

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRACTICES OF
BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION
IN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
IN ADDIS ABABA

A Thesis Presented to
The School of Graduate Studies
Addis Ababa University

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in TEFL

by
CHEFENA HAILLEMARIAM

June, 1988

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Chefena Hailemariam



APPROVAL

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my (our) approval as University Advisor(s)

Approved by:

Tilahun Ganta
Advisor



ALI ABDALLA ABBAS
Examiner



NORMAN A PRITCHARD
Examiner



ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to find out the most common method of teaching reading to beginners. 50 teachers from thirty one elementary schools were the subjects of the study.

To obtain data for the study, a questionnaire was distributed to the teachers. In addition, observation inside the class-rooms was carried out by the researcher. The teachers' responses were tallied, coded and percentages were computed for each variable. Besides, two background data variables of the teachers were compared with five selected variables about class-room techniques and methods and were cross-tabulated to see possible relationships.

Results of the study show that the most common method of teaching reading was the 'look-and-say' method of words and larger language units. However, few teachers were using a combination of 'phonic', 'word' and 'sentence' methods of teaching. Experience of teachers was found out to correlated with their employment of 'eclectic' method. The study has also revealed that the techniques of word recognition skill were used by an insignificant number of teachers.

On the basis of these findings, recommendations concerning the teachers' quality improvement through training and preparation of the text-books are made.

AKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am heavily indebted to my advisor, Dr. Tilahun Ganta, without whose advice and encouragement, this thesis would not have assumed its present form. His guidance and critical comments were vital to the completion of my work.

I am grateful to Dr. Asmerom Kidane, of the Department of Statistics, who assisted me in the data analysis and tabulation.

Thanks are due to Ato Hailemical Abera, of the Department of Foreign Languages, for his useful suggestions at the initial stage of my work and his concern in the progress of the thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract	i
Aknowledgement	ii

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM	1
1.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY	1
1.3 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY	2
1.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY	2
1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS'	3

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	4
2.1 THE NATURE OF READING	4
2.2 LEARNING TO READ IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.	6
2.3 READING READINESS	8
2.4 APPROACHES AND METHODS	11
2.4.1 ALPHABETIC METHOD	12
2.4.2 THE PHONIC METHOD	13
2.4.3 THE "WHOLE WORD" or "LOOK-AND- say method	14
2.4.4 THE SENTENCE METHOD	15
2.4.5 THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE	15
APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING.	

2.4.6	THE INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET (THE i.t.a)	16
2.5	THE PROBLEM OF SELECTING AN APPROACH	17
2.6	RESEARCH ON BEGINNING READING	18
2.7	FACTORS AFFECTING READING INSTRUCTION	22
2.8	THE TEACHER VARIABLE	22
2.9	WORKS ON BEGINNING READING IN ETHIOPIA	24

CHAPTER THREE

3.	METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE	25
3.1	PROCEDURE	25
3.2	METHODOLOGY	25
3.3	3.2.1 SAMPLING	25
	3.2.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	26
	3.2.2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE	26
	3.2.2.2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE	27
	3.2.2.3 OBSERVATION	27
3.3	METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS	28

CHAPTER FOUR

4.	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	29
4.1	TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES	29
4.2	TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF THE TEXT BOOK	34
4.3	RESULTS OF OBSERVATION	35
4.4	READING READINESS OF PUPILS	36
4.5	BACKGROUND DATA DESCRIPTION	38

CHAPTER FIVE

	SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	41
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	45
	APPENDICES	
	APPENDIX - A Questionnaire	48
	APPENDIX - B Tabulated Summary of Responses	57
	APPENDIX - C Correlation Tables	59

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to investigate the practices of teaching reading to beginners in English in thirty one selected elementary schools in Addis Ababa. In light of the basic beliefs of teaching reading to beginners and the various methods developed, this study will attempt to find out what methods and techniques of teaching reading to beginners teachers use in the class-room situation.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Reading in English is very important in Ethiopia because English is the language of education starting from grade seven in all government schools in Ethiopia. The ability to read in English is of paramount importance in that it is a basic skill that affects other skill areas. Since beginning reading is a skill taught in the class-room, an elementary school learner who has not been taught to read in English will find it difficult to pursue his study in his junior secondary school where he has to read text-books written in English. Initial reading also plays a decisive role in the child's learning development as an anonymous writer had said 'once the child has learned to read, she (sic) can read to learn'. Therefore, when one realizes that there are various methods and approaches to teaching

beginners to read, from which the teacher has to choose, and when the current practices of teaching are not definitely known, it is important to first determine the most common method in Ethiopian elementary schools at the present. It is equally important to show which teachers are using which methods.

1.3 THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study has been limited to teachers from thirty-one selected elementary schools in Addis Ababa. The random sampling technique has been used to select the schools. In this study the teachers of grade three and four have been taken as subjects. The logical basis for selecting these two grades is the fact that they are stages in the pupil's reading development that bridge the gap between the stage of 'being ready to read' to the stage of 'being able to read'. Furthermore, reading is a gradual development in which one can hardly draw a demarcation line between the actual print reading and the stages preceding it.

Special emphasis has been put on government and public schools because it is there that the problem is believed to be more serious and because apart from other variables like family background of the learner, in the mission and private schools reading instruction starts in grade one.

1.4 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Inclusion of elementary school teachers from other parts of the country could have provided an ideal sample for the

study. But such a research would call for more fund and involves more than one person in the collection of the data. The writer of this thesis has, therefore, taken the sample from Addis Ababa and mainly from one zone. The selection was made on the basis of the random sampling technique.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Beginning - In the Ethiopian government elementary schools formal instruction of reading in English starts at the middle of level 3. Therefore, grades three and four pupils are considered as beginners in this context.

2. Public Schools - They are private schools run by committees formed by the government. In these schools the same teaching material as in the government schools is used and teachers are sometimes assigned by the Ministry of Education to teach in these schools.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE NATURE OF READING

Defining the term 'reading' seems to be the main concern of some scholars. This is because unless the idea 'reading' is clearly defined it is not easy to talk about it and also analyze the teaching of reading.

Although it is often avoided in books about reading one of the major problems in reading instruction is a definition of reading. Without a clear-cut concept of definition of the reading act and the process of reading it is almost impossible to plan the goals of instruction. Without what the process is, we can not evaluate the reading behaviour of the pupils we train (Space, 1967:4)

Although there seems to be a general awareness that reading is a complex concept defined variously by experts, the term 'reading' can be defined by limiting its sense to the context of beginning reading. Concerning this issue Latham says "what we need to do is then choose between definitions of reading and the choice should be guided by consideration of the consequences of our choice predicted and observed in terms of aims and actions" (1968:28-29)

However, it seems that it is easier to describe the concept than to define it. This is because evidence concerning cognitive process to some extent depends on subjective

interpretations (Taylor,1973:19) and not much is known about the process that underline the acquisition of reading (Calfee, 1978: 426). Frank Smith says:

To avoid semantic arguments, which are especially frustrating when we do not realize that we are involved in one. We should stop looking for definitions of reading and consider instead what is involved in reading. Illustrations, descriptions and analysis are after all what we usually want we ask people to define their terms (1985:100)

It is then possible to describe reading in terms of the activities and skill it involves. William Latham draws a distinction between 'lower order skills' ('decoding' process) which according to him is considered the responsibility of the teacher concerned with the child's early years and the 'higher order skills' related to comprehension and inference considered as aspects of thinking and thus the responsibility of every body (pp. 28-29)

Nuttal has three categories of skills with respect to reading at different levels.

- a. understand, interpret meaning, sense
- b. decode, decipher, identify
- c. articulate, speak, pronounce

And she goes on to elaborate 'If you used the ideas reflected in the second group you have probably wanted to include the first thing of all about reading: namely that unless we can recognize the words we meet in print, we cannot even begin to read. The process of identifying written words

is mainly the concern of the teacher of early reading(1982:2)

When we look at some other scholars' views about reading some kind of consistency is observed in the way initial reading is described. Virginia Allen(1977),John Downing (1979), Pat D'Arcy (1973), and Opal Dunn(1984) agree that initial reading involves 'decoding' by way of getting meaningful message.

2.2 LEARNING TO READ IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

As opposed to teaching reading to pupils in their own native language, teaching pupils reading in a foreign language is fundamentally different in that learning to read in a foreign language does not only involve being introduced to new structural patterns but also to new habits and concepts. The process of learning to read in a foreign language is not a mere transference process from the oral to written form of the language which the learner already knows. There is an important pre-condition for it: sufficient oral practice with the emphasis on associating meaning with the graphic forms through pictured concepts is needed (Bumpass, 1965:97). And it is only after this stage is completed can one pass to the teaching of actual book reading. If the students have learned the meanings of those words then you can show them how these

words look in print (Allen, 1977:27). However, this does not mean that the non-native speaker of English must master a new language on a level equal to that of his English class-mates before he can be introduced to reading, but it means **that as soon as possible** he should attain a minimal of counterpart of their language (Bumpass 1965: 95)

On the other hand according to some theorists the nature of reading process is almost similar in all languages and reading skills in the native language are transferable to reading in a foreign language. Therefore, for a pupil who has already been taught to read in his own language, the task of learning to read in a foreign language will not be a totally new one as Willga Rivers reports:

When learning to read in his native language he has acquired essential space and direction habits: he can recognize the shape of letters in his native language alphabet and he has become skilled at reading these in the direction his language prescribes. He has also learned to recognize certain patterns of arrangement (such as paragraph division) and is familiar with the punctuation marks and their function. When he comes in a foreign language then he already understands what the process of reading signifies (1968: 215).

This view is reinforced by Charles Anderson (1986) who quotes Jolly (1978)

Jolly (1978) states that success in reading a foreign language depends crucially upon one's first language reading ability rather than upon the student's level of English. "If this is identifiable" He goes on to say that reading in a foreign language requires the transference of old skills, not the learning of new ones". Therefore, it would follow,

students who fail to read adequately in the foreign language fail because they either do not possess the 'old skills'. or because they have failed to transfer them. (pp. 2-3)

2.3 READING READINESS

Researchers in beginning reading have been interested to see what the child must do to learn to read successfully, and for about fifty years the question as to when children are ready to read has been a subject of debate. Thus it was accepted that reading readiness was a result of maturation. And until a child reached that age level of development it was useless to try to teach him to read. This was based on Piaget's early investigation into the stages of the children's intellectual development (Taylor, 1973: 47) According to the modern theory of Piaget's cognitive development there are four stages. 1. Sensory motor stage (1-2 years) in the first two years of life a child's intellectual development is mainly non verbal. 2. The Preoperational stage (2-7 years) during which the child develops an ability to think symbolically and to use language. 3. The Concrete Operational stage (7-11 years) an important development during this stage is mastery of the concepts of time, space and number. 4. The Formal operational stage (11 years and above) which **represents** the attainment of intellectual ability; at this **stage** the child starts to think critically. (Dennis, 1980, pp 340-342)

Harrison classifies the factors influencing reading readiness into three main headings namely 1. intellectual development 2. physical development 3. personal development. According to Harrison the single factor which most accurately

determines reading readiness is mental age. He states "It has been found that in order to make any progress in reading a child must have attained a mental age of at least six years and a mental age of six and one half years more nearly ensures success"(1939:2). Other scholars were interested mainly in the pre-reading activities.

A child must begin the interpretation of written expression in a meaningful situation. Before any child starts reading from books he should have acquired habits, abilities, and understanding so that this most important experience shall be successful. (Lamoreaux and May Lee, 1943:6)

The modern view of reading readiness differs to a certain extent, from the older view in that it lays emphasis on the value of training in helping the child to reach a stage when he can begin to read. According to the modern view the importance of growth and maturation is not underestimated but reading readiness should not be waited for to come and adequate background experience to the child to read is called for: It may mean training in particular skill related to reading such as noting the difference between word shapes, looking at words and pictures, following a sequence of pictures and so on ...' (Schonell, 1961:49). A definition of reading readiness formulated by Roger Farr and Nancy Roser, which according to them, is based heavily on the works of Arthur Gates (1937) David Ausubel (1958) and Dolores Darkin (1976) is one that places the responsibility for reading readiness upon the teacher.

A child's readiness to read is dependent upon how his or her unique set of pre-reading behaviours can be matched with appropriate instructions. (1979: 91),

Farr and Roser go on to say that all the definition seems to suggest is that there is some absolute set of pre-reading behaviours that can be taught to children who need it; but there is no such set. This is because there is not any yardstick that measures the state the child is in. "Inventories exist that catalogue all the prerequisites to reading readiness. They are not usually informed by any kind of theory about reading, but are more like 'shopping list' of everything the compiler thinks might be relevant to reading ..." (Smith, 1985:91) Nevertheless, there are some general characteristics the pre-reader is expected to demonstrate. In his preparatory period the child may show some degree of interest and motivation - his concern with books, his inquiries about the printed words, his wish to be able to read by himself. Additionally the child's linguistic skill or maturity and his ability to use words is known to be very important. Opal Dunn (1984) and Farr and Roser (1979) mention knowledge of letters as an important aspect of preparatory programme. Others include reading in a mother tongue as part of reading readiness. "Where practicable a child should learn first to read in his mother tongue. He should only tackle the problem of reading in a second language when he has mastered the elements in the first" (Afoyalan et al, 1986: 26).

The transition in the child's reading development from being 'unable to read' to the state of 'being ready to read' is not clearly demarcated. Although it can be said that

reading really begins with the child's ability in interpreting meaning from print, each stage in reading is a step in reading readiness for further reading as long as there is development in reading process. Smith reports:

If learning to read is regarded as a continual process of making more and more sense of written language advancing with every reading experience and beginning with the first insight that print is meaningful then it will be seen that there can never be anything specific for a child to be ready for. Learning to read is simply a matter of reading more (pp. 156-157).

In this study all the reading development preceding the actual reading of print (third grade, second semester) from a book will be considered reading readiness. However, this readiness may continue after the book-reading has begun (i.e. grade four, first semester, when there is a preparation for further reading.

2.4 APPROACHES AND METHODS

When the preparatory reading stage has been completed the stage for a more formal and systematic reading lessons should be set as an essential part of beginning reading programme. Although not all pupils in a group will be ready for more formal introduction of reading a book, the teacher can proceed to teach his pupils, using one method or a combination of methods. There are several methods. Each with its advocates and opponents has tried to offer recommendations. In spite of the long-standing controversy over the two major methods namely, the 'look-and-say' and the 'phonic', none has been accepted as a magic formula to solve all

problems related to teaching beginners to read. In this chapter four major methods will be discussed.

2.4.1 ALPHABETIC METHOD

This method is a spelling method whereby children learn the alphabetic names of the letters and then spell out and learn individual words. Accordingly to Bloomfield's, the last serious proponent of this method, the teaching programme should distinguish between regular spelling and irregular spelling of the English alphabet. Hence, the alphabetic principle of teaching reading delays the teaching of irregular words until the child learns the regular words. Bloomfield States:

For instance, we must train the child to respond by the 'k'-sound to the sight of the letter 'k' in words like kiss, kid, kit, but we must also train him not to try to pronounce a 'k'-sound when he sees the written 'k' in words like knit, knife, knee, knight (1970: 390).

Some objections raised to Bloomfield's system include: exclusive use of the name rather than sound of the letters, too rigid exclusion of irregularly spelled words during early instruction, and its dependence on 'automatic' rather than the reasoned association between letters and sounds.

It seems then the approach perhaps cannot be used in its entirety, but that the classification of the sounds can be accepted as a linguistic contribution and included at the proper stage in the reading process. The application and planning of the methodology are the task of the educator

(Bathman and Weherell, 1971:175)

2.4.2 THE PHONIC METHOD

The phonic method is based on word building according to the sounds of letters and letter combinations as opposed to their alphabetic names. It teaches sounds of letter combinations by oral exaggerations of similar sounds. The basic unit is the grapheme corresponding very closely to the phoneme in speech. Syllables consist of graphemes and have a three-place structure.

Initial grapheme		Medial grapheme		Final grapheme
c	+	a	+	t
d	+	o	+	g
th	+	a	+	n
c	+	a	+	tch

The child is taught the sound values of the different letters. He may be explicitly taught to sound the letters.

/k/ + /a/ + /t/ = /kat/

Or he may be expected to induce the sound values from the selected examples and to generalize these values to new words - cat, car, come etc.

Originally the sounds of individual letters were taught but mainly in the last decade. Linguists have pointed out that letter-sounds are never produced singly but in the context of words, and that usually the positioning of the letter determines its particular sound (Goodacre, 1978:173) Another disadvantage of this method is "only one sound is

given for each letter, so that the scheme is weak in the first place, because it provides only twenty - six sounds out of the sixty-odd sounds which the twenty-six letters of the alphabet may represent (schonell: 1961:84). And according to Margaret Grant the flaw of this method is that the pupil may lose meaning and sense of the sentence because he will be concerned with sounding out of letters and words and focus may be on sound than meaning. (1960: 123). On the other hand using the phonic method children learn letter sound relations and sound blends so that they can sound out unfamiliar printed words (Taylor and Taylor, 1983:371)

2.4.3 THE "WHOLE-WORD" OR "LOOK-AND-SAY" METHOD

The 'whole-word' method teaches recognition of the whole words often selected from words already familiar to the learner without necessarily giving emphasis to the knowledge of sounds of letters. The word is introduced gradually and systematically, without much revision. The theoretical basis for the proponents of this method was the Gestalt theory of psychology which puts forward the view that things are perceived in wholes rather than in parts of a whole and so it is believed that children would recognize words as wholes before they can break them into parts. In 1885 a certain scholar by the name of Cattell made an experiment in which he showed by two lines of evidence that a familiar word is read as a whole rather than by spelling out its letters (De cecca, 1963:342). This method has been criticized as being in certain circumstances a crude form of deciphering unfamiliar words. In some classrooms one can see a line of children waiting to be told

'what the word says'. In large classes, the use of this method does produce particular difficulties. Children are not only encouraged to recognize words by their shape or pattern but also think what particular word fits into a context (Goodacre, 175).

2.4.4 THE SENTENCE METHOD

This method follows the same principle as the 'look-and-say' or the word method, but this method is based on the view that the sentence or the phrase is a more natural unit of recognition for the learner than the word. This method teaches sight recognition of sentences and encourages reading with stress and intonation.

The sentence method of teaching involves activities such as the following stages:

1. introducing sentences;
2. matching a flash-card of the sentence;
3. recognition of the sentences without the help of the picture; and
4. matching flash-cards of words to sentence.

A possible disadvantage of this method is (at first) the children can only read sentences they have been taught and have no way of finding out words for themselves (Grant, 130).

2.4.5 THE LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH TO THE TEACHING OF READING

This approach teaches texts based on the child's own language. It uses the child's own writing as a source material

" 40 "

for readers. According to Lawrence W. Carrilo whose dissertation deals with this particular topic (1965), if the words, sentences, concepts included are full of meaning for the children, if they have linguistic relevance, if they have been heard or and spoken by children prior to their printed presentation, learning to read will be relatively simple. On the other hand, if the printed page represent a type of communication which is different and if the situations found in the story had never been experienced, learning to read is difficult (1967:197). The Language Experience Approach, however, cannot be a substitute to any other method, because combining the Language Experience Approach with almost any other method is thought to produce good results.

A negative aspect is that children tend to supply colourful but uncommon words (frightened, icecap, knife) rather than bland but useful words (man, see)(Taylor and Taylor, 377).

Evidence concerning the relations of this approach to the child's reading achievements will be dealt with later on in this chapter.

2,4,6 THE INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET (the i.t.a)

The inconsistency and irregularity of the English orthographic system and the problem it poses to the learner has been felt long ago. Baugh states "The English Speaking child undoubtedly wastes much valuable time during the early year of his education in learning to learn his own language, and to the foreigner our spelling is appallingly difficult" (1968:13). Renowned people like George Barnard Shaw

have proposed the modification of the traditional English orthography. Sir. James Pitman developed the best known modification, the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a) in the early 1960's. The principle of the i.t.a is to have one grapheme for one phoneme but without making a major change in the traditional orthography. The i.t.a is thought to be useful for the child's learning in associating a sound with its letter. One of its advocates is Downing who had carried out experiments and claimed to have obtained positive results. In the literature of 1970's not much is said about the i.t.a. Despite the facility it provides at the early stage in the child's learning there are some implementation problems associated with the i.t.a such as limiting the beginning reader to read only those material that have been printed using the modified alphabet. (Farr and Roser, 1979:476).

2.5 THE PROBLEM OF SELECTING AN APPROACH

The teacher may adopt a method or combination of methods and approaches developed when the material produced does not explicitly state the model on which it is based as in the case of the current use in the Ethiopian government elementary schools. However, if one views the reading process in the initial stage as primarily a matter of decoding written into spoken symbols, the method adopted will be designed on such relationships. It can be according to Downing (1979) 'phonic' or according to Taylor and Taylor(1983) 'look-and-say'.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the teacher has to take two main decisions. According to Southgate (1967) the first has to do with the basic belief about teaching beginning reading. This dilemma concerns the issue as to which of the

main philosophies to follow. Southgate describes these two broad approaches, 'Incidental learning' and 'Systematic teaching'. The second dilemma in which the teacher can be caught is related to the question of which of the main methods or combination of methods the teacher shall adopt. The problem somehow arises from the nature of the writing system. The inconsistency and irregularity of the English traditional writing system is sometimes a hindrance to the learner. Downing states

Some writers have argued that the look-and-say methods are appropriate for languages such as English in which the letter-sound relations are complex or irregular whereas phonic methods are better for languages such as Spanish in which the letter-sound relations are simple and regular. (1979, 42).

2.6 RESEARCH ON BEGINNING READING

In reviewing what research offers to us on beginning reading the survey studies conducted in some societies can be mentioned. In London Dr. Goodcre E.J. conducted a survey to find out the pre-dominant method of beginning reading. According to D'Arcy (1973) this survey showed that, irrespective of social area of school, mixed method was the most common. In Nigeria a general survey was carried out and through the observation of several primary schools, 'reading-while-listening' or 'look-and-say' was found to be the most common method. However, a few teachers were using a combination of alphabetic, phonic, and sentence methods of teaching reading (Gbenedio, 1986:46).

Taylor and Taylor (1983:384) Cite R. Dykstra (1974) and his summary of 60 years research on beginning reading show that early systematic instruction in phonics provides a child with skills necessary to become an independent reader at an early age. At school, Grade 1 children taught for some months exclusively by the whole word method show skill in word recognition, but less than those who are taught by phonics (Alegria et.al. 1982, woh, 1975).

Results of experimental studies carried out by Loise Gurren and Ann Huges is reported by Jerry Johns as follows: in 1965, **these two** reviewed 18 published and unpublished studies that compared intensive-phonics versus gradual-phonics the so-called 'look-and-say' group. According to Gurren and Hughes, each study included in the review fulfilled four criteria: 1) a true comparison of intensive phonics versus gradual phonics; 2) a sampling procedure that ensured that both groups were equivalent in intelligence; 3) adequate and similar testing groups; and 4) the use of **statistical** test to determine the significance of the differences between the means in the two groups. (1983, 98). Johns goes on to say that these groups were tested for different skills and

From their analysis of data Gurren and Hughes concluded that intensive phonics was superior to gradual phonics; moreover intensive phonics benefited comprehension and vocabulary from the start of formal reading and in grades three and above. They then recommended that all the main sound-symbol relationships (vowel and consonant) be taught intensively from the beginning of reading instruction. To keep implement intensive phonics, they urged schools

and institutions of higher learning to offer appropriate training, techniques, and material in an intensive-phonics approach. (p.99).

In a similar study Linnea Ehri summarized the study of Dorothy C. Ohnmacht: the effect of letter-name knowledge on achievement in reading in the first grade. According to him there were three groups who received three different 'treatments' - Treatment Group A received instruction in letter names followed by instruction in sight-words (sight-word instruction involved activities like visual and auditory perception of words, whole words in sentences etc). Treatment Group B received instruction in letter names and sounds followed by sight words. Treatment Group C received instruction in sight words followed by letter-name-and-sound instruction. The same material was used. During, the 18th week of instruction achievement test was administered to measure three different skills. After results had been analyzed, several implications for instruction were drawn. However the most important inference was 'early emphasis on letter-name-and sound' instruction yields an advantage in learning to recognize words early sight-word instruction' (Ehri, 1983: 142).

Taylor and Taylor have also tried to review the works on the effect of letter recognition ability on reading. They report

Bond and Dykstra(1967) compiled the findings of studies involving several thousands of children who were taught to read by six different methods. At the end of Grade 1, the best predictor of reading success was the letter recognition sub-test of Murphy Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis. The finding was

repeated when the studies were extended to Grade 2. (Dykstra 1968) According to Richek (1977-1978) the ability to recognize letters was one general skill that predicted success among kindergarteners, regardless of methods of instruction used (1983:357).

About the Language Experience Approach to teaching reading to beginners Gertrude Hildreth's study of a school beginner's progress in learning words supports the view that oral language with which children are familiar provides the basis for their learning to recognize words. Words more often used by the individual in speaking are normally easier to recall in print. In her experiment a boy of normal language development was shown flash-card each containing a single word. As each card was flashed he was to pronounce a word. The result showed that the words more meaningful to him "pony, boy, orange, candy, mother" were quickly learnt (1972:51).

In Nigeria after a general survey was carried out to find out the most common method, U.B. Gbenedio made a study comparing a 'reading-while-listening' group or a group taught using the look-and-say method and a group taught using the combination of alphabetic, phonic, and sentence methods. And he says, results of the study seem to indicate that the reading-while-listening method of teaching is not quite as effective as the combination of the alphabetic, phonic, word and sentence methods. While the latter seems to emphasize meaning the former does not (1986:51).

2.7 FACTORS AFFECTING READING INSTRUCTION

Several factors may affect the success or failure of any reading instruction programme; the dominant ones according to some researchers are the learner, the teacher, the method and the material.

In this thesis the focus of study will not be the learner. Taking the learner as a subject of study would involve studying individual differences of a group of learners as regards reading readiness, home background and other extraneous factors. The method and the material are sometimes closely linked. However, they cannot by themselves make any programme a success. It seems that the teachers quality and skill accounts for certain differences.

2.8 THE TEACHER VARIABLE

Initial reading is a fundamental skill usually taught at school by the teacher. By and large it is the responsibility of the teacher concerned with the child's early years at school. What takes place in the class-room is critical for many children, because it can determine whether they become readers or not. Ruth Strang (1964) Elizabeth Goodacre (1978) and Frank Smith (1983) stress the influence of the quality of teacher on the success or failure of the learner. As Goodacre explains

A research programme in America called the First Grade Reading Programme produced the most important finding the fact that no one method was superior to any other and that the really important factor was the understanding and competence of the teacher (1978:165)

Mary C. Austine is concerned with the pre-service and in-service education to teachers of reading. How successful these teachers will be in their effort depends in large measure upon preparation they receive before entering the profession and continued guidance offered to them after they begin to teach. The findings of a survey research conducted to investigate the pre-service education of prospective teachers of reading show that 93 percent of the colleges sampled required a course in basic reading instruction (1967:27).

The trainers of the teachers to a certain extent are responsible for the success or failure of a reading programme. Julian Darkin referring to J. Morris's findings says

Morris concluded that the cause of most failures lies with the teacher. Schools which have the same kinds of children and use the same material get different results. Morris draws up an interesting scale against which to assess teaching, and shows that in nearly every case where the results are bad, the teaching is also bad. Her conclusion places heavy responsibility on the trainers of the teachers (1969:118)

Other studies as reported in the work of Taylor and Taylor (1983) show that

Among children predicted to fail in reading those taught by competent teachers had lower rate of failure than those placed in classes of teachers judged to be poor (Jansky & de Hinsch 1972). Chall (1967) after reviewing 85 studies on teaching methods concluded. It was what the teacher did with the method, the material and the children rather than the method itself that seems to make the difference (p. 270).

2.9 WORKS ON BEGINNING READING IN ETHIOPIA

Attempts have been made in this chapter to summarize works related to beginning reading in other countries. The researcher has not come across any study conducted concerning practices of beginning reading instruction in Ethiopian elementary schools.

As far as the policy of the curriculum designers is concerned, the writer of this thesis had interviewed one of the persons involved in the preparation of the text book to find some relevant information. It has been ascertained that the curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education does not have any clearly stated policy to pursue. In the syllabus for levels 3 up to 6 objectives have been stated in very general terms. Some of the points stated are "The student will be able to.... recognize and reproduce English vowel and consonant sounds and their combinations and by so doing gain auditory facility". It further states "use the English language for individual reading and writing purpose"(1984:158) However, as to how these objectives are to be achieved no specific guidelines are provided by the syllabus. According to the authorities it is assumed that the individual teacher will use whatever approach and method he might think is appropriate depending upon the kind of students he has, the nature of the topics he deals with and other variables. It is also taken for granted that the teacher, having been trained in the T.T.I's, will employ his knowledge and creativity. As already stated, therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out, just exactly, what approaches and methods teachers use when they teach beginners in our elementary schools.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

3.1 PROCEDURE

A preliminary study was started, which involved visits to various elementary schools, during which reading lessons were observed and many teachers interviewed by the researcher. In order to give a thorough description of the beginning reading instruction a questionnaire was prepared in such a way that all points related to class-room activities are included.

Apart from finding out the most common method being used by teachers, the study was also concerned in finding out possible relationships between background of teachers with the methods they used.

The data obtained through the questionnaire together with the results of observation were analyzed and discussed. The method of analysis was both descriptive and correlational.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 SAMPLING

The random sampling technique was used to select one out of the five zones in Addis Ababa. Zone Four was chosen by lot. The rationale behind the employment of random sampling to select one out of the four zones was that in the one

hundred and forty elementary schools grouped into five zones there is no disparity as regards placement of students, assignment of teachers, or supply of teaching material. In relation to this Warwick and Linger (1975:69-70) report that a reasonable sample size depending on the purpose of the study can represent the whole population if the population is homogenous. If the population is, however, **heterogenous** the sampling should take every group into account in order to have an unbiased sample. Therefore, fifty teachers from twenty seven schools - 21 grade four and 29 grade three teachers-were the subjects of the study.

3.2.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

3.2.2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The class-room observation and the theoretical background in the review of literature had served as material for the preparation of the questionnaire. Although an attempt has been made to include all points related to class-room activities and teaching techniques, the degree of the importance of items included varied according to their direct relevance to the statement of the thesis.

In preparing the questionnaire the researcher had made all possible efforts to use plain language. Technical and uncommon terms were deliberately avoided and replaced by paraphrases and simple and common expressions. The sequential order of questions was another point that attention was paid to. As far as

possible items were made to throw a light on the subsequent items, so that the respondent can be directed by the ideas with which he had been familiar earlier. Moreover, items referring to the same idea were constructed with different wording to complement some important questions.

3.2.2.2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Each teacher was approached by the researcher and a brief explanation about the content and objectives of the questionnaire was given. The respondents were told to be frank in answering the questions and that the purpose of the questionnaire was to gather information for research. The researcher gave ample time to the respondents in order for them to be able to read each question carefully and fill in the necessary and reliable information. The questionnaire was administered at the appropriate time when the memory about the actual class-room activities and teaching was fresh in their minds. This is because the reliability of responses can sometimes be affected by time gap.

3.2.2.3 OBSERVATION

The purpose of the class-room observation by the researcher was to see and record the methods and materials used by individual teachers. Against the background of the fundamental theories of beginning reading instruction and the major methods developed (chapter II) this method of data collection attempted to determine the most common method currently being

used by teachers teaching reading to beginners. The class-room observation is expected to supplement the data obtained through the questionnaire.

3.3 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

After data were collected responses were coded in the following manner: **(Appendix B)**

- a. 'Yes' responses were given the value of 2
- b. 'No' responses were given the value 1
- c. Adverbs of frequency and quantitative adjectives were given values between 0 and 4 according to the relative strength and weakness they denote.
- d. Background data variables were designated by arbitrary numbers.

After tallying and summarizing, the responses the researcher computed percentages for every item. A computer was used to compute the correlation of two background data variables or dependent variables against five independent variables or the questions supposed to yield information regarding the practices of teaching. However, the results could not clearly show this relationship as the data gathered were categorical or qualitative in which respondents were required to give, in most cases, a 'yes' or 'no' dichotomous answers. It was therefore, necessary to show the relationship of this variables using the cross-tabulation method. Ten tables were prepared to show the correlation (Appendix C)

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following results and Analysis of data obtained refer to the total sample of 50 teachers from government and public elementary schools in Addis Ababa. Towards the end of this chapter an attempt has been made to analyze and discuss what was observed in the actual class-room situation. In the section below (4.1) responses of individual teachers regarding the class-room activities and teaching techniques, which otherwise could not have been secured through observation, are analysed and discussed.

As a matter of convenience, items in this part of the questionnaire have been grouped according to the connection they bear with each other. Ten tables have been prepared (Appendix C) to show the relationship of two background variables (educational level and experience of teacher) against five dependent variables of questions about the class-room activities and teaching techniques.

4.1 TEACHING TECHNIQUES AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

The first question (3.1) asked teachers which of the various methods they adopted at the very beginning of the reading instruction and the responses given show that 46% of the total started with the names of the letters. This being the dominant method used, the remaining 54% reported that they used other methods like the word, phrase, sentence and sounds of letters at the very beginning.

Four questions had to do with the use of the 'phonic' method. Item 3.9 asked teachers if they taught separate sounds of words by breaking them into their parts and item 3.10 if they taught the sounds of letters and combination of letters by matching them with the corresponding Amharic letter sound. Their responses were that 56% of them used the former and 42% used the latter. In item 3.14 teachers were asked if they believed that teaching the separate sounds within a word helped children to read unfamiliar words later on and item 3.15 asked those who had tried this method how effective it was. In response to item 3.14, 78% answered positively saying that the method helped children to read unfamiliar words later on. In the subsequent question of the total subjects those who could tell about its effectiveness were 84% because 16% of them had not tried it. 34% said that it worked with "most" children and 40% reported that it worked with "some" children. The remaining 10% reported in terms of inconsiderable quantifiers. (with 'few' children and "not effective at all")

Item 3.16 was meant to elicit opinion on how they found the 'whole-word' method and item 3.17 asked teachers to give their opinion about how a teacher should begin his teaching with reference to the major methods of teaching. In their response to item 3.16, 62% of the respondents agreed to the idea that it is rather easier to teach the 'whole-word' at the beginning. In response to the latter question 36% favored single and separate methods while 74% favoured a combination of methods. Those who approved that a teacher should use the most eclectic method of the combination of "whole word,

phonic and sentence methods" were 34% of the total. This is relatively a big figure.

Teachers were asked if they made their pupils read without the help of pictures to see how far their pupils are dependent on picture aids (3.2) and 82% of the teachers reported that they made their pupils read without the help of pictures. The following question (3.3) inquired if teachers made their children write the words they had read. This was meant to find out if the reading skill was integrated with writing. 90% of the respondents answered positively to this question. Out of those who responded negatively 80% were below the average years of experience (13.58).

Three consecutive items were related to the use of flash-cards by respective teachers. These items asked teachers if they used flash-cards (3.4), how they used the flash-cards(3.5) and if they wrote sentences on flash-cards (3.6) and their responses were:

- a. 68% of the total reported that they used flash-cards.
- b. Of this 12% said that they flashed the card together with the corresponding picture or object while 6% reported that they asked pupils to identify the correct flash-card as the teachers called out the word. The remaining 40% used both techniques.
- c. 62% of the flash-card users wrote sentences on flash-cards.

Items 3.7 and 3.8 were pertaining to dictation tests. While 52% of the teachers gave single word dictation tests,

only 12% gave sentence dictation tests.

Items 3.11 and 3.12 were questions asked to draw teachers' opinion regarding the practice of matching pictures with words. They reported that this technique is helpful in 96% of the cases. However, 58% of them agreed to the assumption that this practice would make pupils dependent on cues from the pictures.

Finally teachers were asked (item 3.18) if they needed a seminar, a workshop or refresher courses related to beginning reading; 90% of the respondents reported that they needed these kinds of programmes.

As far as some of the teaching techniques are concerned, some strong points of the teaching practices can be mentioned here. The fact that 82% of the teachers made their children write words and sentences is an important aspect of reading programme by way of combining the reading skill with writing skill. Writing is one means by which the child can reproduce what he had acquired or 'decoded' through his reading skill. In addition, 90% of the teachers made their pupils read without the help of pictures. This, in a way, would enable children not to totally depend on cues from pictures when they read. Their decoding skill is thereby developed.

On the other hand, flash cards, thought to be important teaching aids in word recognition skill, were used by only 58% of the teachers. This is not a big figure. The implication is that the word recognition skill has suffered to a certain extent. Besides, only 52% of the teachers gave word

dictation tests. If according to one of the objectives of instruction of level 3-6 of the syllabus, the student will have to "use the English language for individual reading and writing purpose" it is necessary to test the progress he has made towards this expected outcome. Dictation test can indicate the result of the reading instruction. Furthermore, only 58% of the respondents used the "phonic" method. Although the phonic method by itself does not make a reading programme successful, research findings have established the fact that it gives the child a sense of security by way of developing his "phonic generalization" skill which will enable the child to at least guess how a symbol is going to be produced by his own sound when he looks at the graphic symbol. It is important, however, to note that a substantial percent of the teachers reported they knew the fact that the phonic method helped children to read unfamiliar word later on. This could not have been substantiated by the class-room observation. The discrepancy observed could be attributed to the fact that teachers greatly relied on what the text-book dictated them to do. What they claimed to do about the phonic method seems to be only occasional.

This study has also tried to show how some of the recommended techniques of the phonic method were used in relation to the individual teacher's educational level and experience. The findings indicate that teacher's educational level did not have any positive relationship with the techniques and methods they are expected to employ. In fact, results show that with the increase in the educational level of individual teachers the tendency of using this technique tails off.

Nevertheless experience of teachers was a good indicator and a function of recommended methods and showed positive relationship or positive correlation. This implies that the knowledge the teachers have about the effectiveness of each of the techniques and methods seems to be a result of their cumulative experience over a long period of years with different pupils and in different situations. Moreover, what these findings indicate is using the recommended methods by experienced teachers was an outcome of the trial-and-error method rather than adequate training in the subject.

4.2 TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF THE TEXT-BOOK

In this section an attempt was made to see if the text-book had some influence on the teaching-learning process. From the facts and opinions gathered through the questionnaire some of the strong and weak points can be mentioned.

Only 54% of the teachers reported that the text-book allowed them to use a variety of methods. As a result 46% adopted any method they thought was helpful. Although 72% of the total said that the presentation of 'people' and 'objects' was attractive to the children and 64% of them reported that the colouring was adequate to illustrate and explain the text, some experienced teachers complained that the text-book depicted pictures limited only to **indoor** activities. They added many attractive pictures like "hopping" and "horse riding" could have been included. Besides, the text-books, especially that of grade four, lacked brilliant colours. The green and blue colours are thought to be more attractive to the child, but these text-books

have little of these coloures. It also makes one uneasy to find out that 20% of the teachers do not own the teacher's guide

In general the helpfulness of the teacher's guide was not denied by the majority. 60% of the teachers reported that it was helpful. However, the complaint raised about the teacher's manual was that it was not well synchronized with the units of the text-book in that the manual required more items to be covered than the time could allow. It can, therefore be said that the text-book has to some extent an influence on the teaching.

4.3 RESULTS OF OBSERVATION

Through the class-room observation the researcher was able to determine the most common method currently being used and to give a general picture of the practices. Although 58% of the teachers claimed that they used the phonic method, in about 90% of the 43 classes visited, teachers were found using the "look-and-say" or "reading-while-listening" method of whole words or sentences. Much of the reading was done by whole class repeating in chorus, and in very few cases teachers allowed individual children to read. A major weakness that has been observed in almost all of the classes was that reading was not treated as reading as such. In an attempt to promote the communicative skill of the children, reading has been unnecessarily and unduly intergrated with structure and usage of the language. This involved a whole period of repetition of pattern drills aimed at the production

of correct responses with little attention given to word recognition and 'decoding' skills, which are fundamental at this stage of learning. The worst part of this practice was that pupils sometimes read by looking at pictures without noticing the printed symbol of the word or sentence they read. It was found out, therefore, that oral practice and oral production was given undue emphasis at the expense of the reading skill.

However, there were few teachers (8%) who followed a well organized and systematized teaching. A case of one teacher in one of the mission schools is worth mentioning here. After having taught the names of letters, she made her pupils learn the sound combination of letters of regularly spelled English words like, 'cat', 'mat', 'rat'. Flash-cards were used for word recognition practice. Later on, children are trained to write in cursive writing and a dictation test follows, usually with good effect.

Therefore, what the observation has revealed about practices of teaching with respect to the 'whole-word' versus 'phonic' method\$controversy is that for the most part the instruction gave emphasis to 'whole-word' or the "look-and-say" method of words and larger units of language in an informal and incidental way of teaching reading to beginners.

4.4 READING READINESS OF PUPILS

There were 29 teachers who were required to respond to the points in this part. About the general readiness of pupils in each class and the effort each teacher had made up

to the middle of the third grade in preparing the children to the introduction of the print reading, facts gathered from questions show that:

96% of the teachers said that they had done adequate oral practice to prepare their pupils to print reading, 93% reported that their pupils could repeat or pronounce sentences of four to six words after their teachers;

23 teachers (79.3%) gave the answer that their pupils could read in Amharic; one could not tell whether the pupils in the class could all read in Amharic or not;

In response to the question if all the children in their classes could read pictures only 16 (55.17%) responded positively;

and finally teachers were asked what percent of their class knew the English alphabet; all the fifty teachers reported the percentage of each of their classes who knew the English alphabet and the pooled average of the children who knew the English alphabet was 74.3%

In general the above facts show that the reading readiness stage is achieved. The efforts on the part of the teacher together with the behaviours the children have shown can confirm this fact. Most of the questions related to the indicators of reading readiness of the children have been answered positively. Teachers reported that these indicators had been demonstrated by some of the behaviours the children had exhibited in the class-rooms. The performance of the children in some skills imply that what went on before the middle

of their grade three (from first grade up to the second semester of grade three) had served to promote the reading readiness of the children, regarding the knowledge of the English alphabet, which is thought to be the best predictor of success in reading, the overall performance of the children is considerably strong (74.3%). **Having** been taught to read in their own language in the preceding two years and being aware of the fact that the print has meaning they can learn the English alphabet without much difficulty because they are expected to transfer their old skills of 'decoding' to the new task of reading in a foreign language. Besides, the intensive oral practice they are exposed to during the first semester of grade three is expected to prepare them for reading the printed symbol of the idea they knew previously. It can, therefore, be argued that owing to the above facts the question as to whether the children have reached the stage when they can read or not does not seem to be crucial. It can be said that precondition for the formal beginning of reading instruction is fulfilled. It follows then, that the second question whether we should pass to the next stage, introducing the print, or postponing it until the reading readiness stage is completed is not debatable in this context.

4.5 BACKGROUND DATA DESCRIPTION

The following background data description refers to the total sample of fifty teachers from thirty one government and public schools in Addis Ababa.

Of the total respondents 34% had started teaching without prior training. On the other hand 24% of the teachers had passed through T.T.I s and only 14% had attended institutions of higher education offering college diplomas like Kotebe and Bahir-Dar Colleges of Teacher Education. However, when the total number of teachers who have college education, of any type, was taken into account 42% have attended college education between first year and third year. This includes those who did not have initial training in any college of higher education but perhaps continuing their studies in the Extension Programmes.

As far as the respondents Experience is concerned the highest is 33 years and the lowest 1 year. The mean was 13.58 with standard deviation 8.38. However, the mean of the public schools was 9.88 as opposed to the government schools' which is 17.28.

Teachers who reported that they had taken training related to beginning reading instruction were 30% of the total.

In general, it can be inferred that quite a large number of teachers (34%) had not taken training before they were hired to teach. Besides only 30% of the total had taken training related to initial reading. This implies that a few teachers have knowledge about the subject matter which they are supposed to know. It would follow then, that there is a situation in which teachers teach reading when they have little knowledge about it.

Concerning the teaching experience, the government schools seem to have more experienced teachers than the public schools. While the mean of experience in the public schools is only 9.88, the mean of experience in the government schools is 17.28. This is a significant difference which attention should be paid to because, in this study, facts have revealed that experience of teachers correlated with the use of the recommended methods. In addition the government schools have more trained teachers than the public schools (18% compared to 6% T.T.I graduates) This will in turn have an impact on the teaching because training is thought to be a very important factor in the success of any teaching programme.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Studies in beginning reading have not yet arrived at conclusive results and researchers have not been able to recommend the best single method of teaching reading to beginners. Advocates of each method claim to have obtained positive results, and the controversy over the 'global', look-and-say method of words and larger language units versus the phonic method has been going on for a long time now. The problem partially arises from the complex nature of the reading act itself. This, however, has not deterred scholars from tackling this important subject. From the reports of collected experiences and empirical studies available in literature the following propositions can be stated:

1. Although reading is a complex concept capable of several definitions, we can define and describe beginning reading in terms of the activities it involves;
2. Beginning reading is represented by the 'lower-order-skills' of reading which involves 'decoding' as opposed to 'higher-order-skills' which have to do with thinking, comprehension and inference. It is a skill taught systematically at school;
3. Out of the several methods of teaching reading to beginners, no single method can solve all the problems related to beginning reading;
4. It is the teacher's quality that plays a pivotal

role in the success of a reading instruction programme. An experienced and trained teacher can make a difference in the results of a reading instruction programme.

Against this background, this study has attempted to find out ~~the~~ **which** of the methods is predominant in the elementary schools studied. Findings of the study are summarized below.

The investigation of teachers' background has revealed that an insignificant number of teachers had taken training related to teaching beginners to read. This was reflected in the techniques and methods they adopted. There was a noticeable difference of experience between teachers of the government schools and those who teach in the public schools. This is something that requires attention.

The question of whether the children are ready for the formal introduction of print reading was not found out to be a possible hinderance to the success of the reading programme. Facts have shown that the reading readiness stage is completed.

As far as the central point of the study is concerned, from the information gathered and observation made, the current practices of beginning reading are not aspects of a strong reading programme. To mention some of the shortcomings:

1. reading has been unnecessarily and unduly integrated with grammar and oral practice. No time was allotted for reading as such;

2. The 'phonic' method, which is an important element of word recognition skill has not been given due attention;
3. useful teaching aids in this respect, such as flash cards, have not been used properly.
4. Teachers heavily depend on the text-book which does not lend itself to using a variety of methods.

On the basis of the findings the following recommendations could be made.

1. If it has been recognized that reading is an essential skill in the elementary schools and if the child is expected "to use the English language for independent reading", all necessary preparations towards this objective should be completed.
2. As beginners children mostly recognize words before they can recognize larger language units such as phrases and sentences. If this is established, the children should be allowed to develop their word recognition skill.
3. The child should not be left to do this by rote memorization of large numbers of words by their shapes when the English language writing system is to a certain extent logical and consistent to enable the child to draw some kind of "phonic generalization"
4. However, the reading programme should not be 'code-oriented' - establishing in the learners mind

- a correlation between grapheme and phoneme, because reading involves meaning as well.
5. Being aware of the limitations of each of the reading methods, the teacher should be able to exploit the merits of each of these methods by way of striking a balance between 'code emphasis' techniques of the phonic method and the 'meaning emphasis' of the look-and-say or the whole-word techniques.
 6. To achieve this goal, the researcher recommends that prospective teachers should be given training in this subject. Workshops and training of short duration should be given to teachers currently teaching beginners so that teachers can exchange experiences in this subject.
 7. Well-illustrated and brightly coloured text-books for beginners should be prepared so that the first experience of the pupils with books will be more interesting and attractive. Moreover, the text-books should be designed in such a way that they enable teachers to use a variety of methods of teaching reading.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, F. Virginia. "Teaching Beginning REading: An Interview with Virginia Allen", FORUM. Vol. XV No 1 Jan. 1977.
- Anderson, Charles. "Reading In A Foreign Language," In Reading in A Foreign Language. Charles Anderson and A.H. Urguhart(ed.) New York: Longman Inc., 1986.
- Afoyalan, Adebisi.et.al. Teaching Primary English, London: Longman Group Ltd., 1986.
- Austin, C. Mary. "Training Teachers to **Teach Reading**". In The Second International Reading Symposium. John Dowing And Amy L. Brown(eds.) London: casselle and company Ltd., 1967.
- Batheman, Barbara and Wetherell, Janis. "A critique of Bloomfield's Linguistic Approach to the Teaching of Reading". In Linguistics in the Elementary School Class-room . Paul S. Anderson (ed.) New York: the Macmillan Company, 1971.
- Baugh, C.Albert. A History of The English Language. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1968.
- Bumpass, Faye. "Basic Considerations and Sequenced Steps in Teaching Young Children to Read English as a second Language." In On Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Virginia French Allen(ed.) National Council of teachers of English, 1965.
- Calfee, C. Robert. "A Proposal For Practical (but good) Research on Reading". In Reading: From Process to Practice John Chapman and Pam Czernwieska (eds.) London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1978.
- Carillo, W. Lawnence. "The Language Experience Approach To The Teaching of Reading" In The Second International Reading Symposium. John Downing and Amy L. Brown (eds.) London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1967.
- D'Arcy, Pat. Reading For Meaning: Learning To Read. London: Hutchinson Education Ltd., 1973.
- Darkin, Julian. "The Teachi-g of Reading". In Applied Linguistics And The Teaching of English. Hugh Fraser and W.R. O'Donnel (eds.) London: Longman Group Ltd., 1973.
- De cecca, John. Human Learning. New York: Holt Rinechart and Winston, 1963.

- Downing, John. Reading And Reasoning. London: W & R Chamber Ltd. 1979.
- Dunn Opal. Developing English With Young Learners. London: Mackmillan Publishers Ltd. 1984.
- Dennis, Coon. Introduction To Psychology (Exploration And Application). New York: West Publishing Company, 1980.
- Ehri, C. Linnea. "Summary of Dorothy C. Ohnmacht's Study: The Effect of Letter Knowledge on Achievement In Reading In The First Grade." In Reading Research Revisited. Lance Gentile et.al (eds) Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1983.
- Gbenedio, U.B. "Two Methods of Teaching Reading in Nigerian Primary Classes." In ELT Journal, Vol 40/1, Jan., 1986.
- Grant, Margaret. School Methods With Young Children: A Hand Book For Teachers in Africa. London: Richard Clay and Company Ltd., 1960.
- Goodacre, Elizabeth. "Methods of Teaching Reading" In Reading From Process to Practice. L. John Chapter and Pam Creznwiesk (eds.) London: Rothledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1978.
- Harrison, Lucile. Reading Readiness. Massachusetts: Houghton Miffling Company, 1979.
- Hildreth, Gertrude. "Linguistic Factors in Eary Reading Instruction" In Linguistics in Elementary School Classroom Anderson Paul (ed.) New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971.
- Hochett, Charles.(ed.), A Leonard Bloomfield Anthology. London: Indiana University Press, 1970.
- Johns, L. Jerry. "A critique of Loise Gurren and Ann Hughes Study: Intensive Phonics Vs Gradual Phonics in Beginning Reading: A Review. In Reading Research Revisited. Lance Gentil et.al (eds.) Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1983.
- Lamaneaux, Lillian and Lee, May Dorris. Learning To Read Through Experience. New York: Appleton Century Company Inc. 1943.
- Latham, William. "Are Today's Teachers Adequately Trained For The Teaching of Reading" In The Third International Reading Symposium. John Downing and L. Brown (ed.) London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1968.
- Nuttal, Christine. Teaching Reading Skills in A Foreign Language. London: Heinman Educational Books, 1982.

Rivers, Willga. Teaching Foreign Language Skills. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Smith, Frank, Reading(second edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Schonell, J. Fred. The Psychology and Teaching of Reading. London: Oliver and Bond Ltd., 1965.

Space, D. George. Reading In The Elementary School. Boston: Ally and Bacon Inc., 1967.

Southgate, Vera. "The Problem of Selecting an Approach to the Teaching of Reading. In The Second International Reading Symposium. John Downing and Amy L. Brown (eds.) London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1967.

Taylor, Isap and Taylor, Martin. The Psychology of Reading. New York: Academic Press, 1983.

The Ethiopian School Syllabusses. Ministry of Education of Socialist Ethiopia (First edition). Addis Ababa: 1984.

Wardwick, Donald and Charles, A. Liniger (eds.) The Sample Survey: Theorey and Practice. New York: Mc.Graw Hill Book Company, 1975.

APPENDIX-A

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES
GRADUATE STUDIES PROGRAMME

QUESTIONNAIRE: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PRACTICES
OF BEGINNING READING INSTRUCTION
IN GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS IN ADDIS ABABA

DIRECTION: This questionnaire consists of four parts. Grade three teachers are expected to respond to all the four parts. Grade four teachers are not required to respond to questions in part II (About Reading Readiness).

IMPORTANT: The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information for research work. Therefore, the researcher would like all respondents to be frank in answering these questions.

Thank you.

Please mark with a tick (✓) throughout except when the questions require written responses

PART I

1. About your background

- 1.1 Name of School _____
- 1.2 a) Public _____ b) Government _____
c) Mission _____
- 1.3 Educational Level
- a) 10 _____
- b) 10+1 (grade 11) _____
- c) Twelfth grade (directly went to teaching) _____
- d) 10+2 (T.T.I Graduate) _____
- e) 12+1 _____
- f) 12+2 _____
- g) 12+3 _____
- h) B.A. Degree _____
- i) M.A. Degree _____
- 1.4 College or Institute of teacher training you attended
(Write the name) _____
- 1.5 Length of time in teaching profession (Experience) _____
years
- 1.6 Have you taken any training related to teaching reading
to beginners?

Yes

No

1.7 Have you attended any Workshop, Seminar or refresher programme related to beginning reading instruction?

Yes

No

1.

PART II (only grade three teachers should answer this part)

2. About the Reading Readiness of the Pupils

2.1 Have you done adequate oral practice to prepare the pupils to read printed words?

Yes

No

2.2 Have you made the pupils repeat sentences of four to six words after you?

Yes

No

2.3 Are all of the pupils able to read in Amharic?

Yes

No

2.4 Can all of the children read pictures in books, on charts and cards?

Yes

No

2.5 What percent of the class do you think knows the English alphabet?

a) 50% c) 70% e) below 50%

b) 60% d) 80%

PART III

3. About Teaching Techniques and Classroom Activities

3.1 How do you start teaching your pupils to read at the very beginning? Teach:

- a) name of letters (e.g. a,b,c,d ... etc) _____
- b) phrases (e.g. a cat, a man, under a tree ... etc) _____
- c) words (e.g. cat, man, tree ... etc) _____
- d) sentences (e.g. This is a book, that is a door. etc) _____
- e) sounds of letters (e.g. a:a b:be c:le a: de e:i etc) _____

3.2 Do you make your pupils read single words without the help of pictures?

Yes

No

3.3 Do you sometimes tell your pupils to write words they have read?

Yes

No

3.4 Do you use flash cards?

Yes

No

3.5 If your answer to No 4 is Yes, how do you usually use the flash cards?

- a) Show the card together with the corresponding picture or object as they repeat the word after you _____
- b) call out a word and ask students to find the correct flash card _____
- c) both a and b _____

3.6 Do you write sentences on flash cards?

Yes No

3.7 Do you give single word dictation test?

Yes No

3.8 Do you give sentence dictation test?

Yes No

3.9 Do you teach the separate sounds of words by breaking them into their parts? (e.g. /ba/ ; /g/ is read as 'bag')

Yes No

3.10 Do you teach the sounds of letters and combination of letters by matching them with a corresponding Amharic letter sound? (e.g. /be/ = ቤ

/si/ = ሲ or ስ

3.11 Do you think that matching words with pictures is helpful?

Yes No

3.12 Does this practice (No.11) make pupils depend on cues (hint) from the picture and not on the printed symbol of the word?

Yes No

3.13 Do you translate meanings of sentences, words, phrases into Amharic?

- a) always _____ b) sometimes _____
c) rarely _____ d) never _____

3.14 Would you say that teaching children separate sounds within a word helps them to read unfamiliar words later on?

Yes No

3.15 If you have already tried this (No.14), how effective was it? Effective with:

- a) most children _____
b) some children _____
c) few children _____
d) Not effective at all _____

3.16 Would you say that it is easier to teach only the sounds of the whole word at the initial stage?

Yes No

3.17 How should a teacher begin his reading instruction?

Teach:

- a) whole words _____
b) separate parts of a word _____
c) phrases and sentences _____
d) a and b _____
E) combination of a,b, and c _____

3.18 Would you say that any seminar, workshop, or refresher course related to initial reading instruction is necessary for you?

Yes

No

PART IV

4. About the Text-book

4.1 Is the presentation of people and objects attractive to the children?

Yes

No

4.2 Are the pictures well coloured to explain the text?

Yes

No

4.3 Does the text-book allow you to use different methods of teaching reading? (see part III)

Yes

No

4.4 If it does not (No.3) do you use any method which you think is helpful?

Yes

No

4.5 Does the text-book contain concepts outside the child's experience?

Yes

No

4.6 Do you have a teacher's manual?

Yes

No

4.7 If you have (No.6), is it helpful, practical and explanatory?

Yes

No

APPENDIX-C

Correlation of two background variables (educational level and experience) of teachers against five selected variables of class-room activities and teaching techniques

TABLE 2
VARIABLE 1.3 Vs VARIABLE 3.0

Edu. Level	NO	YES
Grade 12	33.3	34.5
T.T.I	19.0	27.6
12 + 1	19.0	27.6
12 + 2	19.0	6.9
12 + 3	9.5	3.4
	99.8 (42%)	100.0 (58%)

TABLE 3
VARIABLE 1.3 Vs VARIABLE 3.10

Edu. Level	NO	YES
Grade 12	24.1	47.6
T.T.I	31.0	14.3
12 + 1	27.6	19.0
12 + 2	10.3	14.3
12 + 3	6.9	4.8
	99.9 (58%)	100.0 (42%)

TABLE 4
VARIABLE 1.3 Vs VARIABLE 3.14

Edu. Level	NO	YES
Grade 12	54.5	18.2
T.T.I	18.2	25.6
12 + 1	18.2	25.6
12 + 2		15.4
12 + 3	9.1 100% (22%)	5.1 100% (78%)

TABLE 5
VARIABLE 1.3 Vs VARIABLE 3.15

Edu. Level	No Response 0	Not Effective 1	With Few 2	With some 3	With most 4
Grade 12	25		50	40	23.5
T.T.I	25		25	15	35.3
12 + 1	37.5		15	20	23.5
12 + 2				20	11.8
12 + 3	12.5			5	5.9
	100 (16%)	100 (2%)	100 (8%)	100 (40%)	100 (34%)

Edu. Leve Grade 12	$\frac{(40 \times 2) + (23.5 \times 3)}{5} =$	30.1
T.T.I	$\frac{(15 \times 2) + (35.3 \times 3)}{5} =$	27.1
12 + 1	$\frac{(20 \times 2) + (23.5 \times 3)}{5} =$	22.1
12 + 2	$\frac{(20 \times 2) + (11.8 \times 3)}{5} =$	15
12 + 3	$\frac{(5 \times 2) + (5.9 \times 3)}{5} =$	5.5
		99.8%

TABLE 6
VARIABLE . 1.3 Vs VARIABLE 3.17

Edu. Level	Whole Word A	Separate Parts of The word B	Phrases and Sentence C	A & B	A, B, & C
Grade 12	14.3	44.4	50	26.7	41.2
T.T.I	14.3			46.7	23.5
12 + 1	42.9	22.2	50	20.0	17.6
12 + 2	14.3	22.2		6.7	11.8
12 + 3	14.3	11.1			5.9
	100.1 (14%)	99.9 (18%)	100 (40%)	100 (30%)	100 (34%)

Grade 12	$\frac{(26.6 \times 3) + (41.2 \times 4)}{7} =$	34.94
T.T.I	$\frac{(46.7 \times 3) + (23.5 \times 4)}{7} =$	33.44
12 + 1	$\frac{(20.0 \times 3) + (17.6 \times 4)}{7} =$	12.92
12 + 2	$\frac{(6.7 \times 3) + (11.8 \times 4)}{7} =$	13.9
12 + 3	$\frac{5.9 \times 4}{7} =$	3.37
		98.57%

TABLE 7
VARIABLE 1.5 Vs VARIABLE 3.9

Experience	NO	YES
1-4 years	19.2	10.3
5-9 "	19.1	24
10-14 "	17	17.1
15-19 "	42.8	6.8
≥20		41.1
	98.1	99.3
	(42%)	(58%)

TABLE 8
VARIABLE 1.5 Vs VARIABLE 3.10

Experience	NO	YES
1-4 years	13.6	14.3
5-9	17.2	28.7
10-14	17.1	19.1
15-19	24.1	19.1
≥ 20	27.2	19.1
	99.2%	100.3%
	(58%)	(42%)

TABLE 9
VARIABLE 1.5 Vs VARIABLE 3.14

Experience	NO	YES
1-4 Years	27.3	10.4
5-9 "	36.4	20.6
10-14 "	9.1	20.6
10-19 "	27.3	20.5
≥ 20		30.9
	100.1%	100.5%
	(12%)	(88%)

TABLE 10
 VARIABLE 1.5 Vs VARIABLE 3.17

Experience	No Responce 0	Not Effective 1	With Few 2	With Some 3	With Most 4
1-4 Years	12.25		50	15	5.9
5-9	37.5	100	25	15	17.7
10-14				30	17.7
15-19	37.5			30	11.8
> 20	12.5		25	10	47.2
	100	100	100	100	100.3
	(16%)	(2%)	(8%)	(40%)	(34%)

1-4 Years	$\frac{(15 \times 3) + (5.9 \times 4)}{7}$	= 9.8
5-9	$\frac{(15 \times 3) + (17.7 \times 4)}{7}$	= 16.5
10-14	$\frac{(30 \times 3) + (17.7 \times 4)}{7}$	= 22.9
15-19	$\frac{(30 \times 3) + (11.8 \times 4)}{7}$	= 19.6
≥ 20	$\frac{(10 \times 3) + (47.2 \times 4)}{7}$	= 31.2
		100%

TABLE 11
VARIABLE 1.5 Vs VARIABLE 3.17

Experience	Whole Word	Separate Parts of Word	Phrases and Sentences	A & B	A, B & C
1-4	14.3	22.2		13.3	11.8
5-9	28.6	22.2	50	6.7	29.5
10-14	14.3		50	26.7	17.6
15-19	42.9	33.3		13.3	17.7
≥ 20		22.2		40.1	23.6
	100.1% (14%)	99.9% (18%)	100% (4%)	100.1% (30%)	100.2% (34%)

Experience	Average
1-4 Years	$\frac{(13.3 \times 3) + (11.8 \times 4)}{7} = 12.4\%$
5-9	$\frac{(6.7 \times 3) + (29.5 \times 4)}{7} = 19.7\%$
10-14	$\frac{(26.7 \times 3) + (17.6 \times 4)}{7} = 21.5\%$
15-19	$\frac{(13.3 \times 3) + (17.7 \times 4)}{7} = 15.8\%$
≥ 20	$\frac{(40.1 \times 3) + (23.6 \times 4)}{7} = 30.6\%$
	100%