**. \_\_\_\_\_ : Penguin Modern Linguistics.
- Ellis, R. (1994). **The Study of Second Language Acquisition**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1989). 'Classroom Learning Styles and Their Effect on Second Language Acquisition: A Study of Two Learns.' **System** vol. 17,12,249-262.
- Finocchiaro, M. and Brumfit, C. (1983). **The Functional-Notional Approach**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frey, L. et al (1991). **Investigating Communication: An Introduction to Research Methods**. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Getachew Asrat (1996). "The Teaching of Reading in Government High Schools in Addis Ababa": Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa University Press.
- Grellet, F. (1981). **Developing Reading Skills**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guariento, W. and Morley, J. (2001). 'Text and Task Authenticity in the EFL Classroom'. **ELT Journal** 55/4: 347-353
- Harmer, J. (2001). (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) **The Practice of English Language Teaching**. Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hornby, A.S. (2000). **Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jordan, R.R. (ed.) (1983). **Case Studies in ELT**. Somerset: Priority Press.
- Kumar, R. (1996). **Research Methodology**. London: Sage Publication Limited.
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1993). 'Maximizing Learning Potential in the Communicative Classroom'. **ELT Journal** 47/1:12-21
- Kumaravadivelu, B. (1991). 'Language-learning Tasks: Teacher Intention and Learner Interpretation'. **ELT Journal** 45/2: 95-127.

- Lakachew Mulat (2003). "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Communicative Language Teaching and Practical Problems in Its Implementation". Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa University.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1986). **Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leo, Van Lier. (1988). **The Classroom and the Language Learner. Ethnography and Second Language Classroom Research**. London: Longman.
- Madsen, H.S. (1983). **Techniques in Testing**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McDonough, J. and Shaw, C. (1993). **Materials and Methods in ELT**. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Limited.
- Merriam-Webster (1993). [10<sup>th</sup>ed.]. **Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary** Springfield: Merriam-Webster's, Incorporated.
- Miller, G.A. (ed) (1973). **Communication, Language, and Meaning**. New York: Basic Books, Inc.
- Nunan, D. (1987). **The Teacher as Curriculum Developer**. Adelaide: National Curriculum Center.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1988). **The Learner-Centered Curriculum**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nuttal, C. (1982). **Teaching Reading Skills in a Foreign Language**. London: Heinemann Educational Books Limited.
- Oxford, R. et al (1992). 'Language Learning Styles: Research and Practical Considerations for Teaching in the Multi-Cultural Tertiary ESL/EFL Classroom'. **System** 20/4, 439-456.
- Oxford, R.L. (1989). Use of Language Learning Strategies: A Synthesis of Studies with Implications for Strategy Training. **System** 17/2, 235-247.
- Perrot, E. (1982). **Effective Teaching**. Harlow: Longman Group Limited.
- Richards, J. et al (1985). **Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics**. Harlow: Longman Group Limited.
- Richards, J.C. and Nunan, D. (eds) (1990). **Second Language Teacher Education**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Selinger, H.W. and Shohamy, E. (1989). **Second Language Research Methods**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Slimani-Rolls, A. (2005). 'Rethinking Task-based Language Learning: What we can Learn from the Learners'. **Language Teaching Research** 9/2:95-218.
- Stern, H.H. (1983). **Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tadele Girmay (2006). "An Investigation of Teachers' and Students' Preferences of Language Teaching/Learning". Unpublished M.A. Thesis. Addis Ababa University.
- Ur, P. (1988). **Grammar Practice Activities**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wadden, P. and McGovern, S. (1991). 'The Quandry of Negative Class Participation: Coming to Terms with Misbehaviour in the language Classroom'. **ELT Journal** 45/2.
- Wallace, C. (1992). **Reading**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wallace, M. (1982). **Practical Language Teaching**. London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Wenden, A. (1991). **Learner Strategies for Learner Autonomy**. Cambridge: Prentice Hall International Limited.
- Wenden, A. (1986). 'Helping Learners Think About Learning'. **ELT Journal** 40/1: 3-13.
- Widdowson, H.G. (1972). 'The Teaching of English as Communication'. **ELT Journal** 27/7: 15-19.
- Williams, E. (1984). **Reading in the Language Classroom**. London: Macmillan Publishers Limited.
- Wright, T. (1987). **Roles of Teachers and Learners**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## Appendix A

### Questionnaire to be Answered by Teachers

#### Dear Teacher,

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather information, for a postgraduate study (MA) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in teaching English as a foreign language, from teachers on ‘teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks/activities/exercises’ in Grade 11. So in order to achieve the objective of the study, your cooperation in providing genuine responses to the following statements and questions is highly appreciable.

And the researcher would like to thank in advance for sacrificing your valuable time and energy to participate in the study.

**Note:** You are not required to write your name on this questionnaire.

#### I. General Information

Please fill in the necessary information in the blank space given below. Use “X” where necessary.

1. Sex: Male  Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Qualification: BA  MA
5. Total years of English language Teaching experience: \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Instructions on responding to the statements/questions

A. The following statements are related to teacher intention of language learning tasks. For each statement, five alternatives are given: 5= strongly agree; 4=agree 3=undecided; 2= disagree; 1=strongly disagree. Corresponding to each statement, alternatives 5-1 are given in the table below. Please mark “X” depending on your choice to each statement.

No	Statement	Rating				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	The purpose of classroom activities is to enable students to develop their English language.					
2	The teacher has the desire to make the students' language ability adequate.					
3	Since the teacher believes that the development of the English language skills is achieved through practice, he/she engages students in more activities with feedback.					
4	The teacher clarifies the helpfulness of the English language skills to other subjects.					
5	In order to harmonize language learning, the teacher plans and acts to discover how best the students can learn English.					
6	The teacher gives explanations to the students when the language level of the activities is difficult.					
7	The teacher intends to solve the students' reading problems by using different techniques of reading.					
8	The teacher makes much effort in developing students' ability in various writing activities of note-making, note-taking, descriptions, etc.					

No	Statement	Rating				
		5	4	3	2	1
9	With the purpose of English language learning being generally for communication, the teacher uses the activities on different skills to encourage his/her students to achieve communicative ability.					
10	Language learning tests/examinations are prepared with the aim of increasing students' language ability.					
11	The students' classroom actual results/outcomes of tests/examinations reflect the instructional intentions of the teachers.					
12	The current English language textbook is prepared to suit the students' language needs.					
13	Learners are not willing in doing more practice on any of the skills-based tasks/activities.					
14	Most of the tasks in the English textbook are familiar to the knowledge and context/situation or language level of the students.					
15	The teacher uses other evaluative means besides tests/examinations to know the language ability of the students.					
16	The students' classroom actual results/outcomes of tests/examinations are below expectation.					

**B. Please answer the following questions on teachers' intentions of tasks and the problems they face.**

17. As an English teacher, how do you intend or give instructions to your students for doing tasks/activities?

---

---

---

---

---

18. What are the problems that go against your intention of language learning tasks?

---

---

---

---

---

## **Appendix B**

### **Questionnaire to be Answered by Students**

#### **Dear Student,**

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather information, for a postgraduate study (MA) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master of arts in teaching English as a foreign language, from students on ‘teacher intention and learner interpretation of language learning tasks /activities/ exercises’ in Grade 11. So in order to achieve the objective of the study, your cooperation in providing genuine responses to the following statements and questions is highly appreciable.

And the researcher would like to thank in advance for sacrificing your valuable time and energy to participate in the study.

**Note:** You are not required to write your name on this questionnaire.

#### **I. General Information**

Please fill in the necessary information in the blank space given below.

Use “X” where necessary.

1. Sex: Male                   Female
2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Name of school: \_\_\_\_\_

## II. Instructions on responding to the statements/questions

A. The following statements are related to student interpretation/understanding of language learning tasks. For each statement, five alternatives are given: 5= strongly agree; 4= agree; 3=undecided; 2= disagree; 1= strongly disagree. Corresponding to each statement, alternatives 5-1 are given in the table below. Please mark "X" depending on your choice to each statement.

No	Statement	Rating				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	The classroom activities given by the teacher are meant to develop the language ability of the students.					
2	Students have the desire to be good at English.					
3	Students understand that the development of the English language skills is achieved through practice, thus they do more practice on the activities.					
4	Students understand the helpfulness of the English language skills to other subjects.					
5	In order to harmonize language learning, students try to be aware of how best they can understand their teacher's language instructions.					
6	In time of difficulty of the students' understanding English, the teacher does not explain using due examples.					

No	Statement	Rating				
		5	4	3	2	1
7	Even though students do more practice on reading exercises, they still have problems in reading and understanding other subjects.					
8	Students understand that the writing skills' exercises and teachers instructions are not intended for developing academic writing.					
9	Students understand the different skills-based language learning activities are presented in ways that develop their communicative ability.					
10	Students understand tests/examinations as means of increasing their English language ability.					
11	The students' classroom actual results/outcomes of tests/examinations reflect on how English language instructions are understood by them.					
12	The English textbook language level is a problem for students to understand the tasks/exercises.					
13	In processing every activity, the teacher gives feedback.					
14	Most of the exercises in the English textbook are not familiar to the context/situation and language level of the students.					

No	Statement	Rating				
		5	4	3	2	1
15	The only way the English teacher evaluates students' language ability is through tests/examinations.					
16	The students' classroom actual results/outcomes of tests/examinations are below expectation.					

**B. Please answer the following question on students' expectation and their problems**

20. How should the teacher help the students in order to understand English adequately?

---



---



---



---



---

21. What are the problems that create misinterpretation/misunderstanding of English language learning exercises?

---



---



---



---



---

## Appendix C

### The Amharic Version of Questionnaire to be Answered by Students

#### ውድ ተማሪ፣

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና አላማ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የኢንፎርሜሽን ቴክኖሎጂና ኮምፒውተር ስራ ስልጠና ለማድረግ የደህረ ምረቃ መርሃ-ግብር "በኢንፎርሜሽን ቴክኖሎጂ ትምህርት መልመጃዎች ላይ የአስተማሪ እሴትና የተማሪ አረዳድ" በሚል ርዕስ ለማስተርስ ዲግሪ ማሟያ ፅሁፍ ለሚደረግ ጥናት ከአስራ አንደኛ ክፍል ተማሪዎች መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነው። ስለዚህ ይህ ጥናት ከግብ እንዲደርስ ለቀረቡት ሀሳቦች/ጥያቄዎች ቀና ምላሽ በመስጠት ረገድ የአንተ/የአንቺ ትብብር ከፍተኛ አስተዋፅኦ አለው።

ውድ የሆነ ጊዜና ጉልበትን በመስዋት ይህንን የጥናት መጠይቅ በመሙላት ስለተባበርክኝ/ስለተባበርሽኝ በቅድሚያ ምስጋናዬ ይድረስህ/ይድረስሽ።

ማሳሰቢያ:- በመጠይቁ ላይ ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም።

ግንቦት 1፣ 1999 ዓ.ም.

#### I. አጠቃላይ መረጃ

ቀጥሎ ለቀረቡት 3 ጥያቄዎች ተገቢ የሚሆኑትን መረጃዎች በተሰጡት ክፍቶቻችሁ ላይ አስፍር/አስፍራ። በተሰጡት ሳጥኖች ላይ የ"X" ምልክት አድርግ/አድርገ።

1. የታ:- ወንድ  ሴት

2. ዕድሜ:- \_\_\_\_\_

3. የትምህርት ቤት ስም:- \_\_\_\_\_

## II. ትእዛዞች

ሀ. የሚከተሉት ሀሳቦች ተማሪዎች ሴንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት መልመጃዎች ላይ ያላቸውን የአረዳድ ሁኔታን ይመለከታሉ። ለእያንዳንዱ ሀሳብ አምስት የመልስ አማራጮች አሉ ። እነርሱም ፡- 5=በጣም እስማማለሁ፣ 4 =እስማማለሁ፣3= መወሰን ያዳግተኛል፣ 2= አልስማማም፣ 1= በጣም አልስማማም የሚሉ ናቸው። እጃንዳንዱ ሃሳብ ትይዩ ከ5 -1 የተመለከቱ ክፍት ጭቃዎች በሰንጠረዥ ቀርቦታል ። ለእያንዳንዱ ሃሳብ ያለህ/ያለሽ ምርጫ በሰንጠረዥ ውስጥ ባለው ክፍት ቦታ የ"X" ምልክት አድርግ/አድርገ ።

ቁጥር	መጠይቅ	መጠነ መለኪያዎች				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት በአስተማሪው የሚሰጡ የክፍል ውስጥ መልመጃዎች (exercises) የተማሪዎችን የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታን የሚያዳብሩ ናቸው።					
2	ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ብቃት እንዲኖራቸው ይፈልጋሉ።					
3	የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታን ማዳበር የሚቻለው በቋንቋ ክህሎች ልምምድ እንደሆነ ተማሪዎች ያምናሉ፤ በዚህም መሰረት ብዙ ልምምድ ያደርጋሉ።					
4	የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ክህሎች ለሌሎች የትምህርት ዓይነቶች ያላቸው ጠቀሜታ ተማሪዎች ይገባቸዋል።					
5	የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት ሂደት እንዲሰምር ተማሪዎች አስተማሪው የሚሰጠውን ትምህርት በሚገባ ለመረዳት ጥረት ያደርጋሉ።					
6	ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ያለመረዳት ችግር ሲያጋጥማቸው አስተማሪው በተገቢ ምሳሌ አስደግፎ አያሰረዳም።					
7	ተማሪዎች በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ የንባብ ክህል (reading skill) መልመጃዎች ጭዝገታ ማንኛውም የትምህርት ዓይነት አንብበው ለመረዳት ያዳግታቸዋል።					
8	በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ረገድ የሚሰጡ የፅሁፍ መልመጃዎች ለሌላ የትምህርት ዓይነት ለሚጠቅም አካዳሚያዊ የፅሁፍ ችግር (academic writing ) አያበቁም።					

ቁጥር	መጠይቅ	መጠነ መሰኪያዎች				
		5	4	3	2	1
9	ተማሪዎች በተለያዩ የቋንቋ ክህሎች /listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar/ ላይ ተመስርተው የሚቀርቡላቸው መልመጃዎች በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ለመግባባት በሚገባ አስችሏቸዋል።					
10	ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ፈተናዎችን የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ችሎታቸውን ለማበልፀግ/ለማዳበር ይጠቀሙበታል።					
11	የተማሪዎች የእንግሊዝኛ ፈተና ውጤት እንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋን እንዴት እንደሚረዱት የሚያሳይ ነው።					
12	የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መፅሀፍ የሚጠቀምበት ቋንቋ ተማሪዎች መልመጃዎችን በሚገባ ተረድተው እንዳይሰሩ የሚያደርግ ነው።					
13	በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት አስተማሪዎችን መልመጃ ግብረ-መልስ (feedback) ይሰጣል።					
14	በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ መፅሀፍ የተካተቱት አብዛኞቹ መልመጃዎች ከተማሪው የአካባቢ ሁኔታ ጋር የተያያዙ አይደሉም።					
15	አስተማሪው የተማሪዎችን እንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ብቃትን የሚፈትሽበት ብቸኛ መንገድ ፈተና ነው።					
16	ተማሪዎች በእንግሊዝኛ ትምህርት ከሚሰሯቸው መልመጃዎች ብዛት አንጻር ሲታይ የፈተና ውጤታቸው አጥጋቢ አይደለም።					

ለ. የሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎች ተማሪዎች እንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋን እንዴት መማር እንደሚገባቸውና ትምህርቱ ላይ ያሉባቸውን ችግሮች ይመለከታሉ ።

17. አስተማሪው ተማሪዎች የእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋን በብቃት እንዲረዱ/እንዲያውቁ እንዴት አድርጎ ቢያስተምር ትመክራለህ/ትመክሪያለሽ?

---



---

18. በእንግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት የሚቀርቡ መልመጃዎች በአጭረው/አንዳትረጁ አስተዋፅኦ የሚያደርጉ ችግሮች ምን ምን ናቸው?

---



---

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview Questions for Teachers**

“Good morning/afternoon: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I have come from Addis Ababa University, Department of Foreign Language and Literature, to study teacher intention and learner interpretation of English language learning tasks in English language teaching/learning classes in \_\_\_\_\_ school.

This study requires your honest and genuine contribution. I would like to let you know that the information will be used for academic purposes and will be kept confidential. ”

1. “Do you clarify or explain the reasons to the students why you assign the different English language activities?”
2. “Do you explain the significance of the English language exercises to other subjects?”
3. “How do you make your intentions of the tasks easily understood by your students?”
4. “Do you say your intentions on the tasks are properly interpreted by your students?”

## Appendix E

### Amharic Version of Interview Questions for Students

“ደህና አደርክ/ሽ/፣ ደህና ዋልክ/ሽ/፣ ስሜ \_\_\_\_\_ የመጣሁት ከአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በውጭ ቋንቋዎች እና ስነጽሁፍ የጥናት ተቋም ጸግሊዝ ኛ ቋንቋን እንደውጭ ቋንቋ ከሚያስተምር የትምህርት ክፍል ነው። የመጣሁበት አላማም በ \_\_\_\_\_ ት/ቤት በ 11ኛ ክፍል የእግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት መልመጃዎች ላይ የአስተማሪው እሳቤና የተማሪው አረዳድ በሚል ርዕስ ለማካሂደው ጥናት መረጃ ለማሰባሰብ ነው።

የአንተ/ቺ/ ቀና መልስ መስጠት ለጥናቱ ከፍተኛ አስተዋጽኦ ይኖረዋል የሚል እምነት አለኝ። የምትሰጠው/ጨው/ መረጃ በጥንቃቄ የሚያዝ ለመሆኑም ከአክብሮት ጋር ለመግለጽ እወዳለሁ።”

1. “አስተማሪው በእግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ ትምህርት የሚቀርቡ መልመጃዎች ለምን መስራት እንደሚያስፈልገው አብራርቶ የማቅረብ ሁኔታ እንዴት ነው?”
2. “የእግሊዝኛ ቋንቋ አስተማሪው መልመጃዎችን ሲያሰራ ለሌሎች የትምህርት ዓይነቶች ያላቸው ፋይዳ እያገናዘበ/እያያያዘ ነው የሚያቀርባቸው?”
3. “የእግሊዝኛ ቋንቋን መልመድ/ማወቅ የሚቻለው በምን መንገድ ነው ብለህ/ብለሽ ነው የምታስምጠው/የምታስቀምጭው?”
4. “አንተ/አንቺ በመልመጃዎች ላይ ያለው የአስተራሪው እሳቤ ይገባሃል/ይገባሻል?”