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Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Language Studies

Exploring Teachers' and Parents' Roles in Helping Pupils
Learn Reading



By
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Addis Ababa

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables	vi
Abstract	vii

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the Study	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	3
1.3. Research Questions	5
1.4. Objectives of the Study	6
1.4.1. General Objective	6
1.4.2. Specific Objectives	6
1.5. Significance of the Study	6
1.6. Scope of the Study	6
1.7. Limitations of the Study	6
1.8. Definitions of Terms	7

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature	8
Introduction	8
2.1. Definitions of reading and Learning to Read	8
2.2. The Importance of Learning to Read	10
2.3. Basic Components of Learning to Read	10
2.3.1. Alphabetic principle (Alphabets and letter sounds)	11
2.3.2. Phonemic Awareness	11

2.3.3. Word Recognition	12
2.3.4. Oral Reading Fluency	12
2.3.5. Comprehension	13
2.4. Principles of Reading at Early Grades	13
2.5. The Role of the Teacher in helping Pupils Learn Reading	15
2.5.1. Methods of Teaching Reading in the Early Grades	15
2.5.1.1. Phonics Method	15
2.5.1.2. Whole language method	16
2.5.1.3. Interactive (balanced) method	16
2.5.2. Stages of reading development in the classroom	16
2.5.2.1. The pre-reading stage	16
2.5.2.2. Beginning Reading	17
2.5.2.3. Developing reading fluency	17
2.5.3. Using Appropriate Reading Materials	17
2.5.4. Using the Reading Approaches	18
2.5.5. Motivating Pupils in early reading	19
2.5.6. Tutoring the struggling readers	19
2.5.7. Involving Pupils' Parents at School	21
2.6. The Role of Parents in Helping Pupils Learn Reading	21
2.6.1. At School	21
2.6.2. Home Reading	22
2.6.3. Reading readiness	23
2.6.4. Availing Reading Materials	23

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	24
3.1. Research Design	24
3.2. Subjects of the Study	24
3.3. Sampling Technique	24
3.4. Methods of Data Collection	25
3.4.1. Structured Observation	25

3.4.2. Tests	25
3.4.3. Structured Interview	26
3.4.4. Semi-Structured Interview	26
3.4.5. Focus Group Discussion	26
3.5. Types of Data	26
3.6. Developments of the Instruments	26
3.7. Data Collection Procedures	28
3.8. Methods of Data Analysis	30

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	31
4.1. Structured Classroom Observation	31
4.2. Tests	35
4.3. Structured Interview	37
4.4. Semi-Structured Interview	40
4.5. Focus Group Discussion	44

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations	49
5.1. Summary	49
5.2. Conclusions	50
5.3. Recommendations	51
References	52

Appendices

Appendix A	56
Appendix B	57
Appendix-C	59
Appendix D	60
Appendix E	61

Appendix F 63

Appendix G 65

Appendix H 67

Appendix I 68

Appendix J 69

Appendix K 70

Appendix L 71

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Cumulative Data of Classroom Observation	31
Table 2: Pupils' Level of Reading	35
Table 3: Parents' Response to Structured Interview	37

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to investigate problems pupils face in their practice and learning to read. It also checks whether teachers and parents use their roles in early reading or not. To collect data based on the objectives provided above, instruments have been used. These are: structured observation, tests, structured interview, open-ended interviews and unstructured focus group discussion. The data were organized and analyzed more of qualitatively. As a result, the findings indicated that teachers were unable to use appropriate methods, teaching aids and reading materials in the classroom. The pupils' lower marks confirmed that the parents did not help their children at home. The reasons and solutions related to problems of learning to read were also found out using semi-structured interview and focus group discussion. The ineffectiveness of teachers' and parents' roles in learning to read resulted in making the pupils have lower level of reading ability. Eventually, it was recommended that teachers should be trained to make them use of appropriate methods, teaching aids and reading materials. Strengthening the relationship between teachers and parents, making the children attend pre-school education and having the access of reading rooms and libraries were also put as solutions to alleviate the problems.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

English is learned all over the world. Many students in Ethiopia learn English to acquire the four basic skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. They learn it as a foreign language in the classroom as they lack direct exposure to the native speakers. Heugh et al. (2006) also stated that English is taught as a subject from grade one and is a medium of instruction from grade nine through colleges and universities nation wide. All universities in Ethiopia are supposed to use English as their working language; they ought to produce documents, hold meetings, write minutes and reports, etc, in English. Reading is one of the most important macro skills of English language teaching. It is the best means of learning foreign language. Pahuja, N.P. (2002: 74) stated that of the four skills involved in language learning i.e listening, speaking, reading and writing the one which is like to be the most useful for students of a foreign language is reading.

Reading is the major avenue to learning, and it must be mastered in school. Because, of the importance of reading, especially during the primary grades, difficulty in learning to read influences children's motivation to read. Students must acquire the knowledge, skills, and strategies that will allow them to read, write, and think critically (FLaRE, 2001: 4). Children are expected to start to learn reading at school. They must be equipped with the necessary skills of early reading. Or else, they will not be interested in reading later as they are unable to extract any information from a text. Besides, children benefit from experiences in early childhood that foster language development, cultivate a motivation to read, and establish a link between print and spoken words. Later, students need to develop a clear understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds, and ability to obtain meaning from what they read (National Research Council).

Similarly, reading is a basic life skill. It is a corner stone for a child's success in school, and indeed, through life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost (Becoming a Nation of Readers). In other words, it is through reading that a child can have good access for further learning and finding better

jobs in the future. A child who is unable to read earlier will never be successful in his/her later life careers.

The pupils can be successful in learning to read when their parents are involved at school. This can be achieved if there is good teacher parental relationship. Supporting this notion, Crawford (2006) stated that the importance of home-school partnership in supporting and increasing the effectiveness of teachers and parents to help children succeed in their literacy learning is reasonably well established. Carter (2000:31) also stated that partnership between the home and the school can be achieved if there is trust between teachers and parents, and efforts must be made to establish, and maintain, this understanding. An advantage of such a relationship is that teachers can know more about the home environment and the students, and be better able to help them to learn. Parents will also be more comfortable when visiting the school, and participating in the parental activities.

The school teachers are expected to make the pupils learn the basic reading skills early. The pupils' parents should be involved during early reading instruction. They should also help their children learn reading better at home than school. Besides, Clark (2007) stated that young children are active learners who learn through their early years at home more quickly than at any other time in their life. Early childhood educators are aware of the important roles that parents and the home environment play in the development of early reading skills.

There is no exact time for children to start to learn reading. Some children learn to read at the age of seven while others start at nine. Supporting this notion, Fisher and Hiebert (1990) state:

Learning to read is a gradual process that occurs over several years. It is surprisingly, difficult to say precisely when the process begins (or ends), and there is wide variation among children in when they may be said to have acquired reading complications notwithstanding, most children in America learn to read by about age nine. For a century, American schools have recognized the importance of learning to read by making it cornerstone of elementary school instruction.

Although the beginning time for early reading is controversial, many scholars agree that helping pupils learn reading school be started during the primary school years.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As grade one is the starting stage to identify pupils as good or struggling readers, it must be checked whether English alphabets and distinctive sounds are mastered or not. Hence, remedial instruction will be given for the slow learners early. Similarly, it is during first grade that most children define themselves as good or bad readers. To read, children must know how to blend isolated sounds into words; to write, they must know how to break words into their component sounds. First grade students who don't yet know their letters and sounds will need special catch-up instruction. In addition to such phonemic awareness, beginning readers must know their letters and have a basic understanding of how the letters of words, going from left to right, represent their sounds. First grade classrooms must be designed to ensure that all children have a firm of these basics before formal reading and spelling instruction begins (Learning First Alliance, 1998: 1).

Musen (2010) also states:

By third grade, students are expected to know the fundamentals of reading and able to apply their reading skills across the curriculum. Students are not being taught how to read any more in the third grade. Instead, they use written text to teach other material, such as science, history, math and literature. This shift from learning to read to reading to learn is extremely difficult for children who have not mastered basic reading skills (p. 1).

Thus, grade three is a critical stage in which pupils are evaluated whether they are able to extract meaning from a text or not. In the foundation phase, they are expected to recognize letters, sounds and start reading words and phrases orally. This enables them to pronounce words and read simple stories and paragraphs. As a result, they can transfer from learning to read to reading to learn and start to read other subjects independently. However, pupils

who are not at reading to learn stage are struggling readers and need to be tutored either at home or school .

Through the ages, parents have been more concerned about their children's progress in reading than any other school subject. Parents' role in their children's reading development is not a recent phenomenon in the educational literature (Goodman & Haussler, 1984). Historically, reading was taught at home than at school. Hence, grades 1-3 English teachers are expected to bring effective early reading instruction by involving parents at school. Supporting this idea, Hannon (1995: 46) pointed out that any attempt to involve parents in teaching literacy should have some theoretical basis, with the aim of helping them and to understand what is important about parent's role, what experiences are likely to assist children's literacy development, and broadly, what ways of working with parents should be considered.

Some experiences related teaching reading were happened in the early grades 1-3. It was observed that many pupils faced with problems of learning to read. Majority of the pupils could not identify the English alphabets and read words properly. During the classroom observation, some pupils read some words, but few were able to do accordingly. There were problems of availing reading materials and methods. The medium of reading instruction focused on translation and teacher-led activities. The teaching aids (i.e flashcards, pictures, charts and actions) were not used effectively.

As teachers we provide the range of experiences and the instruction to help children become good readers early in their school careers. All children possess fundamental attributes they need to become literate, and some may have developed a great deal of expertise in written language by the time they enter first grade. A few children may actually be reading and know how to learn more about reading (Elley, 1996). Early graders become active in learning to read if and only if teachers integrate their experience with the pupils' prior knowledge. Some pupils start to learn reading when they have the basic skills in early reading. However, some pupils may join to first grade without having fundamental knowledge of reading.

Some research works, similar to the recent thesis, were found out locally. All the PhD dissertations of Gebremedhin (1993), Gessesse (1999) and Taye (1999) focused on the tertiary and secondary level of English reading ability of students. Their findings concluded that the English language reading ability of Ethiopian secondary and tertiary students has been declining.

Similarly, Mesfin (2008) and Michael Daniel (2003) tried to solve problems of reading in primary level education. The former focused on problems related to the practice of teaching reading in grade four. The study indicated that the pupils' reading ability was found to be low. The later also dealt with the effect of primary English readers on reading skills. It showed that the pupils in grade four and eight were unable to use the supplementary materials.

All the local researchers mentioned above tried to solve problems related to reading to learn stage. However, this study focused on learning to read.

1.3. Research Questions

1. Do primary school early grades 1-3 English teachers use appropriate teaching reading methods, teaching aids and reading materials in the classroom?
2. What are the pupils' levels of reading in learning to read?
3. Do early grade English teachers involve the pupils' parents in helping their children learn reading?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate problems pupils face in their practice and learning to read.

1.4.2. The specific Objectives are

- To identify the teachers' roles in helping pupils learn reading.
- To see the extent in which parents play their roles in helping and guiding their children learn reading at home.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study contributes to the school by solving problems of learning to read during the primary school years. It also helps the teachers to use appropriate methods, teaching aids and reading materials to teach reading in lower level classes. This means, it enables them to make grade one and two pupils acquire the knowledge of alphabets and oral reading fluency respectively. Besides, the study benefits for grade three pupils to start reading simple paragraphs and short stories. Furthermore, the study can be a starting point for the researchers who have planned to conduct on exploring teachers' and parents' role in helping pupils learn reading.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study was conducted at Selam Primary School. It is found in Tigray region, Eastern zone of Wukro Woreda. The School was selected purposefully due to the fact that it was not costly for transport and data collection comparing to other primary schools in the region. It was also decided that it was suitable for getting educated pupils' parents who responded the structured interview properly. Besides, it was planned to take the school as a sample due to its veteran primary level English teachers.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Some problems were faced while conducting this study. To begin with, had this research been carried out on many schools, the result would have been more representative of the country. The constraints of time, research fund and resources have restricted the study to be conducted only on one primary school. Hence, care should be taken in generalizing the result to other similar situations.

The other challenging problem while doing the study was encountered during the data collection process. For instance, there was less cooperativeness of some teachers during the structured interview for sixty parents. For this reason, some extra days were added to get response from all the interviewees.

1.8. Definitions of Terms

- **Exploring:** is assessing the teachers' and parents' roles in helping pupils learn reading both at school and home.
- **Roles:** are the responsibilities of both teachers and pupils' parents in learning to read.
- **Pupils:** learners who are at the early grade levels of one, two and three in Selam primary school.
- **Learning to read:** is the reading level that is commonly taught at the early grades 1-3
- **Struggling readers:** pupils who are unable to master the basic reading skills in learning to read.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

In this section, opinions of different scholars regarding reading English as a foreign language in general and learning to read in particular will be presented. The teachers' and parents' roles in helping pupils learn reading at the early grades 1-3 will also be discussed. The section is divided into different sub-topics. Firstly, the definitions and importance of reading and learning to read are presented. Secondly, the basic components of learning to read (i.e alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency and comprehension) and the principles of reading at early grades are discussed respectively. The teachers' role in helping pupils learn reading and the parents' role in helping their children learn reading at home and school are also included independently.

2.1. Definitions of Reading and Learning to Read

Scholars have defined reading in various ways and all the definitions seem to have similar concepts. For instance, Taylor and Taylor (1983: 24) define that reading as a continuum with the four major signposts of letter and word recognition, sentence reading, story reading and reading for its own sake. Similarly, reading is a complex system of deriving meaning from print that requires: an understanding of how speech sounds are related to print, decoding (Word identification) skills, fluency, vocabulary and background knowledge, active comprehension strategies and a motivation to read (The National Institute for Literacy, 2005: 7).

Two of the definitions stated above indicate that reading is to be started at primary levels where students are expected to learn reading focusing on the knowledge of letters and words and goes into the skills of prediction and inference when the students are at middle and upper level of reading.

Williams (1984) also states that reading as a process of decoding symbols: looking at words and understanding what has been written. This definition indicates that reading begins at

the primary level where children are made to acquaint with letters and combinations of letters to form words.

Reading as a skill should be taught from primary to tertiary level. It is broaden terminology. Hence, many of the previous definitions included beginning to the advanced level of reading. This means, the stage in which learners extract meaning and understand a reading material is reading to learn. On the other hand, when lower level pupils are made focus on identify letters, words, sounds, phrases and sentences is learning to lead.

Similarly, Ifeani (2006) defines:

Learning to read is the primary process of developing and acquiring the basic beginning reading skills in order to possess reading as a tool for learning. This is different from reading to learn which is the end product of the former. In reading to learn, reading has been developed and acquired as an instrument for learning. Reading cannot take place without the development and acquisition of the basic foundational skills exposed in the process of the learning to read (P. 25).

Thus, it has been defined to indicate that learning to read is the fundamental level of reading. It enables the lower grade pupils learn reading by focusing on getting the knowledge of letters, words, sounds, phrases and sentences primarily. Then, it would help them to lie basic foundation for reading to learn in the future academic careers.

The National Inquiry into the Teaching of Literacy (2005) also states:

The ability to read and comprehend depends on the rapid and automatic recognition of single words. All words are visually unfamiliar when encountered for the first time and a powerful strategy in this situation is for the students to use phonological knowledge to identify the word. That is, students recognize the unfamiliar word by identifying and blending its phonological (sound) elements and comparing that sound pattern to the sound patterns of the words in their oral /aural vocabulary. The beginning

reader must learn to decode some thousands of words that are initially visually unfamiliar and to commit those visual patterns to memory (P. 26).

Therefore, reading extremely depends on the learners' previous experience of knowing words and their sounds at the early years of reading. By having this knowledge, readers are able to decode or encode words of a reading text properly.

2.2. The Importance of Learning to Read

Reading is one of the basic skills which every one accepts is essential for survival in the modern world (Sesnan, 2003). Supporting this idea, Irwin (1967) says that skills in reading enable learners to benefit from educational activities, and to participate fully in the social and economic activities in which they take part. In addition, reading is fundamental to progress and success in all other school subjects. This means, unless pupils start learning to read early and able to comprehend a reading material, they will be socially, economically and academically disadvantaged people in the future.

The reason for the decision of government in many countries and private schools all over the world to introduce English at primary level is the pedagogical belief that young children learn languages better at an early age (Brewster and Gail, 1992). In other words, the early years are the best years for language acquisition and learning, particularly, it is the critical stage for children to acquire the basic knowledge of early reading.

Learning to read is arguably the most important accomplishment of the first few years of schooling. The ability to read--fluently and with good comprehension -- opens doors to human knowledge which, in turn, can lead to better jobs and more productive, satisfying lives (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1999: 1). The importance of reading has been stated to indicate that learning to read is basic and decisive factor in making pupils be successful in their future academic and social endeavor.

2.3. Basic Components of Learning to Read

There are five essential components of learning to read namely as alphabetic principle, phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency and comprehension (Paris, 2003: 1; National Institute for Literacy, 2005: 13 and Ifeani, 2006: 5).

The definitions and instructional implication of the five components can be presented as follows.

2.3.1. Alphabetic principle (Alphabets and letter sounds)

Alphabetic principle is the understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between letters and spoken words (Armbruster, et al., 2001: 12). Similarly, Ifeani (2006: 28) defines that it refers to the understanding that written letters represent sounds. For example, the word 'big' has three sounds and three letters.

The two definitions indicate that alphabetic principle is a fundamental component of learning to read that helps the lower level pupils to relate the letters on a page with the sounds to be heard orally. In dealing with alphabetic principle, it is advisable to talk about letter or called alphabets. Letters are the building blocks of print. What beginners to advanced readers read on a page is a print which is formed from letters. Learning to read depends completely on the ability to recognize the letters of alphabet accurately. Similar to this notion, Adams (1990: 112) states that there exists a wealth of evidence that the speed and accuracy with which young readers can recognize individual letters is a critical determinant of their reading proficiency and future growth.

Regarding to the instructional classroom implication of alphabets, teachers need to determine which children need more instruction and then provide specific activities for them. Alphabet books are helpful for child with little experience with print because they also build vocabulary skills. Practice can be fun if teachers use songs, chants, rhymes, poems and oral language to recite letters of the alphabet (Paris, 2003: 2). This means, teachers should help their students to teach English letters by using different activities and language games. Besides, they ought to make them train the alphabets orally.

2.3.2. Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to detect individual sounds (National Institute for literacy, 2005: 33). It deals with the distinctive sounds that are heard from early graders when they read a word.

According to National Institute for Literacy (2005: 5), phonemic awareness enables the early graders to get the following instructional benefits as follows.

Phonemic awareness instruction helps children learn to read. Its instruction improves children's ability to read words. It also improves their reading comprehension. For children to understand what they read, they must be able to read words rapidly and accurately.

2.3.3. Word Recognition

Word recognition refers to the ability to identify printed words and to translate them into their corresponding sounds quickly and accurately so as to figure about meanings (Ifeani, 2006: 28). Maharaj (2007: 13) also defines that word recognition refers to the skills that readers need in order to read unknown words. In other words, to read a passage, its words need to be identified. To recognize the words, the beginning readers need to have the basic knowledge of letters and sounds. Hence, the words can be read by translating the written script on a page into spoken language form.

2.3.4. Oral Reading Fluency

According to Maharaj (2007: 17), fluency in reading means the ability to read texts smoothly, accurately and understanding. This definition indicates that fluency is the beginning readers' skill to recognize the letters, words or phrases. Hence, it enables them to comprehend a reading text accurately and easily.

Fluency is usually strengthened with repeated reading, so teachers can ask children to read to silently, then aloud, and then together in chorale reading. Children can also be asked to read dialogues of different characters in a classroom play or to memorize poems or famous speeches. Some teachers have children practice chorale reading in groups or dialogue reading in pairs, and later they listen to individual children read aloud to assess their improvement in rate, accuracy and expression (Paris, 2003: 7).

Thus, children who learn to read at early grades can master their reading fluency when teachers make them practice reading different texts in the classroom. Most importantly, the children should read independently and silently. Then, they should read for their groups or the whole class loudly. They can read short literary texts either in pair or in groups. To this

end, it is the teachers' task to assess and identify whether the children can read words or phrases accurately or not.

2.3.5. Comprehension

Comprehension is an understanding what you read (National Institute for Literacy, 2005: 71). Comprehension can also be defined as "it is the reason for reading. If readers can read the words but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading" (ibid).

Both definitions indicate that children can have the skill of comprehension if and only if they are able to extract meaning from the reading material, it is not because when phrases or sentences are read word by word.

2.4. Principles of Reading at Early Grades

According to Roskos, et. al (2009: 9), there are eight principles of reading that help the pupils of early grades learn reading. These also aid them to bring some experiences and initiation of beginning reading. Most importantly, the principles are provided as follows.

Principle 1: Oral Language is the Foundation of Learning to Read and Write

At the initial stages, reading builds on an oral language. Any reading program designed to build early reading skills must offer support for and connections to an oral vocabulary in a spoken language. Reading instruction should cultivate a concept of word in print that is the basis for learning how to transform written words in to sounds. To support the learn-to-read process, reading instruction is also coordinated with other language arts: writing, speaking and listening.

This principle tells that oral expression is the basic tool for learning to read. Unless the pupils have mastery of the distinctive sounds of a word, they are unable to read it well. Besides, learning to read instruction can be strengthened by integrating reading with the other three skills. However, integrating the skills one another is not commonly implemented in the lower level classes.

Principle 2: Books and Texts are varied in Genre and form; they are Plentiful

Children need access to quality books and print to develop and grow as readers. This seems obvious, but it is not simple. Children thrive in learning to read when the environment contains ample books and print. In real terms this means a large supply of books organized for instruction as well as for independent reading in a classroom library.

Learning to read instruction at early grades can be highly facilitated when the pupils are made expose to different texts in the classroom. Hence, they start to practice reading independently. But, its implementation by taking into account the teachers' internal motivation and method of teaching seems to be challenging.

Principle 3: The Learning Environment Contains Abundant Print of Many Kinds

In addition to books, the learning environment is resourced with high-quality reading materials. All of the physical reading materials necessary for reading instruction, including charts, journals, and work display, are available in the classroom setting.

Principle 4: An evidence-based Curriculum Guides Reading Instruction

The curriculum can serve as an important source of support in focusing early grades reading instruction on what students need to know and be able to do. Similarly, it is obvious that classroom teachers should have a general guideline that helps them to decide what contents need to be focused in early reading. Besides, it enables them to level the pupils' reading ability during the classroom observation.

Principle 5: Teachers are prepared to teach the reading program well

There is no substitute for teacher who is knowledgeable, flexible and strategic in helping children learn to read. This includes skills mastery to organize early grades reading instruction under the conditions of limited resources.

Ongoing support for the teaching of reading is critical. Effective support cannot be delivered in training workshops alone. Teachers must be actively support through coaching in the implementation of programs. Teachers must be encouraged to work together to adopt

programs to local conditions. Teachers must be treated as professional and encouraged to take charge of their learning and development.

Principle 6: An assessment system is in place

Teachers must be responsible to learners as they teach and as they plan to teach. Assessment guides both ongoing and long-term decision making. Tools and strategies for assessment must be provided as part of any program and should be aligned with instructional goals.

Principle 7: Family involvement is an integral part of reading at early grades

Any initiative that focuses on reading must attend explicitly to fostering home-to-school and school-to-home literacy connections. Developing a sense of school community is a start point for building relationships with parents as partners in supporting the learn-to-read process.

Principle 8: Evaluation is a tool for change

All programs must be open to adoption and modification to local contexts.

2.5. The Role of the Teacher in helping Pupils Learn Leading

2.5.1. Methods of Teaching Reading in the Early Grades

According to Ifeani (2006: 48), there are three methods of teaching reading as phonics method, whole language and interactive.

2.5.1.1. Phonics Method

Phonics is an approach to reading instruction that focuses on learning the names and sound of the 26 letters of the alphabet, letter-sound relationships, combinations of sound and word sounds. There are two approaches to phonic instruction, implicit and explicit. Implicit phonics, most often taught in today's schools, stresses a whole-to-part approach in which the reader starts with the word and tries to guess in using context clues. The explicit approach, which was used in teaching phonics years ago, involves moving from the smallest part to whole. Students learn letters, then sounds, combinations, and words.

2.5.1.2. Whole language method

The whole language approach signifies an entirely different perspective in teaching, learning, and the role of language in the classroom than phonics instruction employs. It emphasizes the need for children to use language in ways that relate to their own lives and cultures. The premise of the whole language approach is that it encourages students to focus solely on “reading to understand”. During whole language instruction, language is kept whole, not fragmented into “skills”. Besides, learning within the classroom is integrated within the whole life of the learner.

2.5.1.3. Interactive (balanced) method

The balanced reading approach provides the most viable alternatives to extremes of pure phonics or whole language. A combination of both approaches generates an effective mixture of instructional philosophies and therefore accommodates a wide variety of learning styles. The curriculum needs to allow creative freedom for teachers to search and find the balance in their own classroom (Ibid).

In teaching reading in the lower level classes, teachers should emphasize to use all the methods mentioned before alternatively. Most importantly, it is advisable for them merely focus on the balanced method. This means, as the pupils are beginners, they are expected to start learning from the smallest units of reading. The reading lesson should also be taught in the way that enables them to relate it with their social and cultural background.

2.5.2. Stages of reading development in the classroom

According to N’Namdi (2005:15), there are three stages of reading development as the pre-reading stage, beginning reading and developing reading fluency. These are provided as follows.

2.5.2.1. The pre-reading stage

The first stage of development is the pre-reading stage. The responsibility of the teacher is to encourage reading interest with enjoyable experiences and activities, with an emphasis on oral expression. The principal goal at this stage is to ensure that the learner is socially, mentally, emotionally and physically ready to learn to read.

2.5.2.2. Beginning Reading

At this stage of development, the learner must acquire an ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet, but not to memorize them. This is accomplished by varying the types of techniques used to teach the alphabet. The modern approach is that children learn the alphabet in a literature context. The goal to this beginning stage is to develop reading habits that continue to promote reading as enjoyable activity.

2.5.2.3. Developing reading fluency

The third stage of reading development is reading fluency. At this stage of development, the pupil is prepared to identify words that he or she cannot pronounce and find the pronunciation independently, read simple stories and feel comfortable learning new concepts. Pupils begin to use context clues, using information in the story to guess the meaning of certain unknown words or ideas. Materials need to be very diverse. The pupil is better able to make use of various texts (Ibid).

The stages of reading development are very useful for pupils at the early grades. Here, teachers should know the stages properly, with the help of this knowledge, they are able to use them to assist their pupils learn reading easily. Besides, they are essential for the pupils to acquire the basic knowledge of oral expression, alphabets and reading simple texts independently. Conversely, many primary school teachers are assumed to be ineffective to implement these stages in the actual classrooms. For instance, it is the day to day classroom observation that many pupils are not learning alphabets in the way they can recognize, but for rote memorization.

2.5.3. Using Appropriate Reading Materials

One of the main problems in many rural areas is lack of reading materials. All pupils should be provided with all the books and material they need to create interest and stimulate the desire to read. Where there is a lack of reading materials, the teacher should create as many of the materials as possible. The materials may be basic, such as very short stories, perhaps used only in small groups at a time, if there is a lack of coping facilities (N'Namdi, 2005: 32).

Therefore, primary school teachers are not always assigned to teach early reading in schools where they can find plentiful texts easily. This means, some schools have abundant reading materials while many others lack the pupils' textbooks. It is obvious that teachers who teach in the rural areas may not get the accessibility of texts. They can find books neither in the school library nor in the classroom. But, they are expected to be creative to solve problems related to limited resources by using local context.

2.5.4. Using the Reading Approaches

According to Carter (2000: 10), there are five reading approaches as reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, paired reading and independent reading. These are provided as follows.

- **Reading aloud to children**

Reading aloud to children from children's literature should form part of the reading activity in the classroom. This should include both fiction and non-fiction.

Reading aloud helps to familiarize children with the language of books and patterns. It fosters listening habits and provides a model for children to emulate.

- **Shared reading**

Shared reading is an interactive process of reading involving the whole class. Children participate in the process by reading key words and phrases they know, while the teacher reads aloud. Children read more and more of the text on other occasions, until they can read it independently.

- **Guided reading**

Guided reading is an approach in which the teacher provides the structure and purpose for reading, and for responding to the material being read. Monitoring, and evaluating progress, are done during this reading.

- **Paired reading**

During this process the students work in pairs, and assist each other in learning how to read. The combination of each pair may vary in ability and age.

- **Independent reading**

Children need not time to read appropriate texts by themselves. There should be materials for students to read independently. A wide variety of reading materials in the classroom, or school library, encourages independent reading (Ibid).

Reading approaches are the most important reading strategies in which teachers use them in the early reading instruction. They enable the pupils to be equipped with various sub-skills and abilities of learning to read. When teachers make use of them properly, the pupils start to transfer from the foundational phase knowledge to independent reading. Hence, primary school teachers should be responsible to implement them in the actual classrooms interactively.

2.5.5. Motivating Pupils in early reading

The role of the teacher is to employ various behavioral and teaching strategies to promote pupil motivation. If children are motivated to learn to read, they will try to learn to read, and continue to do so, even when faced with obstacles. The teacher is responsible for creating an environment that motivates children to read (N' Namdi, 2005: 15).

This indicates that teachers have roles in making their pupils be interested in learning to read. This can be achieved by having suitable environment and available reading materials in the classroom. Similarly, Pressley (2005) states that a motivating environment that effectively mixes language experiences and phonics skills maximizes literacy growth in elementary students.

2.5.6. Tutoring the struggling readers

Teachers are expected to tutor the struggling readers in early reading instruction. Supporting this idea, Meier, J. and Freck, K. (2005:1) state that children come to our

classrooms from so many ability levels and backgrounds. As a teacher, it is important to recognize and know what to do to help a struggling reader.

There are four steps that enable teachers help for struggling readers. These are provided as follows.

- **Get to know the student**

Find out the interest of your struggling readers and incorporate those into your teaching strategies and the materials you select.

- **Encourage good literacy habits at home**

Supporting family reading time by allowing students to borrow books overnight or for a few days. Be sure to send home books that students can be successful with. During your meetings with the parents of a struggling reader, remind them that daily shared is a critical part of literacy growth.

- **Reflect on your own research-based teaching**

Good beginning reading instruction teaches children how to identify words, to understand what they read, to achieve fluency, and to develop a love of reading that will motivate them and stay with them for the rest of their lives. It is systematic and it integrates instruction in both comprehension and decoding (the ability to sound out words) to provide children the experiences they need.

- **Advocate for the student through school-based and out side resources**

Many schools have a tutoring program in place for struggling readers. Tutoring often takes place before or after school and can involve teachers, assistant, or community volunteers (Ibid).

Similarly, pupils who are at lower level ability in learning to read should be tutored properly. They should be made master the fundamental elements of reading as alphabets, oral reading fluency and reading shorter paragraphs early. This means, the tutorial program should be designed in the way that the pupils will be advantageous in the future. Therefore,

once the struggling readers transfer to reading to learn, they are expected to use more of independent reading effectively.

2.5.7. Involving Pupils' Parents at School

This is important in building effective school-home partnerships and these procedures make parents aware of what is on at school and what they are expected to do. Teachers, in order to work and interact with parents in a successful way, should be aware of the type of literacy experiences occurring at home and should also have some knowledge of the cultural context of their student's families (Nutbrow et al., 2005). This is to mean that teachers should consider the parents' participation at school. They should also be informed by parents how every child acquires various experiences and some knowledge related to early reading at home.

Morrow, et al. (2004) also adds that teachers need to give parents the opportunity to present their views on what they would like their children to be learning, to express how they feel about what happens in school and to offer suggestions for changes.

2.6. The Role of Parents in Helping Pupils Learn Reading

2.6.1. At School

Parental involvement must be fostered if literacy and learning are to be attained, and this should begin in the early years. Parents are the first teachers, and although there might not be a match between their cultural expectations for literacy and those of school, efforts must be made by the school to encourage families to share literacy activities with children, and encouraged conversation in home (Carter, 2000: 13).

Parents contribute to their children's reading skills and leisure reading development in many ways (Greaney, 1986). Bruke (1985) also stated that parents prepare children during oral discourse when they read or tell stories; they provide interest in reading; they provide access to print; and they stimulate their children's imaginations and help them to understand words along before the words are recognized in print.

The above notions related to the parents' role at school inform that parents are the source of early reading instruction. With this concept, they are responsible people who make their

children read different reading materials and stories at home. As a result, the pupils are able to be equipped with different socio-cultural experiences that would help them learn reading better at school.

2.6.2. Home Reading

Children should be spending more time on reading than is available at school. They should read at home on a regular basis, usually 20 to 30 minutes each evening. Parents can be asked to send in signed forms indicating that children have done their home reading. Many teachers ask that children read aloud with their parents, siblings or others in first grade and then read silently thereafter. The books the children read should be of interest to them and should match their proficiency (Learning First Alliance, 1998:6).

N’Namdi (2005:10) also states that parents who practice literacy at home with their children tend to participate in the academic progress of their children by, for example, helping with their homework and reading with their children.

Similar to the ideas mentioned above, pupils spend much of their time at home than at school. If their parents make them use of their time for reading, they have ample time to do it. Here, parents are the first people who are responsible for the pupils’ early reading competency. This means, the children’s reading ability highly depends on their parents’ role at home. They can be good readers if the parents provide them book, tutor and check their home reading activities. However, some parents are not expected to help their children learn reading due to literacy, low income and lack of awareness.

Carter (2004: 23) also states that parents can help their children to learn reading as follows:

- Read with the children
- Tell family stories
- Limit the children’s television watching
- Have books and other reading materials in the house
- Take them to the library
- Review their homework
- Meet with their teacher

Q

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- Set a reading time in the weekends

2.6.3. Reading readiness

Children must reach a definite stage of physical and mental development before they learn to read. Some children learn to read as early as four years old, while others are not able to read before age seven or later. Children who have been exposed to books in their home since infancy will be ready to read before children, who have never seen a picture, not had a story read to them before coming to school (Uganda Ministry of education, 2000).

Similarly, parents are expected to train their children the basic early reading skills. They ought to help them to recognize English alphabets and have interest for reading. They should also make them identify how to hold a book properly, tell stories and pronounce simple words before they start formal class.

2.6.4. Availing Reading Materials

According to Ontario Ministry of Education (2002), parents are expected to make their children get reading materials that are provided as follows.

- As parents, you are your child's first and most important teacher. When you help your child learn to read, you are opening the door to a world of books and learning.
- Reading aloud to children is the best way to get them interested in reading. Before long they will grow to love stories and books.
- Reading can be a family activity. Spending time with word games, stories and books will help your child to fall in love with books.

Similar to the points mentioned above, children should be made read books and short stories at home. Once the parents show them how to read simple texts, the children start to be interested in reading. As a result, they develop the habit of reading and have mastery of basic elements. However, some pupils are expected to be struggling readers in the future as they may not be exposed to different reading materials at home.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology part of this study includes: subjects of the study, sampling technique, methods of data collection and types of data, developments of the instruments, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

This study attempted to assess the teachers' and parents' roles in learning to read and thus, the design was an exploratory case study in nature. This means, detail information was collected by using a variety of data gathering procedures over sustained period of time.

3.2. Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study were grade one, two, and three pupils, their parents and teachers. Focusing on teaching pupils learn reading at early grade was the main reason for the selection of pupils. Three hundred out of six hundred grade 1-3 pupils were taken. Sixty parents and four English teachers were also selected for the study.

3.3. Sampling Technique

This technique enabled me to make the target population of the study be manageable. This resulted in bringing exact sample population for the study. The subjects of the study were selected by using purposive, simple random and available sampling.

Selam Primary School was selected purposefully. The selection aimed at getting experienced teachers and many pupils' with literate parents (see appendix H). With the help of the participants of this study, teachers' and parents' roles were explored.

Three sections (1A, 2C, and 3B), 150 pupils and 60 parents were selected randomly. They were taken for structured observation, tests, and structured interview respectively.

The sample pupils for the test were selected from grades 1-3 homeroom teachers' attendance. Each grade level had A,B,C and D sections. There were 12 sections. A total of 50 pupils from grade one i.e 12, 12, 13 and 13 were selected from sections 1A, 1B, 1C, and

1D respectively. One hundred pupils were also taken from grades two and three similarly. Besides, sixty pupils' parents and one hundred and fifty pupils from 1A, 2C and 3B sections were also selected randomly.

There were only four English teachers teaching in grade 1-3. Hence, all the teachers were involved in the study.

3.4. Methods of Data Collection

Five instruments were used to collect data in the study. Firstly, structured observation was used for both teachers and pupils. Besides, the teachers showed their documents. Tests were administered for grade one, two, and three pupils separately. Structured interviews were also given to the pupils' parents. Finally, both structured interviews and group focus discussions were conducted with all four English teachers teaching in grades 1-3.

3.4.1. Structured Observation

One hundred and fifty pupils (1 A, 2C and 3B sections) and three teachers were observed. This means, 50 pupils from each grade level were taken randomly. A total of 12 items (see appendix B) with four scales (see appendix A) i.e outstanding, good, satisfactory and development need were prepared in advance. The first 8 items focused on the teachers' use of appropriate methods and teaching aids and the teachers' ability to motivate the pupils learn reading and so on. The rest 4 items dealt with teachers' role in documenting the pupils' assessment, teacher-parent relations, classroom reading and tutorial programs in early reading.

3.4.2. Tests

The tests (see appendixes C, D and E) were designed to check the pupils' skill and teachers' role in learning to read. They were administered to 150 pupils (25%) participants of the study. This means, 50 pupils from each grade level were taken randomly. Here, the items of the tests were prepared on the basis of the grade levels. Then, grade one testees named the 26 English alphabets. Grade two pupils were also asked to read phrases and sentences orally. Finally, grade three pupils were asked to

answer true –false, gap-filling and think and answer questions from simple and single reading paragraph. The reading comprehension was designed to check whether the testees were at the transitional stage of reading to learn or not.

3.4.3. Structured Interview

Structured interview items (see appendix F) were responded by sixty pupils' parents. The interviewees were chosen randomly.

3.4.4. Structured Interview

Four open-ended interviews (see appendix I) were prepared for the respondents. Four teachers who teach English for grade one, two and three were interviewed

3.4.5. Focus Group Discussion

Unstructured focus group discussion was conducted with four English teachers.

3.5. Types of Data

In this study, the major types of data were primary sources. Accordingly, the data collected from classroom observation, interviews, focused group discussions and structured interviews were primary. This was because the participants were expected to respond depending on the real life or existing conditions.

3.6. Developments of the Instruments

Before the instruments were designed for data collection, the related literature works of different scholars were reviewed. Locally researched MA thesis and many books related to this study were read. Then, essential contents for the review of related literature were compiled and paraphrased.

From the review of related literature, items for the data gathering instruments were drawn and developed as follows.

In designing items for structured observation, focus was given on the teachers' role in helping pupils to learn reading in the classroom. Then, 14 items with four scales (outstanding, good, satisfactory and development needed) were prepared. The scales were

designed to measure for each item in the checklists. At the beginning, it was planned to put (√) mark at one of one the scales after the observation was completed. Before the classroom observation, my advisor told me to prepare additional format for comments. Tests were also developed to identify the pupils' level in learning to read. They were designed in the way that they focused on alphabetic knowledge, oral reading fluency and paragraph reading comprehension for grade one, two and three respectively. For grade one testees, 26 blank spaces with instruction were developed. Then, the pupils were expected to fill all the spaces with 26 English alphabets. Five phrases and five sentences were also designed to be read by grade two testees orally. The items were prepared in the way that they measured their phonemic awareness and oral reading fluency. A simple paragraph reading comprehension was browsed from the internet. This was done to get standardized test for grade 3 testees. The passage consisted of three parts: true-false, gap filling and think and answer instructions. Revision was done before the administration of the test. This means, some modifications like changing the foreigners' names into local and replacing some objects with the social context of the testees were made in the passage.

To develop structured interview with 'Yes' or 'No' responses, it was focused on the parents' role in helping their children learn reading at home items with three scales (i.e. reasons) for each response were prepared. The scales were 'usually', 'sometimes', and 'rare' for **yes** and 'low income', 'illiteracy' and poor 'parent-teacher' relation for **no**. These were developed to be reasons for the response of every item in the checklist.

The items were also designed in Tigrigna version (see appendix G) from the beginning. This was done as some of the pupils' parents were expected to have either lower command of English or illiteracy.

Eight items were prepared for both structured interview and focus group discussion. Each instrument had four items. All of them were open-ended questions. In developing the items, they were made relate to the basic research questions and objectives of this study. Besides, they were developed in the way that the respondents were able to point out problems related to early reading and put solutions.

Lastly, the items of both structured and focus group discussion were developed in English. They were distributed to grade 1-3 English teachers. But, many of them were unable to respond to items as they had low command of English. Later, the items were translated to Tigrigna version (see appendix J and L) and distributed to the discussants and interviewees accordingly.

Some items of structured observation were piloted as follows. As it was mentioned previously, fourteen items were developed for classroom observation. The effectiveness of the items was tested at the study area (i.e. Selam Primary School). Two sections (excluding the sample sections) were randomly selected for piloting purpose.

The classroom observation focused on the improvement of items. Hence, two items were revised. 'The ability of the teacher to use appropriate methods (phonics, whole language or balanced) and 'the teacher's ability to balance both print-based and meaning-based skills' found to be similar. Hence, the later item was discarded. 'The teacher's role in tutoring the struggling readers' and ' identifying pupils as struggling readers during early reading' were also similar. For this reason, both were merged to avoid repetition and improved as 'identifying and tutoring the struggling readers'. Finally, item 2 was improved in the way that was read as 'the ability of the teacher to use the three stages of early reading'. Here, stages four and five were checked to be beyond the level of early grades and excluded.

3.7. Data Collection Procedures

To collect data by using five instruments mentioned previously, some procedures were used as follows.

The following procedures were used when data was collected from classroom observation. Three (1A, 2C, and 3B) sections were selected randomly. The teachers who teach in the sample sections were informed in advance. The purpose of the classroom observation was explained to them. Then, they understood that its main objective was not to investigate errors, but to explore the teachers' role in helping pupils learn reading.

The schedule for classroom observation was arranged in the way that it took six days. Each section was expected to be observed within two days. A period (40 minutes) was allowed in a day.

Soon after a day, section 1A was observed focusing on the 12 items. Comments focusing on the purpose of classroom observation were written on a separate sheet. Based on the comments, it was easier to put (✓) mark at one of the Scales for every item in the checklist. It should be clear that each item was evaluated by its own scales. The scales were also prepared to measure an item starting from the highest value (outstanding) to the lowest value (development needed).

When an item had few, some and more comments, it was evaluated as good, satisfactory and development needed respectively. Or else, if an item had not had any comment, it would have been evaluated as outstanding. Sections 2C and 3B were observed similar to section 1A.

In general, the classroom observation items were common for all sample sections. But some special emphasis was given for each section independently. The sections 1A, 2C, 3B were observed focusing on alphabetic knowledge, oral reading fluency (Phonemic awareness and word recognition) and single paragraph reading skills respectively.

After the completion of classroom observation, tests were administered to grade 1-3 pupils. They were completed within three days (i.e. two days for grade two and a day for grade one and three.). To begin with, all grade one testees were assigned to be in a classroom and took the test. As soon as the first tests was over, grade 3 sample pupils were made read and answer questions from simple paragraph. A test that focused on oral reading fluency was also administered to grade two pupils. The testees were asked read five phrases and five sentences one by one orally.

Finally, all the test papers of grade 1-3 testees were collected, tabulated and analyzed.

Structured interviews were also responded by the pupils' parents as follows. The parents' children were chosen from each section randomly. The representative sample pupils were asked to tell the personal information (see appendix H) i.e. sex, educational status and job title of their parents. Besides, either the pupil's mother or father was allowed to be registered randomly. The pupils' parents who were selected on the behalf of their children were called to Selam Primary School. Parents were asked to respond the interviews. All the questions were completed within six days. Finally, all the interview papers were collected, tabulated and analyzed.

As soon as the structured interviews were completed, the open-ended interviews were responded by the teachers. Taking into account the research ethics, the teachers were asked whether they liked to be interviewees or not. They were interested in responding to the items as they were made to be familiar with the instruments like classroom observation before. Then, four of the items were responded and recorded within two days. Eventually, they were written in the form of notes from the tape recorder and analyzed separately.

At the end of the data collection of open-ended interviews, four teachers discussed on four items related to problems and their solutions in learning to read. They were also explained in detail and written on blank spaces left below each item. The discussion was completed in a day. Then, they were collected for analysis.

3.8. Methods of Data Analysis

All the data collected from structured observation, tests, structured interview, open-ended interviews and focus group discussion were analyzed qualitatively.

The quantitative method was only used to tabulate the numbers and percentages of the tests and structured interview responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis is a way of interpreting the data collected from the subjects of the study. The data were collected and organized before interpretation. Later, they were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

All the instruments were arranged to be analyzed separately. Each tool was discussed step by step as structured observation, tests, structured interview, open-ended interviews and unstructured focus group discussion respectively.

4.1. Structured Classroom Observation

Table 1: Cumulative Data of Classroom Observation

O= Out standing, G=Good , S= Satisfactory, IN= Improvement Needed

N ^o	Teacher's role in the classroom	Scales				Comment
		O	G	S	IN	
	Items related to teaching reading					
1	The ability of the teacher to use appropriate methods of (phonics, whole language or balanced)				√	
2	The ability of the teacher to use three stages of reading (pre-reading, beginning reading and developing reading fluency)				√	
3	The appropriate use of reading materials			√		
4	The ability of the teacher to use teaching aids (picture , charts, real objects , actions, and flash cards)			√		
5	The teacher's ability to use songs, games, and rhyming to teach alphabetic, words and oral reading.				√	
6	The ability to use the reading approaches				√	
7	The teacher's ability to integrate reading with three skills				√	
8	Motivating pupils to learn reading				√	
	Items related to classroom documents					
9	Assessing pupils focusing on alphabets, phonemic awareness, word recognition , oral reading fluency and paragraph reading comprehension.				√	
10	Identifying and tutoring struggling readers in early reading			√		
11	Applying classroom reading program				√	
12	Teacher's role to involve pupils' parents in learning to read.			√		

Item 1: As seen in Table 1 above, it was observed that all teachers were dominantly teaching reading without using any clues. The teacher in grade 3B taught words in isolation. He tried to teach the students to identify the meanings of ‘butter’, ‘wood’ and ‘soap’ using Tigrigna language. The second teacher in grade 2C did similar. He taught words ‘bread’, ‘happy’, ‘family’, ‘afternoon’, ‘bye’ and ‘too’ in isolation. The pupils in section 1A were also learning English letters by using memorization.. From this information, it can be inferred that all the teachers early reading by using phonics method. Similarly, the group focus discussants confirm that the teachers were unable to use appropriate methods as they did not get any kind of training related to teaching reading at early grades.

Item 2: Based on the data displayed in Table 1 above, it was observed that the teachers were not making the pupils ready to learn reading mentally, socially and emotionally. The pupils reading habit and knowledge of simple words were limited. Hence, their beginning reading stage was not developed well. Besides, the pupils were not learning to read in the way that made them pronounce words and read simple stories independently. Eventually, the item was decided to be ‘improvement needed’. Hence, the data reveals that almost all teachers were able to use none of the three stages of early reading.

Item 3: Unlike section 1A teacher, it was observed that 2C and 3B pupils did not make use of their textbooks in the classroom.. Grade 3B pupils were expected to be at the transitional stage of reading to learn. They should have started to read simple stories. From the data provided above, it can be inferred that the teachers’ ability to use reading materials was insignificant.

Item 4: Regarding to the data in Table 1 above, section 1A teacher should have used the alphabet chart, but he taught them by using memorization. Similarly, section 2C teacher should have used actions or pictures to teach ‘the time to eat and drink’ topic, but he taught them orally. Section 3B teacher was also able to use none of the teaching aids to teach words.

Item 5: As shown in Table 1 above, the teachers who were teaching in the sample sections used none of the language teaching elements. From the data displayed above, it can be inferred that the teachers should have used songs, rhyming and games to teach alphabets, words and oral readings to sections 1A, 2C and 3B respectively. This means, both classroom observation and the tests confirm that the teachers' ability to use songs, rhyming and games in the class was ineffective.

Item 6: Focusing on the data in Table 1 above, it was observed that section 1A teacher made the pupils memorize the alphabets. This means, he stood near the blackboard and taught English letters not in the way that pupils recognized them, but for memorization. Both section 2C and 3B teachers also merely used loud reading to teach word and sentences respectively. Similarly, Maharaj (2008:26) states that reading aloud should occur every day in the early stages of reading instruction to stimulate the children's interest in books and reading. From this information, it can be interpreted that the teachers were not effective to use the reading approaches.

Item 7: It was observed that the teachers in sections 1A, 2C, and 3B taught letters, words and simple reading paragraph respectively. They taught the topics in isolation. To some extent, they should have integrated reading with the other skills. However, Hussien (2002:31) states that for reading activities to be meaningful, they should have to be integrated with other language skills; that is, reading skills should not be separated from other language skills.

Item 8: As indicated in Table 1 above, it was observed that the pupils in all sections 1A, 2C, 3B were not motivated to learn reading. This means, their interests for early reading was not aroused by using various teaching strategies that enabled them to be active participants in learning to read. Hence, this item was evaluated as 'development needed'.

Item 9: Regarding to the data in Table 1 above, it was checked that the teachers' documents of assessment in section 1A and 2C merely focused on matching words with pictures. It was also checked that section 3B teacher documented more grammatical test items. Based on the data provided above, it can be inferred that Selam Primary School

lower level English teachers should have focused on assessing alphabets, word knowledge and oral reading fluency.

Item 10: Based on the data in Table 1 above, it was checked from the teachers' documents that pupils in section 1A, 2C, and 3B were grouped into upper, middle and lower levels. The grouping was not focused on identifying the struggling readers in learning to read, but in all subjects. The tutorial classes were also given to the pupils who were considered to be lower in all subjects. From this data, it can be interpreted that all Selam Primary School grade 1-3 English teachers should have identified and tutored the struggling pupils focusing on early reading.

Item 11: Regarding to the implementation of the classroom reading program, it was checked that the teacher in section 1A had some reserved reading materials i.e. classroom library in the class. On the other hand, it was observed that teachers in section 2C and 3B were unable to apply the reading program. Instead, they mainly used textbooks to teach early reading. This is to mean, they did not use either the reading corner or classroom library. From this information, it can be inferred that almost all the teachers were not making the reading program arrange by relating early reading with the local conditions in the classroom.

Item 12: Was intended to elicit information focusing on teachers' role to involve the pupils' parents in learning to read. Based on the teachers' classroom documents, it was checked that the teachers involved the parents. The parents were made come to school monthly. Then, they were informed about the academic achievement of their children in all subjects. From this data, it can be interpreted that all Selam Primary School grade 1-3 English teachers would have had classroom documents that indicated the pupils' reading level to be informed for parents. However, family involvement is an integral part of early reading (Principle 7) cited from Roskos et al., (2009) was stated in the review of related literature.

4.2. Tests

Tests focusing on alphabetic knowledge (26%), oral reading fluency (10%) and reading comprehension(15%) were administered to grade one , two, and three sample pupils respectively. Based on the test scores, the pupils' early reading levels are provided as follows.

Table 2: Pupils' Level of Reading

Levels	Grade one		Grade two		Grade three		Grade one –three	
	Testees	%	Testees	%	Testees	%	Total	%
Higher	12	24	17	34	3	6	32	21.33
Medium	10	20	4	8	20	40	34	22.67
Lower	28	56	29	58	27	54	84	56
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Grade One: As can be seen in Table 2 above, fifty grade one pupils were made take a test that focused on alphabetic knowledge. They were told to write all the 26 English letters in logical order. Based on the test scores 12(24%), 10(20%) and 28(56%) pupils were leveled as upper, medium, and lower respectively. Based on this information, majority of the testees scored lower marks. Hence, it can be inferred that the testees were unable to identify the alphabets properly. The group discussants also confirm that the pupils' parents would have made their children master English letters before the formal school.

Grade Two: Oral reading fluency test was also administered for fifty grade two students. The testees were made read five phrases and five sentences orally. The data in Table 2 above indicates that 17 (34%), 4 (8%) and 29 (58%) were leveled as upper, medium and lower respectively. Majority of them were in the lower level. For this reason, it can be inferred that they had unautomatic and inaccurate oral reading fluency. However, the National Institute for Literacy (2001:5) states that for children to understand what they

read, they must be to read words rapidly and accurately. Rapid and accurate word reading frees children to focus their attention on the meaning of what they read.

Grade Three: The data in Table 2, above indicates that fifty grade three pupils took a paragraph reading comprehension test. Based on their scores, 2 (6%), 20 (40%) and 27 (54%) were leveled as higher, medium and lower respectively. As shown on the displayed data in Table 2 above more than 50% of the testees scored lower marks. This is to mean, they were unable to comprehend simple reading paragraph. Hence, it can be inferred that Selam Primary School grade 3 pupils were considered to be poor early readers. As they were struggling readers, they should have also mastered the basic components of learning to read (i.e. alphabetic, phonemic awareness, word recognition and oral reading fluency) accordingly.

Grade 1-3: One hundred and fifty grade 1-3 pupils took an alphabetic knowledge, oral reading fluency and simple paragraph reading tests respectively. Based on the data in Table 2 above, 32 (21.33%), 34 (22.67%) and 84 (56%) were grouped into higher, medium and lower respectively. Regarding this information, more than 50% pupils were grouped into the lower level of early reading. This indicates that many grade 1-3 testees were not good at learning to read. For this reason, it can be inferred that they had learning to read difficulty.

Besides, the interviewees confirm that the pupils' ability to learn reading was below average. This means, few pupils were good at learning to read, but majority were unable to recognize words and comprehend simple reading paragraph.

However, FLARE (2001:15) states that during grades, 1-3 teachers should help children develop their overall literacy abilities and skills. During grade 2-3, children should practice reading as many fiction and non-fiction books as possible. Reading practice will help enhance their decoding abilities, comprehension abilities, and their overall confidence and motivation read independently.

4.3. Structured Interview

Table 3: Parents' Response to Structured Interview

U= Usually, S= Sometimes, R=Rare, LI= Low Income, Il= illiteracy and PPT = Poor Parent Teacher

N ^o	Items related parents' role in learning to read	Yes						No					
		U	%	S	%	R	%	LI	%	I	%	PPT	%
1	Do you make your children read at home?	8	13.33	30	50	15	25	7	11.67	-	-	-	-
2	Do you help your children in doing reading homework at home	10	16.67	13	21.67	22	36.66	15	25	-	-	-	-
3	Do you make your children learn at kindergarten before they start formal school?	32	53.33	16	26.67	4	6.67	8	13.33	-	-	-	-
4	Do you motivate your children to go to library?	13	21.66	16	26.67	24	40	7	11.67	-	-	-	-
5	Do you buy extra reading materials for your children?	20	33.33	10	16.67	5	8.33	25	41.67	-	-	-	-
6	Do you have good parent-English teacher relationships	10	16.67	14	23.33	10	16.67	-	-			26	43.33
7	Do you made your upper level children help the early graders in learning to read?	14	23.33	18	30	28	46.67	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Do you have time table for helping your children learn reading during the weekends?	11	18.33	26	43.34	14	23.33	-	-	9	15	-	-
9	Do you read stories for children at home?	12	20	15	25	23	38.33	-	-	10	16.67	-	-
10	Do you make your children develop reading habits	15	25	17	28.33	22	36.67	-	-	6	10	-	-
11	Do you make your children not watch TV frequently	33	55	12	20	8	13.33	7	11.67	-	-	-	-

Item 1: Based on the data in Table 3 above, it was found out that many parents tended to choose 'Yes' than 'No'. This means, 30 (50%) of them responded 'sometimes'. This data reveals that parents helped their children to read at home. But, majority of the parents' children who took the test scored lower marks. It shows that the pupils' score and the

parents' response were different. Hence, grade 1-3 test scores confirm that the parents' role in making their children read at home was insignificant.

Item 2: The data in Table 3 above indicates that 10(16.67%) usually, 13(21.67%) sometimes, 22 (36.66%) rare and 15(25%) illiteracy. This shows that many respondents tended to say 'rare'. It seems to mean that more parents did not help their children do reading homework.

Item 3: As seen in Table 3 above, it was computed as 32(53.33%) usually, 16(26.67%) sometimes, 4(6.67%) rare and 8(13.33%) low income. The data indicates that many parents responded 'usually'. From this information, it can be interpreted that more parents made their children attend the pre-school before formal education. However, the focus group discussants confirm that parents had the problems of sending their children to pre-school education.

Item 4: Focusing on the data in Table 3 above, the parents responded as 13(21.66%) usually, 16(26.67%) sometimes, 24(40%) rare and 7(11.67%) low income. Majority of them tended to say 'rare'. Based on this information, it can be inferred that few parents made their children go to the library. However, the parents' role to take their children to the library cited from Carter (2004: 23) was stated in the review of related literature.

Item 5: Regarding to the data displayed in Table 3 above, it was found out that the parents said 20 (33.33%) usually, 10 (16.67%) sometimes, 5(8.33%) rare and 25(41.67%) low income. Here, many parents responded by saying 'No' than 'Yes'. This means, the majority of them said 'No' by responding the reason to be low income. From this data, it can be inferred that many parents were unable to buy supplementary materials for their children. Besides, the focus group discussants confirm that parents' low economic status was one of the reasons for pupils' lower level of learning to read.

Item 6: It was responded that 10(16.67%) usually, 14(23.33%) sometimes, 10(16.67%) rare and 26(43.33%) poor parent- teacher relations. The data displayed in Table 3 above indicates that many parents had poor parent-teacher relationship. Conversely, Carter

(2004:22) states that partnership between the home and the school can be achieved if there is trust between teachers and parents, and efforts must be made to establish and maintain this understanding. An advantage of such a relationship is that teachers can know more about the home environment and the children, and be better able to help them to learn. Parents will also be more comfortable between visiting the school, and participating in parental activities.

Thus, it can be inferred that majority of the pupils' parents at Selam Primary School were unable to participate in activating their role in learning to read. In addition, it is confirmed during the classroom observation that the sample teachers did not have a document that indicated parent-teacher relation.

Item 7: It was responded that 14 (23.33%) usually, 18(30%) sometimes and 28(46.67%) rare. This indicates that almost half of the parents responded 'rare'. Based on the data in Table 3 above, it can be inferred that many parents were unable to make the upper grade children help the early graders. However, Schacter (1999:3) states that must children will learn to read in about 30 hours without any formal instruction if they are placed in a trusting, comfortable environment and read one-on-one a caring adult.

Item 8: It was responded that all (18:33%) usually, 26(43.34%) sometimes, 14 (23.33%) rare and 9(15%) illiteracy. This data indicates that more parents sometimes helped their children learn reading during the weekends. On the contrary, most of the parents' children who took the tests scored lower marks. This means, the pupils' scores and the parents' response were different. For this reason, the test scores confirm that majority of the respondents did not have timetable for helping their children learn reading during the weekends.

Item 9: It was responded that 12(20%) usually, 15(15%) sometimes, 23(38.33%) rare and 10(16.67%) illiteracy. Here, more parents tended to say 'usually'. Based on the data in Table 3 above, it can be inferred that the parents' role in reading stories for their children was significant. However, the group discussants confirmed that the pupils' parents had the problems of marking their children learn reading at home.

Item 10: It was responded that 15 (25%) usually, 17(28.33%) sometimes, 22(36.67%) rare and 6(10%) illiteracy. This information reveals that many parents were unable to make the pupils' reading habit develop well. Most of them did their role rarely. Hence, it can be inferred that the parents' role in developing the children's reading habit was insignificant. Similarly, the interviewees response reveals that the parents did not try to make their children develop their reading habit.

Item 11: As indicated in Table 3 above, 33(55%) usually, 12(20%) sometimes, 8(13.33%) rare and 7(11.67%) low income. Here, more than half of the parents tended to say 'usually'. This means, many of them made their children watch TV frequently. Form this data, it can be inferred that the parents' children spend much time watching TV than learning to read. But, the parents' role to make their children not to watch TV frequency cited from Carter (2004:23) was stated in the view of related literature.

4.4. Structured Interview

Item 1: Do you like teaching reading at lower level classes?

Majority of the respondents said that they disliked teaching reading at lower level classes. They also reported that they were assigned to teach these classes without their interest. When three of them got their diploma from private colleges, they were forced to teach reading in grade 1-3. However, one teacher said that he liked teaching reading as he has been teaching for several years.

This teachers said as:

I personally like teaching reading as I have been teaching the lower level classes for many years. After all, I don't have the problem of communicating with children. I am always interested in preparing teaching aids that are available for them. I sometimes teach reading by using games. I sometimes also tell the pupils jokes and short stories when I understand

*that they feel boring, particularly during 5th and 6th periods.
Hence they are always happy and motivated to learn reading.*

Based on the interviewees' response to Item 1 provided above, three teachers (75%) responded that they disliked teaching reading in lower level classes. A teacher (25%) said that he liked teaching reading. This indicates that almost all of them were not interested in teaching reading. If the school administration had not forced them to teach, they would not have taught reading in the lower classes. Therefore, the classes were expected not to have teachers. For this reason, it can be inferred that they were employees than the professionals of reading teachers.

Item 2: How do you make the pupils learn reading independently?

Four lower level English teachers were interviewed to respond the way they make their pupils learn reading independently. The interviewees said that they could not do the task at all. All of them agreed that they merely used loud reading to teach reading. This means, they all responded similarly. One of the interviewees said as:

We are in doubt that independent reading for lower classes is useful. We are not accustomed to make pupils learn reading independently. But, we always use loud reading to teach reading. After all, we are not well trained how to teach reading. This means, we have never taken any kind of training related to teaching reading in the early grades. We have little knowledge related to independent reading. Besides, we are not always exposed to conducive environment that helps us to take some experiences from other trained English teachers.

All (100%) Selam Primary School English teachers who teach grade 1-3 were unable to make their pupils learn reading independently. Based on the interview response illustrated

above, they all were not sure to use independent for lower classes. This means, they believe that it was less important for early grades.

However, Harrison (1980:112) points out that the first years, when a child is beginning gain independence in reading is crucial because the task of matching a reader to a text is at its most delicate.

Thus, it is the right time to make a beginning reader start reading independently. This is the most important condition that helps him/her identify the relationship between a reading material and its readers.

Item 3: What is the major problem in teaching reading at early grades?

Concerning the major problem that the interviewees have in teaching reading in the early grades, two of the respondents said:

The students' interest in early reading is declining from time to time. Their ability to learn reading is also below average. We encounter many problems in teaching reading nowadays. Few pupils are good at learning to read. But, the majority neither recognize words nor comprehend a simple reading paragraph.

The interviewees' response provided above indicates that many pupils had lower level of reading. Thus, most of them scored lower marks in alphabetic knowledge, oral reading fluency and a paragraph reading tests. This means, both open-ended interviews and tests confirm that majority of Selam Primary School grade 1-3 pupils were in the lower level of learning to read.

Item 4: What should be done to improve pupils' Problem in learning to read?

The interviewees responded that the following should be considered to alleviate students' problem in learning to read as:

make pupils develop their reading habit.

Readers should be tutored regularly

Pupils' pre-school background

As responded by the interviewees above, it can be inferred that parents helped the pupils improve their ability of learning to read. Hence, the pupils' reading should have been developed early. However, Thrope (1988:9) stresses that a positive home environment can have a decisive role on whether a child adopts the habit of reading and becomes an effective reader.

Helping struggling readers was one of the teachers' role mentioned in the review of related literature. During the classroom observation, it was confirmed that majority of the teachers were unable to tutor the struggling readers in learning to read. Besides, the interviewees added that they were not tutoring their pupils regularly.

Regarding to the pupils' pre-school background an interviewee said the following:

Many students who join to governmental schools at this level come directly without an early childhood education. This means, they should have been taught starting from the identification of sounds and letters in the kindergarten. Thus, one should not expect higher level of reading in grade 1-3 pupils.

From this information, it can be said that almost all the pupils did not have early childhood education. They joined school and started learning in grade one without having the prior knowledge such as recognition of letters and their sounds. The interviewees' response reveals that parents were unable to make their children learn at the kindergarten before formal school. But, during the structured interview more than half of the parents responded that they made their children attend at early childhood education.

4.5. Focus Group Discussion

Item 1: When do you say that the pupils learn reading?

All of the discussants agreed that they think reading takes place when the students correctly pronounce a written word and when they read sentences appropriately. One of the discussants said the following:

Students should be heard when they read words and sentences correctly and focus should be given for reading aloud. Unless we listen the pupils when they sound words or sentences correctly we feel that they don't learn reading.

From the discussion provided above, the discussants emphasized the importance of reading aloud in learning to read. They also said that they mostly used reading aloud unlike the other reading approaches. Besides, the discussion includes that all the respondents used reading aloud to make the pupils learn to read. This means, majority of them use a single reading approach. From the discussants response, it can be inferred that the teachers should have used the other reading approaches. Besides, the classroom observation confirms that the teachers had the problem of using the reading approaches appropriately.

Item 2: How do you evaluate the pupils' level of reading?

As far as the discussion on the evaluation of the pupils' level of reading is concerned, the discussants said that majority of grade1-3 pupils are lower in learning to read. One of the teachers said the following.

Nowadays the pupils have lower level of academic performance in learning to read. It seems that the pupils may need help either from the school or their parents. We do not think that they made their children learn reading at home. This means, the knowledge of alphabets and their sounds should have been mastered there. Besides, the pupils' ability

to read shorter paragraphs is limited due to lack of reading materials either at home or school.

The teachers' response provided above indicates that the pupils' level of reading was becoming lower and lower. Here, the teacher-parent relation should have been strengthened. The classroom observation confirms that parents were made inform about their children's academic performance in all subjects monthly. On the contrary, more emphasis was not given for the pupils' ability to learn reading. This means, the parents were not made know the reading level of their children. Hence, they were unable to tutor the struggling readers at home.

Item 3: What do you suggest about the availability of reading materials in the school?

All the teachers suggested that there were inefficient reading materials in the school library. Supporting this discussion, one teacher said the following:

We have agreed that there should have been sufficient books and reading materials at Selam Primary School. This means, the pupils should have started to learn reading early. As it is too expensive to make them be good readers in the adult life, their reading skills need to be improved during early childhood. For this reason, there should be available reading materials in the school library.

As can be read above, the teachers said that the pupils were unable to get enough reading materials at school library. From this information, it can be interpreted that more emphasis was not given to make the school library have many books. Hence, the pupils' ability to learn reading was not improved.

Item 4: What do you think are the reasons for pupils' lower level of reading?

All the discussants agreed that there were three major reasons for the pupils' lower level of reading as:

- **Teachers lack of access to evaluate textbooks**

All the discussants said that they should have evaluated new textbooks before or after implementation. The curriculum designers should have also come to take feedback from the teachers. But, they have never made any kind of textbook evaluation at school. Supporting all the discussants, a teacher said the following:

We know that we are the first people to implement the contents of English textbooks to be taught at school we sometimes feel that some lessons related to reading should have been replaced by other contents. But no one was responsible for making us either delete or modify the topics.

As can be shown above the teachers said that they were unable to evaluate new English textbooks. This indicates that the teachers were teaching without making the necessary textbook modification. It was due to lack of willingness from the curriculum designers to make the teachers evaluate the new textbooks. It seems that some topics related to learning to read should have been modified. From the discussants' response provided above, it can be interpreted that the teachers did not get access of evaluating the textbooks.

However, Michael (2003) states:

It is evident that teachers are actively complaining about the new textbooks, but are not making any attempts to improve or supplement them. A sustained effort to involve the teachers in the materials preparation process would not only increases their skills in materials development, but also enable them to

appreciate the work that has gone into the present textbooks (P.23).

- **Parents' low income**

The discussants also raised the problems of low economic status of most pupils in primary schools. Concerning this issue, one of the focus group discussion members stated as follows:

Most students who come to school at this level are from the families of lowest economic background. Consequently, most students have no time after school at home or anywhere else to read and work in their lesson. Thus, many of them go to a work from which they can earn money and contribute to the means of living for the family.

This idea has been confirmed by Michael Daniel (2001) in his writing "The effect of providing primary English Readers on Reading skills in Primary Education in Region 14". This writer says the following "perhaps poor students spend their time earning their living on the streets and do not have the time and place to sit down and study".

Supporting these suggestions, other discussants also said that there are students who do not afford to eat lunch and they are usually passive learners in the afternoon classes.

- **Teachers lack of Training**

As the discussion continued, they responded to a question whether their method of teaching reading is effective or not. The teachers were open-minded to reply the following specific questions on the use of early reading methods and approaches.

One respondent said the following and the others also agreed to what he said:

There was a training going on in summer. This was ELIP training. Though it has helped us to a certain extent in improving our teaching methods, the training did not continue. Thus, it should be useful for us to have that kind of training again and again. However, the methods and approaches we should follow in teaching reading you mentioned are new for us and we have not used them yet.

The classroom observation reveals that the teachers were unable to use teaching methods and approaches appropriately. Similarly, the information provided above indicates that the teachers did not use appropriate methods and approaches in teaching reading as they have not been provided trainings to do so.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary

This study focused on the teachers' and parents' roles in helping pupils in grades 1-3 learn reading. Teachers and pupils were observed. Tests and structured interviews were responded by pupils and their parents respectively. The open-ended interviews and focus group discussions were also responded by teachers.

It was observed that the teachers' role in teaching reading in the sample sections were ineffective. The structured interviewees responded that they helped their children learn reading at home. However, the tests confirmed that the pupils scored lower marks. The group discussants revealed that the pupils should have mastered alphabets, oral reading fluency and reading paragraphs. Some parents responded that their children attended the pre-school education and read short stories. Others said that they did not buy books and did not help their children to use library. Besides, it was confirmed that the children lacked good reading habit and watched TV frequently. The open-ended interviewees also suggested that the pupils had lack of interest to learn and showed lower level of learning to read. In addition, the discussants revealed that teachers' lack of training, parents' low income and teachers lack access to evaluate textbooks were reasons for the pupils' lower level in learning to read.

In general, it was explored that the teachers' and parents' roles in helping pupils learn reading was low. The teachers should have used appropriate methods, approaches, teaching aids and reading materials in teaching reading. They should have also documented the parent-teacher relations, classroom readily and tutorial programs. The parents were unable to make their children made at home and do homework. For this reason, the pupils' level of reading was low.

5.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions are made:

- The English teachers are unable to use appropriate methods, approaches and early stages of reading development as they did not get any kind of workshops and training related to teaching reading in the lower classes. They are also unable to prepare learning to read oriented items for assessment, tutor the struggling readers and arrange classroom reading programs.
- The parents did not help their children learn reading as they were not informed the reading level of their children.
- Some uneducated parents did not tutor their children at home. They did not also make them attend pre-school education as they had low standard of living.
- The pupils did not have opportunities to learn reading at schools as there were not libraries and supplementary materials.
- Pupils showed poor knowledge of alphabets, oral reading fluency and paragraph reading comprehension.
- It is therefore concluded that the lack of proper teaching methods of reading, skilled teachers and supports at home are major problems contributing to poor reading skills of pupils.

5.3. Recommendations

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

- Teachers should be trained to make them use appropriate methods, approaches, teaching aids and early stages of reading development in the lower classes.
- Workshops should be arranged to strengthen the relationship between parents and teachers. Then, parents should be involved to solve problems related to learning to read when teachers inform them the pupils' level of reading.
- The children should attend the pre-school education before formal education.
- Reading rooms and libraries should be set up for pupils' use.
- Supplementary reading texts should be developed and made available.

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Appendix A

Structured Classroom Observation Format for Comments

Grade _____ Section _____

Day _____ Date _____

Item 1. _____

Item 2. _____

Item 3. _____

Item 4. _____

Item 5. _____

Item 6. _____

Item 7. _____

Item 8. _____

Item 9. _____

Item 10. _____

Item 11. _____

Item 12. _____

Appendix B

Classroom Observation for Teachers

The classroom observation focuses on: Checking the teacher's role in helping pupils learning reading in early grades 1-3.

Objective of observation: the objective of this classroom observation is to collect data from actual teaching reading in the classroom. This means, I want to point out the teachers' role in helping pupils learn reading practically. For its simplicity and clarity, 12 checklists of semi structured classroom observation have been provided below. For each checklist, four scales have been given as alternatives. First, I have planned to put comments for each item (checklist) during the classroom observation. This will be written on a blank spaced sheet separately. Then, you will select single alternative based on the evaluation of the comments that have been given recently.

- Subject _____ Topic _____
- Grade: _____ Section _____ Date _____

Structured Classroom Observation

O= Out standing, G=Good , S= Satisfactory, IN= Improvement Needed

N ^o	Teacher's role in the classroom	Scales				Comment
		O	G	S	IN	
	Items related to teaching reading					
1	The ability of the teacher to use appropriate methods of (phonics, whole language or balanced)				√	
2	The ability of the teacher to use three stages of reading (pre-reading, beginning reading and developing reading fluency)				√	
3	The appropriate use of reading materials			√		
4	The ability of the teacher to use teaching aids (picture , charts, real objects , actions, and flash cards)			√		
5	The teacher's ability to use songs, games, and rhyming to teach alphabetic, words and oral reading.				√	
6	The ability to use the reading approaches				√	
7	The teacher's ability to integrate reading with three skills				√	
8	Motivating pupils to learn reading				√	
	Items related to classroom documents					
9	Assessing pupils focusing on alphabets, phonemic awareness, word recognition , oral reading fluency and paragraph reading comprehension.				√	
10	Identifying and tutoring struggling readers in early reading			√		
11	Applying classroom reading program				√	
12	Teacher's role to involve pupils' parents in learning to read.			√		

Appendix-C

Test For Grade 1: Alphabetic Knowledge

Pupil's Name _____

Grade _____ Section _____

**Instruction: Write Down All the 26 English Alphabets in the Bank
Spaces Given Below. (26 Marks)**

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____				

Appendix D

Test For Grade 2: Oral Reading for Fluency

Pupil's Name _____

Grade _____ Section _____

Instruction: I will let every selected student read the following five phrase and five sentences given below orally. (10 marks)

I. Phrases

1. One the table
2. In a bus
3. Has an orange
4. Buy a car
5. Near the door

II. Sentences

6. Almaz is cooking.
7. I live in Wukro
8. Haile is washing his face.
9. The students are learning English.
10. My brother is running to school

Appendix E

Test for Grade 3: Reading Comprehension

Pupil's Name _____

Grade _____ Section _____

Read this passage and answer the questions that are given below this passage

This is Dawit, Dawit's father is a doctor. His name is Gebru. He is thirty-seven years old. He works in a hospital. Dawit's mother is also a doctor. Her name is Almaz. She is thirty-five years old. She also works in a hospital. Teka is four years old. He goes to school to play. He has many toys. He likes his toy car very much. Dawit's grandfather is sixty-two years old. He has grey hair. He likes to read books. He exercises for an hour in the morning. He goes for a walk in the evening. Sometimes Dawit and Teka go with him. Dawit's grandmother is fifty years old. She wears glasses. She likes to cook. She also tells stories. Dawit and Teka like her stories. Dawit has also a lovely cat. Its name is Wuro. Every Sunday Dawit gives Wuro a bath.

Questions based on the reading passage

I. Write "T" for True and "F" for false sentences. (6 marks)

- _____ 1. Dawit does not have a sister.
- _____ 2. Teka's father is a doctor.
- _____ 3. Dawit's grandfather wears glasses.
- _____ 4. Dawit's grandmother tells stories.
- _____ 5. Teka does not like stories.
- _____ 6. Every Saturday Dawit gives Wuro a bath.

II. Fill in the blanks, with correct words (7 marks)

7. Gebru Works in a _____. (Hospital, school)
8. Teka likes his toy _____ very much; (car, bus)
9. Dawit's grand _____ likes to read books, (father, mother)
10. Dawit and Teka like grandmother's _____ (Stories, songs)
11. Dawit's grandmother likes to _____. (play, cook)
12. Dawit's _____ wears glasses. (mother, grandmother)
13. Dawit's mother is a _____ (nurse, doctor)

III. Think and answer (2 marks)

14. How many people are there in Dawit's family?
15. Who is the oldest in Dawit's family?

Answers

I. True-false

1. True 2. True 3. false 4. True 5. false 6. False

II. Fill in the Blanks

7. Hospital 8. Car 9. Father 10. Stories 11. Cook
12. Mother 13. Doctor

III. Think and Answer

14. Six
15. Grand father

Appendix F

Structured Interview for Parents

Dear parents: it is obvious that helping and motivating the pupils improve their academic achievement. Particularly, parents' role in helping the primary lower level pupils learn reading is decisive factor. Meanwhile, I want to collect data regarding the parents' role in helping your children learn reading at home. Hence, eleven structured interview oriented items are prepared to be responded by you. To this end, I would like to thank you for cooperation and holic work in advance.

Direction: Eleven structured interview oriented items are provided below. To respond each item, saying only "Yes" or "No" is incomplete. You have been given alternatives for each response as follows.

"Yes" alternatives

1. Usually
2. Sometimes
3. Rare

"No" alternatives

1. Illiteracy
2. Low-income
3. Poor parent-school relation

Finally, choose a response by saying either "Yes" or "No" and then tell to the interviewer to make you (✓) at one of the alternatives.

Personal Information

1. Sex: Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Educational Status:

Grade 8 complete ☐

Diploma ☐

Grade 10 or 12 complete ☐

Degree ☐

Certificate ☐

Illiterate ☐

3. Job title: _____

4. Your child's grade level:

1st Grade ☐

2nd Grade ☐

3rd Grade ☐

Parents' role Oriented Items	YES			NO		
	Usually	Some times	rare	Low Income	illiteracy	poor parent- School relation
1. Do you make your children read at home?						
2. Do you help your children in doing reading homework at home?						
3. Do you make your children learn at kindergarten before they start formal school?						
4. Do you motivate your children to go to library?						
5. Do you buy extra reading materials for your children?						
6. Do you have good home-school relationship?						
7. Do you make your elder students help the early graders in reading?						
8. Do you have time table for helping your children learn reading during the weekends?						
9. Do you read stories for your children?						
10. Do you make your children develop reading habits?						
11. Do you make your children not watch TV frequently?						

Appendix G

ቃለ-መጠይቅ ንወለዲ ተምሃሮ

ክቡራት/ን/ ወለዲ፡ ደቂቁም ትምህርታዊ ዓቕሞም ከዕብዩ ምእንታን ሓገዝ ምግባርን ምብርታትዕን ኣገዳሲ 'ዩ። ብፍላይ ኣብ ቀደማይ ብርኪ ዘለዉ ተምሃሮ ናይ ምንባብ ክእለቶም ብብእዋኑ ኣብ ምክትታልን ምሕጋዝን ግደ ወለዲ ወሳኒ 'ዩ። በዚ መንፅር ወለዲ ደቆም ኣብ ቤት ትምህርቲ ምንባብ እንትመሃሩ ዘለዎም ግደ ዝብል ፅንዓት ንምክያድ ሓበሬታ ምእካብ የድሊ። ስለዝኾነ ዓሰርተሓደሽ ሕቶታት ብቃለ መጠይቅ መልክዕ ቀሪቦም ኣለዉ። ቐጂሎም ንዝቐርብልኩም ሕቶታት ምላሽ ንምሃብ ዝህልዉ ህርኩትነትን፤ ዝጠፍእ ግዘን ጉልበትን ኣቐዲመ የመስግን።

መምርሒ፡ ትሕት ክብል 11 ሕቶታት ብቃለ - መጠይቅ መልክዕ ቀሪቦም ኣለዉ። መልሲ ክትህቡ እንተለኹም እወ ወይ ከዓ ኣይኮነን ጥራሕ ሞባል እኹል ኣይኮነን። ካብ ክልቲኦም ሓደ እንትመርፁ ኣብ ትሕቲኡም ንዝቐርብልኩም መማረቢታት ማለት 'ዉን ምላሽኩም።

እወ እንተኹይኑ

1. ብተደጋጋሚ
2. ሓላሓሊፋ
3. ሳሕቲ

ኣይኮነን እንተኹይኑ

1. ዘይምምሃር
2. ትሑት መነባብሮ
3. ድኻሞ ርክብ ወለዲ- ቤት ትምህርቲ

ኣብመወዳእታ ካብ ክልቲኦም መማረቢታት ሓደ ሓራኹም፤ ቃለ- መሓትት ንዝገብረልኩም ሰብ ኣብታ ዝለደኹም መማረቢ (✓) ምልክት ግበረለይ ክትብሉ ይላቦ።

ዉልቀ ሓበሬታ

1. ፆታ፡ ተባ ኣገ

2. ደረጃ ትምህርቲ

8^ይ ክፍሊ ዝወደአ

ዲፕሎማ

10^ይ ወይ ከ9-12 ክፍሊ ዝወደአ

ዲግሪ

ሰርቲፊኬት

ፊደል ዘይቆፀረ

3. ስራሕ፡ _____

4. ደረጃ ክፍሊ ኣብ ሰላም ቤት ትምህርቲ ዝመሃር ወላድኩም፡

1^ይ ክፍሊ

2^ይ ክፍሊ

3^ይ ክፍሊ

ግደ ወለዲ ተኮር ሕቶታት	እወ			አይኮነን		
	ብተደጋጋሚ	ሓላሓሊፋ	ሳሕቲ	ዘይምምሃር	ትሑት መነባብሮ	ድኻም ርክብ ወለድ ቤት ት/ቲ
1. ደቅኹም ኣብ ገዛ ክንብቡ ትሕግዝዎም ዶ?						
2. ደቅኹም ዝንብብ ዕዩ ገዛ እንትወሃቦም ትሕግዝዎም ዶ?						
3. ደቅኹም ቅድሚ ስሩዕ ትምህርቲ ሞጅማሮም ኣብ ኣፀደ ህፃዉንቲ ይመሃሩ ዶ?						
4. ደቅኹም ቤተ-ንባብ ክጥቀሙ ተበራታትዎም ዶ?						
5. ናይ ደቅኹም ክእለት ምንባብ ዘማዕብሉ መሃሓፍቲ ትገዝኡ ዶ?						
6. ሞስ ቤት ትምህርቲ ዘለኩም ርክብ ስጡም ድዩ?						
7. ደረጃ ትምህርቶም ልዕል ዝበሉ ደቓኩም ንኣናእሽተይ ኣሕዋቶም ምንባብ ክለማመዱ ይገብሩ ዶ?						
8. ኣብ እዋን ዕረፍትኩም/ ቀዳሙ- ስናብቲ/ ደቅኹም ንባብ ተለማምድሉ ግዘ ሰሌዳ ኣለኩም ዶ?						
9. ንደቅኹም ተረት ሓዘል ፅሑፋት ተንብብለውም ዶ?						
10. ደቅኹም ናይ ምንባብ ልሞዱ ክዕብዩ ሓገዝ ትገብሩ ዶ?						
11. ደቅኹም ኣብ ዕረፍቲ እዋኖም ቴሌቪዥን ብነዘሉ ይክታተሉ ዶ?						

Appendix H

Parents' personal Information

Sex		T	Educational Status						Teachers	Nurses	Office workers	Daily laborers
M	F		TTI	Dip	Deg	ILi	G-8	9-10				
34	26	60	14	9	12	7	7	11	15	3	18	24

Dip= Diploma, Deg= Degree, Ili= Illiteracy

Sex Proportion

- 34 (56.67) and 26(43.33%) were fathers and mothers respectively

Educational Status

- 53(88.33%) were literate parents
- 35(58.33%) were academicians (TTI, Diploma and Degree)
- 15(25%) were teachers who have highly related profession to reading

Job title

- 36(60%) were expected to have good income
- 24(40%) were daily laborers with low income

NB: the personal information indicated above informs that the researcher focused on selecting the study area (Wukro town) where he could find literate parents.

Appendix I

Structured Interview for Teachers

1. Do you like teaching reading at lower level classes?
2. How do you make the pupils learn reading independently?
3. What is the major problem in teaching reading at early grades?
4. What should be done to improve pupils' problem in learning to read?

Appendix J

ቃለ መጠይቅ ንመምህራን

1. ኣብ ታሕታዊ ቀዳማይ ብርኪ ምንባብ ክተምህሩ ድሌት ኣለኩም ዶ?
2. ተምሃሮ በይናዊ ምንባብ ብኸመይ መንገዲ ተለማምድዎም?
3. ኣብ ታሕታዊ ቀዳማይ ብርኪ ምንባብ ኣብ ምምሃር ዘሎ ፀገም እንታይ 'ዩ?
4. ኣብ ታሕታዊ ቀዳማይ ብርኪ ምንባብ ኣብ ምምሃር ዘሎ ፀገም መፍትሒኡ እንታይ 'ዩ?

Appendix K

Focus Group Discussion for Teachers

1. When do you say that the pupils learn reading?

2. How do you evaluate the pupils' level of leading?

3. What do you suggest about eh availability of reading materials in the school?

4. What do you think are the reasons for pupils' lower level of reading?

Thank you very much!

Appendix L

ጉጅለ ተኮር ምይይጥ ንመምህራን

1. ተምሃሮችሎም ምንባብ ክመሃሩ እንትለማመዱ እንታይ ጠመተ ትገብሩ?

2. ተምሃሮችሎም ምንባብ እንትተመሃሩ ዘለዎም ዓቕሚ ብኸመይ ትግምግምዎ?

3. ኣብ ቤት ትምህርትኹም ንታሕታዋይ ደረጃ ክፍሊ ተምሃሮ ዝሕግዙ መፅሓፍቲ ኣቕርቦት ጠመተ ጌርኩም ኣሳብኩም ግለፁ፡፡

4. ተምሃሮችሎም መባእታዊ ምንባብ እንትመሃሩ ዝደኸምሉ ምክንያት እንታይ 'ዩ?

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Hailay Hagos

Signature: _____

Place: Addis Ababa University

Date of Submission: _____

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approvals as an advisor.

Name: Hailom Banteyirga (PhD)

Signature: _____

Date: _____