Assessing Factors Affecting Secondary School Students' Reading Comprehension Skill: North Shewa Zone Seladingay High School In Focus.

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ABSTRACT

The ability to extract meaning from text is an important skill. Yet many students struggle with effectively comprehending what they read. The learners’ reading comprehension skill problems have been encountered by the researcher throughout his teaching career. The researcher was worried by students' problem of extracting meaning from that they read. Therefore, the fundamental purpose of this study was to assess factors that affect students’ reading comprehension skill. The researcher adopted both the qualitative and the quantitative approaches for the collection of data for this descriptive study included interviews and questionnaires. From the total of 563 students, the study was conducted on a sample of 50 students which were randomly selected from grade nine students of Seladingay secondary preparatory school in North Shewa zone. The responses were analyzed through descriptive analysis using frequency and percentage. The finding of the study revealed that lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of prior knowledge, students inability to use reading comprehension strategies and lack of interest are factors that affect students' reading comprehension skill. The researcher recommends that cultivating vocabulary by rote memorization and repetition, using strategies related to ascertaining the meaning of unknown words such as guessing words in context, word structure analysis, structural analysis etc. Activating prior knowledge by doing activities such as pre-reading discussions on the topic which aim at making develop background knowledge on the topic of the text and reading extensively is essential for students. Besides, great attention is essential in material selection especially for younger readers for better understanding the text meaning and in improving way readers interact with what they are reading. As a result, the current problem could be improved.
CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the assessing factors that affect students’ reading comprehension skill in Seladingay General and higher education preparatory School Grade 9 students in Amhara Region, North showa zone. Thus, the main purpose of this chapter is to set the background, statement of the problem, objectives, and scope significance of the study. The conceptual terms used in the study are also defined in this chapter.

1.1 Background

English language is a global language which can be used for communication with native speakers and none-native speakers in the worldwide. In relation to this Graddol (2006: 22) as quoted by McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara, (2013) in his study of global trends surrounding English, comments:

On the one hand, the availability of English as a global language is accelerating globalization. On the other, the globalization is accelerating the use of English. There could be around 2 billion people simultaneously learning English in the world’s schools and colleges and as independent adults. Nearly a third of the world population will all be trying to learn English at the same time.

Similarly, English is used as the medium of instruction in our country in the secondary and tertiary levels and is taught as a subject starting from grade one. Though English as a foreign language is learnt in our country, our students do not have exposure of conversing with native speakers. So, they should read different literatures such as periodicals, journals, newspapers, etc. which are written in English. Unfortunately, as most teachers are complaining, one of the most crucial problems facing secondary school teachers in our country today is that many students come into high schools without the requisite knowledge, skills, or disposition to read and comprehend the materials placed for them. As a result, they have got the problem of understanding the meaning of written texts or comprehend written texts. The ability to read and comprehend the text books and notes they gain in different subjects and the materials all written in English determine the academic success or failure of the learners. Unless students comprehend
or understand what they are reading, especially in the language classroom, their reading for other academic and non-academic purposes will be directly or indirectly affected. Thus, from the researchers long time teaching experience, has observed that most students have the problem of understanding the written materials. That means they (the majority of the students) lack reading comprehending skills. As result, students who had comprehension problem didn't score higher on comprehension testes, didn't able to express verbally or in written communication what they have read, didn't score higher on tests of all school subjects including sciences, and social sciences and even they didn't get a pass mark on these subjects.

There are some local studies which have been conducted on the issue of assessing factors that affect students’ reading comprehension. For example Biruk Abera (2014), Gezahegn Fekadu (2013). Their studies have shown that teachers related factors, school related factors and student related factors can be major factors of students reading comprehension but the these researchers did not consider that reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction only between student and text. This is the reason why this research is needed. In this regard as Pardo (2004) stated, once teachers understand what is involved in comprehending and how the factors of reader, text, and context interact to create meaning, they can more easily teach their students to be effective comprehenders.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

If we think about our first days at school, when teachers were teaching us to read, we can certainly remember how difficult it was to read and take information from a long passage and answer comprehension questions even in our mother tongue language. The same difficulty can be felt when we are learner in a new foreign language at different grades: our students who learn English at school, for example, find themselves experiencing the same uncertainties about language as when they were starting to comprehend written text. Students who have this kind of problem not only suffer in schools but also in their communities. For example in classroom, they can't easily understand school subjects and outside school authentic reading texts. Regarding this Nces (2010), Nichd (2000) as sited in van den Broek, Kendeou, Lousberg &Visser (2011) explained that Children who experience difficulties reading and understanding information that is presented to them tend to suffer from problems in school and in their communities. So it is
clear that life for these students become difficult as they grow older. Thus, they were stragglng to comprehend the text.

The ability to extract meaning from text is an important skill. Students need to read textbooks, articles, magazines or academic texts written in English to acquire knowledge and gather information for both their careers and their academic studies. To this end, Linse (2005) as stated, there are two reason that people read: the first is for pleasure. For example stories provide enjoyment for readers of all ages. The second is for information. Reading for information can be as simple as reading menu at restaurant. Whatever the purpose of the reading is the main task is comprehension because trying to read without comprehension is not reading. Moreover, the Ethiopian education and training policy concerns in providing quality education at every level to the learners. To insure this notion reading is important. Hence, to comprehend the text, the learner should read actively but according to my observation there was a concern that learners in secondary school are experiencing problems with reading tasks and comprehending comprehension questions. Indeed, It is clear that reading comprehension in a foreign language is not an easy task. Especially, employing English language as a medium of instruction, like the Ethiopian context, intensifies the problem of reading comprehension. The goal of this research was to increase our understanding of the factors that underlie the poor reading comprehension abilities of students because to help the learner to be active reader, concerned bodies for instance teachers, school administrators etc. should know that what kind of factors affect students reading comprehension. Based on these facts, this study tries to investigate factors affecting secondary preparatory school grade 9 students’ reading comprehension with reference to Seladingay General and higher education preparatory School.

How this study differs from previous research efforts:

There are some local studies which have been conducted on the issue of factors affecting students' reading comprehension. For example, BirukAbera (2014) and Gezahegn Fikade (2013). The findings of these researchers mainly stressed the teacher related factors. For example, as BirukAbera (2014) explained and the results of his study show that teaching reading techniques and strategies were not almost exercised by the teachers, students’ motivation was very low,
shortage of reading materials at home and library were the most major factors that affect students’ reading comprehension. Similarly, Gezahegn Fikade, (2013) as explained, teachers:

didn't use reading strategies while they are teaching reading, guide and practice students how to use reading activity, give attention to reading activities, only focuses on the text book instruction and Student participants did not use different types of reading strategies because of the following factors. He added also lack of training about reading activities, lack of awareness about breading activities, language proficiency and reading skill, poor background, motivation, practice and exposure to different types of reading strategy.

This study tries to fill the following gaps of these researches. First, These researchers took teacher's poor role, lack of reading strategies, exposure to read etc. as factors. These factors can't be students' reading comprehension factors because teachers who uses a lot of reading strategies may have students with low reading comprehension ability .Similarly, reading comprehension strategies are different from reading strategies. Second, the finding of these researchers mainly stressed teacher related factors and the researchers didn't consider that reading as personal activity. Comprehension occurs in the transaction between the reader and the text (Kucer 2001, Rosenblatt, 1978 as quoted in Pardo, 2004). Therefore, it is difficult to take teachers' role as fourth comprehension elements and teachers' teaching strategies as factor affecting students' reading comprehension. The data they provided also didn't assure it. Finally, Lack of books in the library should not be taken as factors that hinder students' reading comprehension because reading comprehension is the interaction between the reader and text ,That means if there is no reading material, there is no interaction at all. So how can these all, except the readers' motivation, can be factors for students' reading comprehension?

Therefore this research tried to find factors by considering reader characteristics, text properties and the activity or purpose for reading because as many researchers have explained reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language, it consists of three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. In this regard RAND Reading study group (2002) as explained Comprehension entails three elements:
The reader who is doing the comprehending, the text that is to be comprehended, the activity in which comprehension is a part.

In considering the reader, they include all the capacities, abilities, knowledge, and experiences that a person brings to the act of reading. Text is broadly construed to include any printed text or electronic text. In considering activity, They include the purposes, processes, and consequences associated with the act of reading.

That means, the factors are surrounded in these components. Therefore, the researcher believes that these areas (reader characteristics, text properties and the instructional context in which reading takes place) need attention and should be researched and the current study is hoped to fill the existing gap in this particular area of the research in the country. Hence, this heavily initiates the researcher to investigate and fill the gap by carrying out the study on factors affecting the students’ reading comprehension based on empirical data.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General objective

The general objective of this research is to identify the factors that affect students' reading comprehension in Seladingay General and higher education preparatory School.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

Pertaining to the general objective, the study aims to attain the following specific objectives:

● To probing what problem students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill.

● To find out personal factors affecting students' comprehension skill.

● To find out textual factors affecting students' comprehension skill.

● To investigate whether students use reading comprehension strategies /techniques/ to comprehend a text.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the afore-mentioned objectives, the present thesis attempted to seek answers for the following basic research questions:
1. What problems do students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill?
2. What are the students-related factors that affect their reading comprehension skills?
3. What are the reading texts-related factors that affect students’ reading comprehension skills?
4. Do students use appropriate strategies to comprehend a text?

1.5 Scope of the Study

In this study, an attempt was made to identify factors that affect students’ reading comprehension skill with reference to grade nine students in Seladingay General and higher education preparatory School in Amhara Regional State in particular, North Shewa Zone. This school was chosen because it was convenient for the researcher to access more information as the researcher has been working in this school. Reasons for this restriction are given as follows:

1. Since grade 10 and grade 12 students were busy preparing themselves for the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) and Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Certificate Examination (EHEECE) respectively, I felt that they would not complete the questionnaire with sufficient care.
2. Since private schools are not many in number in the country, and most of the students do not have the chance to join these schools. As a result, these schools were not chosen for the present study.
3. It would be good to include some high schools of the region in the study, but due to the effort, time, resource, and finance it may requires, it would be complex and inconvenient for the researcher to carry out and cover such a large study in this specific period of given time. Therefore, the research will not include other schools’ students; will also not include primary schools; other colleges and institutions of the region.
4. Grade nine students were chosen because many English teachers who teach in this grade complain that the students often have poor reading comprehension skills that could be one of the factors that lead to low performance in academics.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The result of this study regarding factors affecting students’ reading comprehension will basically have the following significances:
It can help (or serve as initiator for) the future researchers who will work on the similar area of study.

providing students with the opportunity to use the result as a guide to work hard on improving their reading comprehension skill.

Both teachers and students will benefit from the findings which will hopefully contribute for bringing the solution to the factors affecting students’ reading comprehension.

It can help students to be aware of the factors affecting their reading comprehension.

English teachers will reconsider their attitude towards factors affecting students’ reading comprehension learning and the way they approach it.

It may also help teachers to foster the development of their students’ reading comprehension skill.

It can also boost students’ awareness of the strategies and techniques they can use to comprehend reading texts.

Currently, individuals or parents, school administrators and the Ministry of Education are interested in how our secondary students can become effective readers. So they all are beneficial.

1.7. Limitation of the study

The researcher believes that a study on factors affecting students' reading comprehension skill needs longer time to evaluate as many factors as possible and it might have been more reliable if it was possible to increase the size of the sample population and the number of the subject schools since the larger the sample size is the better the reliability. However, It was also impossible , the time and financial resource limitations didn’t allow the researcher to conduct the study in-depth and for a long time and there is also procedural limitations. Especially at the time the research was being carried out, the researcher was busy performing his professional duties as a teacher. Therefore, The research was limited to one school due to absence of students’ willingness and interruption of the classes due to semester mid exams and inconvenient of time to address all grade levels of the school. In addition, availability of reference material and access of internet in his work place limits the researcher. In spite of these challenges, the researcher has tried his best to collect information by visiting libraries of universities.

1.8 Operational Definition
For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

- **Comprehension** - is the process of making meaning from the text.
- **Expository text** is the text which is written to present factual information or ideas. This type of text is referred to as content area text, which includes social studies, math, or science.
- Comprehension and meaning, background knowledge and prior knowledge are synonymously in this text.
- **Factors** - things those affect students reading comprehension.
- **Assess** - to analyze critically and judge definitively the factors affecting students’ reading.
- **Prior knowledge or background knowledge** refers to the understanding that students bring to a text.
- **Text cohesion** represents the extent to which a text explicitly provides background information and cues to help readers relate information distributed across different parts of the text.
- **Think-aloud** involves making one’s thoughts audible and, usually, public—saying what you are thinking while you are performing a task, in this case, reading.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Definition of Reading

Even though different scholars define reading in varied ways, most of them agreed that it is an understanding of whatever written. To mean that, understanding is commonly the goal of reading. For the purposes of this study, According to Marie Clay’s (1991) as cited in Westwood (2004) definition of reading is accepted. She states:

*I define reading as a message-getting, problem-solving activity which increases in power and flexibility the more it is practiced. My definition states that within the directional constraints of the printer’s code, language and visual perception responses are purposefully directed by the reader in some integrated way to the problem of extracting meaning from cues in a text, in sequence, so that the reader brings a maximum of understanding to the author’s message.*

The key word here ‘understanding’ merely reading without understanding doesn’t count as reading. Reading is a complex, purposeful and critical thinking process that involves series skills, ranging from a simple recognition of alphabets up to a higher order of content and from evaluation skills, higher order of comprehension skills this means that it ranges from the lower order of skills up to the higher order of comprehension skills.

The reading approach to reading is based on our reading purposes. Because people read for different purposes in a flexible speed for various amount of specific information using the conducive atmosphere of reading. To this effect, McDonough, Shaw, Masuhara (2017) as explained,

.........our reading processes will vary according to our purpose and every one reads with some kind of purpose in mind generally speaking, the purpose is either to enjoy oneself or to obtain information of some kind. For example, quick scanning of a page in the telephone directory to find a single name is very different form the careful attention you paid to each word in a legal document. In addition, for different purpose of reading such as for getting overall idea or gist,
for specific information selective reading, for an individual entertainment or fluency activity and that involves worldwide understanding, reading shortest texts in order to extract specific ideas and which involves an accuracy activity people use in different ways of reading.

2.2 Reading Strategies/techniques/

Both skimming and scanning, according to Nation (2009) major kinds of expeditious reading. To mean, skimming and scanning both involve fairly rapid superficial reading and both are aimed at searching, rather than deep processing of the text or reflection upon the content of the text. Scanning and skimming do not remove the need for careful reading, but they enable the reader to select parts of the text, that are worth spending time on. According to Aselam, (2003), There are four types of reading techniques. are skimming, scanning extensive reading and intensive reading. let us look at in detail.

2.2.1 Skimming

According to Nation, (2009), skimming means glancing rapidly through a text to determine its gist. Nation added when skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organized, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. As Nation, skimming is therefore a more thorough activity which requires an overall view of the text and may allow you to ‘read’ up to 300–400 words a minute. Similarly Harmer (2007) summarizes skimming as quickly running one’s eyes over a text to get the gist of it. As with scanning, skimming does not involve reading every word. Instead, you may skim by reading: titles, subheadings, words in that are in bold, in italics or underlined, diagrams, a report’s abstract, introduction or conclusion, the first sentence of every paragraph, chapter questions, chapter objectives, chapter summaries. For instance, skimming works when One does not want to read the whole texts or articles; s/he may use various techniques to skim: (1) Use of quick glance through the pages (2) Notice the titles and headings and subheadings (3) Read the opening sentence and the conclusion carefully (4) Read the first and the last sentence of each paragraph in order to gain the main idea of the main points (Nation, 2009). So, skimming is one of strategies that require readers to read quickly in order to get the general idea or gist of a section. This involves running your eye very quickly over large chunks of text. It’s different from
gaining an overview, because when skimming you deal with the standard print. You are trying to pick up some of the main ideas without paying attention to detail. It’s a fast process. A single chapter should take only a few minutes. Skimming activities should involve texts which are very long and which are on topics that the learners are familiar with. As Nation, Comprehension should be measured by questions which ask “What was the text about?” Multiple-choice or true/false questions which focus on the gist of the text could also be used.

2.2.2 Scanning

According to Nation (2009) scanning means glancing rapidly through a text to search for a specific piece of information. Scanning involves three steps: determine what key words to look for, look quickly through the text for those words, then read the sentences around them to see if they provide the information being sought. Similarly Harmer (2007) summarizes Scanning as quickly going through a text to find a particular piece of information. Therefore, when scanning, we only try to locate the specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it is a name, a date, or specific piece of information. Scanning is far more limited since it only means retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. Scanning is reading quickly to search for specific information. You scan, for example, when checking a TV guide or a phone book, looking for a word in a dictionary. As Nation, scanning may allow you to ‘read’ up to 1,500 words a minute. When a student is asked to employ scanning in a task, this process involves moving the eyes quickly through the text (or down a page) looking for specific words and/or phrases. Scanning involves using the author’s use of organizer’s (i.e., numbers, letters, steps, or the sequence words of First, Second, Third…You can also encourage your students to look for words that are bold faced, italicized or in a different font size, style or color. In most cases, you know what you’re looking for, so you’re concentrating based on finding a particular answer. It involves moving your eyes quickly down the page seeking specific words and phrases. In this way, we can say that scanning is reading quickly to locate specific information. As Nation explained, scanning is useful in pre reading stage to build knowledge. Another possible pre reading use of scanning is to check predictions that students make about the content of the text to be read. Scanning is also a useful strategy after having read a text as well.
2.2.3 Intensive Reading

It refers to a high degree of comprehension and retention over a long period of time, in other words, it is reading in depth or carefully to comprehend a given text for example; studying it line by line, using the dictionary, comparing, analyzing, translating, and retaining every expression that it contains. Aslam (2003) explains that intensive reading involves a profound and detailed understanding of the text not only in terms of what it says but also how it says it (P,81). Similarly Nation (2009) as explained Intensive reading is basically a study technique which aims at reading a high degree of comprehension and retention over a long period of time. Harmer (2007) as summarized, Intensive reading is a reading shorter texts, to extract specific information. This is more of an accuracy activity involving reading for detail. Therefore, intensive reading is reading for a high degree of comprehension and retention over a long period of time. Nation as stated, (1) The aim is to make a detailed study of words, phrases, word order and expressions, thus entirely dealing with the sentence structure. (2) The aim is to enable the students to comprehend the text, its sense and meaning. (3) The aim is to enable the students to improve and command over English and increase comprehension of the texts that they come across with expanding vocabulary. (4) It encourages the students to gather information from the text. As Aslam (2003) explained, in intensive reading, students are supposed to read the text in detail so that they can answer the questions given at the end of each text, questions on comprehension, grammar, vocabulary, writing, etc. In an intensive reading class, the students are expected to go through the text slowly, explaining key words and phrases and analyzing grammatical structures whenever necessary. The teacher has to encourage his students to read as much and as fast as they can often aided by study questions so that they will be able to grasp the main ideas of what they are reading. More over, the students are encouraged to give their own interpretations of the text.

2.2.4 Extensive Reading

According to Aslam (2003) to read extensively means to read widely and for fluency involves reading of longer texts for pleasure and, not necessarily for details. According to Rao (2008), it is reading as much as possible, for your own pleasure, at a difficulty level at which you can read smoothly and quickly without looking up words or translating. Harmer (2007) as also summarized, Extensive reading is reading longer texts, usually for one’s own pleasure. This is
afluency activity, mainly involving global understanding. So, we can say that extensive reading is connected to student choice and pleasure in reading in order to reach enjoyment. Nation (2009) as explained, the objectives of extensive reading are: (1) To develop the habit of self-study in the students. (2) To develop the taste for reading in the students. (3) To enable the students to understand the meaning of the given passage as early as possible. (4) To increase the passive vocabulary of the students. (5) To develop the power of concentration. (6) To read for pleasure and recreation. Therefore, we need this program for our students so that they develop the habit of reading outside classroom for the sake of pleasure. It can provide a better exposure and can play a vital role in the learning of a second /foreign/ language. Exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and interesting second or foreign material will, in the long run, produce a beneficial effect on the target language. This also shows that extensive reading has very substantial benefits. It can contribute greatly in increasing acquisition and manipulation of the target language. Teachers, then need to distinguish clearly between intensive and extensive reading and reconsider the important role of extensive reading in the teaching learning process. Teachers thus have to encourage learners to read extensively through assigning some lengthy works for reading at home far away from the pressures of tests and exams. Theorists, however agree that the benefits of extensive reading do not come in the short time nevertheless, it requires high degree of commitment on both sides the learner as well as the teacher. In general to finalize intensive reading and extensive reading have the following differences.

**Intensive reading**
1. It concentrates upon the language aspect.
2. The aim is to make a careful and minute study what is read.
3. Words, phrases, and expressions are studied in detail.
4. It might be dependent.
5. New words and phrases occurring in the book pass into the pupils active vocabulary.
6. It requires intensive teaching.

**Extensive reading**
1. It concentrates upon the subject matter.
2. The aim is only to grasp the meaning of what is read.
3. Words, phrases, and expressions are not studied in detail.
4. Reading by the pupils is silent and independent.
5. New words and phrases occurring in the book pass into the pupils passive vocabulary.
6. No detail teaching is required.
2.3 Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is “the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language” (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002:11). It involves intentional thinking, during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader. Reading is comprehension. Comprehension is what reading is all about. Deeper comprehension results from students purposefully trying to reach a coherent understanding of what a text is about. The processes involved in reading comprehension include, in part, focusing on relevant and important information from a passage and making connections between that information and prior knowledge and students must also understand the meaning of words as well as integrate the many internal connections among important and relevant pieces of information within a passage (Baker, 1985; Cook & Mayer, 1988 as cited in Johnson & Zabrucky, 2011). According to McManara & Kendeou (2011), decoding and comprehension are separate dimensions of reading comprehension. Decoding without comprehension is simply word barking means being able to articulate the word correctly without understanding its meaning. Regarding this Linse (2004) said reading comprehension refers to reading for meaning, understanding and entertainment and it involves higher order thinking skills and is much more complex than merely decoding specific words. Indeed, Block & Pressley (2003: 188) as cited in Thompson & Vaughn (2007), For children to become good comprehenders, they need to become fluent in word recognition processes, to acquire an extensive vocabulary, and to learn to be active in the ways that excellent, mature readers are active. Therefore, the greatest importance is to assure students that reading comprehension is “sense making.” Many English language learners have spent so much time reading words and text they do not understand that they lose sight of making sense and learning from text. Effective comprehenders not only make sense of the text they are reading, they can also use the information it contains. According to Thompson & Vaughn (2007), reading comprehension is a compilation of skills and strategies that require the following:

• Considering students’ stages of development in their first and second language
• Using multiple ways for students to express their understanding other than through oral language—for example, young students enjoy drawing and
illustrating stories and can even do story sequence through story boxes with pictures

• Applying the foundation skills of word reading and fluency with a series of strategies that influence understanding of text.
• Interacting with the text in ways that blend knowledge and experience of the reader
• Setting purposes for reading and checking to see that these purposes and the text are aligned.
• Using strategies and skills to construct meaning during and after reading
• Adapting the strategies used while reading to match the text and purpose for reading
• Recognizing the author’s purpose
• Distinguishing between facts and opinions
• Drawing logical conclusions
• Making inferences and connections between and across texts
• Learning from and liking what you read

Thompson & Vaughn added reading comprehension can be divided into three types. These are textually explicit, textually implicit, and implicit only. They explained as:

1. Textually explicit suggests that information is in the text with little input from the readers’ background knowledge. Questions that refer specifically to what a character did in the story, the meaning of a concept that is defined in expository text, or a summary of the most important events are examples of textually explicit comprehension questions.

2. Textually implicit information is derived from the text, but readers must use their own knowledge and experience to assemble the ideas. Textually implicit reading comprehension questions can be challenging for English language learners if their background knowledge and experiences are not aligned with the text. Readers are required to read between the lines and combine information from previous experience and reading to make inferences. Providing adequate background
knowledge and key concepts prior to reading helps English language learners succeed with textually implicit questions.

3. Implicit only is information that is not stated in the text or is only vaguely suggested.

Reading comprehension is a complex skill: it requires the successful development and orchestration of a variety of lower- and higher-level processes and skills (Balota, Flores d’Arcais, & Rayner, 1990). As a consequence, there are a number of sources for potential comprehension failure and these sources can vary depending on the skill level and age of the reader (Keenan, Betjemann, & Olson, 2008; RAND, 2002). Theories and models of reading comprehension are necessary to make sense of this complexity.

2.3.1 Levels of comprehension

According to Munamara, Ozuru & Floyd (2011), There are different levels of comprehension which are strongly related:

**Literal comprehension** or understanding the information stated directly in the text, is one type of comprehension. However, even here, the good reader picks and chooses, remembering the most important facts. Readers are likely to focus on facts that are familiar to them.

**Higher-level comprehension**, formulating the central thought of a passage is considered part of higher-level comprehension. The main thought constructed is a little different for each of us. We actively participate in the reading process by constructing meaning. Another form of higher-level thinking consists of the *inferences* or the implied information we draw from the text. The experienced reader will draw many inferences.

**Critical or evaluative thinking** is also a part of higher-level comprehension. As you read, you develop a point of view and evaluate the information in light of your thinking and experiences.

2.4 Models of the Reading

There are three main "models" being proposed to explain the nature of foreign learning to read: (1) bottom-up processing model, which is so called because it focuses on developing the basic skill of matching sounds with letters, syllables, and words written on a page; (2) top-down processing model, which focuses on the background knowledge that a reader uses to comprehend
a text; and (3) the third model called "interactive" model which incorporates both top-down and bottom-up processing models and regards text processing as a non-linear, constantly developing phenomenon where both the former explanations constantly react and influence one another (Alderson, 2000). Therefore, in this section, all the three reading models will be described.

2.4.1 Bottom-up Reading Model

Bottom-up approaches are serial models, where the reader begins with the small units of the text, that is, letters. These letters are recognized and converts into systematic phonemes. This string of phonemes recognized as a word. Now the word can be uttered (as it is the case in reading aloud). Then the reader fixates on the following word and continues processing words in the same way to the end of the sentence. Finally, they proceed to a meaning to the sentence. They read texts by ways of focusing on linguistic forms at the level of word and sentence. According to Anderson (2000) In this model, readers begin with the lowest level, from which the symbols are identified. Strings of symbols are then analyzed into morphological clusters, from which words are recognized and then strings of words are analyzed, into phrases and sentences. The meaning of the text is expected to come naturally as the code is broken based on the reader’s prior knowledge of linguistic units like vocabulary, grammar, syntax. In short, Bottom-up model of reading process holds the view that reading is a process of building symbols into words, words into sentences and sentences into the overall meaning. It seems clear that as familiarities with the words increase, the readers will automatically recognize the words. This helps them to read fluently. On top of this, comprehension is produced when readers decode the letter, encode the sound and then construct the meaning from the text. Similarly, If the text presents completely different things from what we already know, for example, the bottom-up model could be the right approach to use because the reader starts from new information to infer meaning; that is why this model is also called ‘data-driven’. Anderson also pointed out the limitation of this model. In this model the reader is passive decoder of graphemes into phonemes into syntactic units and in the end into semantic patterns. From this point of view there derive top down approaches, which start with the active participation of readers in the process of reading, focusing especially on the previous knowledge one brings to the text.
2.4.2 Top-down Reading Model

This model is contrasted with the bottom-up model, because the readers background knowledge is important to understand the text. According to Anderson (2000), the main characteristic of this model is that the reader relies more on existing knowledge and guess and predict text's meaning on the basis of minimal textual information, and maximum use of existing, activated, knowledge. In this process, readers read, making guesses about the message of the text and checking the text for confirming or rejecting cues, based on prior knowledge and contextual clues. Therefore, top-down reading model has a great deal of influence on both L1 and L2 teaching, especially in promoting readers’ prediction, guessing from context, and getting the main idea. Anderson pointed out that top down processing is called ‘conceptually-driven’ because cognitive skills guide the reader towards comprehension.

2.4.3 Interactive Reading Model

Beside the top-down and bottom-up types of reading approach the so-called ‘interactive model’ has been more recently formulated because comprehension is more complex than the two models would predict. Thus, comprehension is achieved through the interaction of both the bottom-up and top down processes. Anderson (2000) suggested that neither bottom up nor top down model is an adequate for comprehension and the more adequate models are interactive models. Therefore, While reading, readers actively combine their bottom-up processes, for example, the ability to decode and recognize words and grammatical forms with their top-down processes, such as using background knowledge to predict and confirm meaning because as Anderson explained, readers are not passive identifiers of letters and words but active constructor of their own knowledge. The level of reader’s comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader variables (interest to read, reading purposes, knowledge of the topic, target language abilities, awareness, and willingness to take risks) interact with the text variables (text type, text structure, and vocabulary) see afore-mentioned discussions.

2.5 Schemata and Reading Comprehension
One important aspect of the interactive model theory emphasizes "schemata," the reader's pre-existing framework about the world and about the text to be read. ‘Schemata’ which in Alderson (2000:17) are defined as “networks of information stored in the brain which act as filters for incoming information”. Hence, A schema is an abstract structure representing concepts stored in memory. These stored concepts are called prior knowledge or background knowledge (the knowledge that readers comes before reading. Studies in the field of reading comprehension revealed that the better a reader is able to access background knowledge about either the content area of a text or the rhetorical, formal structure of a text, the better that reader will be able to comprehend. On the other hand, If new textual information does not fit into the reader's schemata (background knowledge), the reader misunderstands the new information, ignores it, or revises the schemata to match the facts within the passage. According to Pearson, & Anderson, (1984) three assumptions are implicit in schema-theoretic approaches concerning the way knowledge is utilized in comprehension: (a) that schemata are preexisting knowledge structures stored in the mind, (b) that comprehension is a process of mapping the information from the text onto these preexisting knowledge structures, and (c) that knowledge-based processes are predictive and reader driven. Basically, According to Anderson (2000) there are two types of schemata: content and formal schemata. Content schemata are background knowledge about cultural orientation or content of a text. For instance, if we read a story about a woman at the supermarket, we automatically activate our schema of actions and situations which usually take place in a supermarket. Readers do not construct the meaning of a text in a vacuum. Rather, they do so based on a background of relevant facts and information presented in the text. Good reader can associate text content with the appropriate prior-knowledge sources, the faster the comprehension will be. This is possible when the text topic/content is familiar to the reader. Studies have shown that readers who are familiar with the text content, whether in their first or second language, comprehend and recall more than those who are not as familiar with the text topic/content (Example,Alderson,2000). Similarly, comprehension difficulties which ESL/EFL readers may encounter with a text due to a lack of familiarity with the culture-specific content the text presumes. Teachers should also work on minimizing their students’ reading difficulties by providing them with familiar contents that include relevant cultural information. On the other hand, Formal schemata deal with the rhetorical structure of language and a person’s knowledge of the structure of a particular genre, such as news reports or journal articles, articles, academic
texts, etc. (Richards & Schmidt, 2002:462) Formal schemata define readers’ expectations about how pieces of textual information will relate to each other and in what order details will appear. For example, in a detective story, a reader could expect the following chain of events: A crime occurs, possible suspects are identified, evidence is checked on, and the suspect is arrested. Reading comprehension is first of all inputting some amount of information and then searching for the schemata illustrating the information. Comprehension is generated when such schemata are found or some schemata are specified filled. In reading comprehension, proper schemata need to be activated (by inferring, predicting, elaborating and by talking with others about the topic before reading etc.) to search for information in memory and to rebuild representation of memory. It can be done by applying different strategies.

2.6 The good second/foreign/ language reader

Firstly, good readers preview the text by looking at information around the text to evoke and recall relevant thoughts, memories, and associations. They question themselves to see what they already know about the topic, the genres, and the vocabulary and terms that might communicate the ideas about the topic. It is also unquestionable that good reader has specific goal for interaction with the author, which aims at meaning construction. Good readers can understand the message conveyed in the text and the intentions of the author, thus engaging in an efficient relationship with the author, which lets them successfully relate written information to their own goals. According to the goal setting theory, people must have goals in order to act since human action is caused by purposes and for action to take place, goals have to be set and perceived by choice (Dornyei, 1988). From this point of view, it is clear that good language learners face the reading activity with a goal in mind, which accompanies them throughout the entire cognitive process. Therefore, it is important to teach students to establish their reading goals before starting reading, so that comprehension can be facilitated by giving the task a specific direction. As Anderson (2000) explained, good language learners can develop top-down approaches faster than poor readers, who only make use of bottom-up models of reading. The activation of pre-knowledge is indeed a good strategy to achieve better results in reading, as was suggested by Anderson in his recommendations. Therefore, once the reading goal is set, the good reader manages to use appropriate model which helps him or her integrate information in the text with prior knowledge, in order to ensure comprehension. On the other hand, poor readers tend to
focus on particular details which are not important for the reading purpose, thus they make useless associations of textual elements with personal experience. Successful readers are not also inhibited by comprehension problems and they always try to find the best solutions possible to overcome them. For instance, a reader who has vocabulary problem, he or she uses word recognition strategies, such as Context clues (Figuring out what the word is by looking at what makes sense in the sentence), morphemic analysis (Figuring out what the word is by looking at the prefix, suffix, or root word), Word analysis/word families (Figuring out what the word is by looking at word families or parts of the word you recognize), Asking a friend (Turn to a friend and say, “What’s this word?”), Skip the word (If you are still creating meaning, why stop the process to figure out a word?), Phonics (Using minimal letter cues in combination with context clues to figure out what the word is (Johnson, 2008:47). On the other hand, less successful readers don't have the ability how to solve comprehension problems and tend to worry about comprehension problems that are not relevant to the pursuit of the reading goal and so they can find it more difficult to accomplish the task. I short good readers use strategies that help to construct meaning from reading text.

Good reader is interested and motivated. These are essential ingredients to successful comprehension. Motivation is all power that pushes someone to do something (Nasution, 2000; as cited in Saefullah, 2011:291). It can be stressed that if interest is absent, comprehension can be low. Even when the material is easy in terms of vocabulary and structure it will remain incomprehensible to the reader who is not interested. It is clear that reading purpose is important in order to be motivated and interested. One is forced to read in order to achieve one's purpose. Purpose of reading could be to pass time, to get information and knowledge, to study and the like. Thus, motivation is created. Interest can be created by both the content of the material and the style of the writer. Interesting materials have been viewed as one of the greatest components of motivation (Anderman, 2010).

2.7 Comprehension Strategies

Good readers use strategies to support their understanding of text. Regarding this Johnson & Zabrucky (2010) said, When reading difficult texts, skilled readers use a variety of comprehension strategies to build deeper meaning. Knowing what is understood and not understood while reading and then applying the appropriate strategy to repair meaning are vital
for comprehension to occur. Good readers monitor while reading to see if things make sense, and they use strategies to repair the meaning when things stop making sense. Along with having a repertoire of general strategies, proficient readers know how to adjust these strategies according to the particular texts and tasks at hand. For instance, readers continually make inferences to comprehend texts, but the specific types of inference vary (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). When reading imaginative fiction, readers make inferences to interpret characters’ motivations; when reading scientific exposition, readers make inferences to link technical details. Whether they are reading for pleasure, to acquire new knowledge, or to perform a task, proficient readers use strategies to achieve their goals. When proficient readers get confused or off track, they realize this right away then consciously shift mental gears and apply appropriate strategies. They might identify the source of the confusion, reread it, and then explain it to themselves. They might knowingly make connections to fill in what the author leaves unsaid. And they might record important ideas and information, form sensory images, or ask themselves questions Graesser, McNamara, & VanLehn (2005) as cited in Johnson & Zabrucky (2011). Comprehension strategies include predicting, questioning, visualizing, drawing inferences, and summarizing or retelling.

**Prediction**

Readers need to ask questions about what they are about to read, and to relate what they read to their prior knowledge. Using prediction skills, such as looking at the illustrated cover or discussing the title of a work, can help readers to make a link to related works. This is important, as prior knowledge helps readers to make sense of new readings. By activating prior knowledge, students can make connections about the new information as they read it. This also helps readers to organize the content into a logical framework for learning.

**Questioning**

It is effective in improving comprehension because it gives students purpose for reading, motivates them to continue to read, focuses attention on what must be learned, helps to develop active thinking while reading, and monitors comprehension. Generating questions promotes student interaction with the text. It can help students to review content, make inferences, and relate what they are learning to known information.
Good readers ask questions about what they read, as they self monitor for understanding. They ask questions of themselves, of their peers and of their teachers. Pausing to ask questions is part of the reading process. The ability to make inferences about what one reads requires higher order thinking skills. Asking questions that start with how or why engage the reader. By asking questions of the text, a reader is actively responding with the material to incorporate the new material into his or her schema. Students in the junior grades must be able to use and apply these reading strategies across a variety of texts to be proficient. Successful readers employ all six of these reading strategies to comprehend fully the world around them.

Visualization

This involves students making mental images of the text they read (e.g., processes, events). Creating images that relate to the setting, characters, or plot of a narrative text, or a concept or process in expository text, can help students better recall what they have read. Visualization cues may also be used to self-monitor for understanding. For example, a fluent reader should see a “movie” running through his or her mind when reading. If the movie or mind pictures stop, then the text is too difficult or the reader is not engaged. Seeing an image when reading is a useful self-check for readers to gauge the speed with which they read. Fluent readers are able to visualize as they read.

Summarization

The ability to retell the key points of a text in a logical sequence and hold these details in memory is an important comprehension strategy called summarization. Often these key points are needed later in the text to make sense of what is read. For example, a small but important detail may help a reader to solve the mystery in the novel. Being able to summarize information effectively is an valuable skill for readers of all ages. Students often have difficulty deciding what is important in the text and putting it in their own words. Summarizing can be highly effective in helping students identify main ideas, generalize, remove redundancy, integrate ideas, and improve their memory of what they have read. Modeling summarization in class and providing students with opportunities to summarize are important teaching strategies.

Think-aloud
Think-aloud helps readers to understand the thought processes of a competent reader. Proficient readers think aloud as they read to show how they make meaning of a text. For example, a teacher might say, “I think the author wanted me to see a picture in my mind when I read that paragraph.” This is an excellent way to teach students to make inferences as they read. Thinking about how one reads is an example of using meta cognition skills to improve one’s learning. Think-aloud provide examples of an effective reader using meta cognition strategies to solve problems. It also helps the struggling reader see that proficient readers are actively engaged in the text and are not simply reading the words.

Make Inferences

It refers linking parts of texts that authors did not link explicitly. Or using links across sentences and paragraphs are important to comprehend. “….often known as reading between the lines.” (Cook, Limber, & O’Brien, 2001 as cited in McNamara & Kendeou 2011). In the context of reading comprehension, differencing is the process of connecting information within the text or within the text and one’s knowledge base, and drawing a conclusion that is not explicitly stated in the text. One type of inference, called bridging inferences, connects current text information to information that was previously encountered in the text, such as connecting the current sentence to a previous sentence. Another type, associative inferences or elaborations, connects current text information to knowledge that is not in the text. For such knowledge-based inferences, readers bring knowledge that is related to the text to the focus of attention, and in doing so; construct connections between the text and prior knowledge.

Make Connections

Readers relate the text to personal experiences, to information from other texts, and to information about the world to enhance understanding of text. Thus, Good readers notice pieces of text that relate to or remind them of their lives, past experiences, and prior knowledge. Other books, articles, movies, songs, or pieces of writing. Events, people, or issues

Synthesize

Readers create original insights, perspectives and understandings by reflecting on the text, and by merging elements from the text with their own way of understanding information and the world around them. Good reader ask themselves a question” How do I use what I’ve read to
create my own ideas? Good readers combine new information from their reading with existing knowledge in order to form new ideas or interpretations. Synthesis is creating a single understanding from a variety of sources.

**Reread**

The reader rereads a portion of the text either aloud or silently. The use of this strategy usually indicated a lack of understanding; however, rereading may also have given the reader time to reflect on the content. The more reading a reader does, the more reading comprehension should improve. It is important during independent reading.

**2.8 Background knowledge**

*We must be able to relate new things to what we already know if we are to comprehend them. And relating something new to what we already know is of course learning. We learn to read, and we learn through reading, by elaborating what we know already. This is natural, (Smith, 20144, P: 12).*

Another important point in reading comprehension is the prior knowledge that English learners bring to the task of reading. English learners come to school with a great deal of knowledge about their culture and communities. Comprehension is the essence of the reading act. The many levels of comprehending include drawing on background experiences, literal comprehension, higher-level comprehension, and the ability to study and learn from text. To comprehend material effectively, readers require some background knowledge. The background that students already have enables them to build bridges to new reading experiences and connect what they read to what they know, regarding this Johnson & Zabrucky (2011) discussed, the processes involved in reading comprehension include, in part, focusing on relevant and important information from a passage and making connections between that information and prior knowledge. Readers’ prior knowledge directly influences readers’ ability to generate inferences. Readers who have more knowledge about the topic of a text better understand the written material (Chiesi, Spilich, & Voss, 1979; Haenggi & Perfetti, 1994 as cited in McNamara & Kendeou 2011) and are better able to comprehend texts that require numerous inferences (McNamara, 2001; O’Reilly & McNamara, 2002 as cited in McNamara & Kendeou, 2011).
These advantages partially arise because high knowledge readers answer comprehension questions based on prior knowledge, rather than information in the text and are more likely to generate inferences that connect new information in the text with prior knowledge. There has been scant research on whether prior domain knowledge impacts word recognition. Prior knowledge of both the words in the text and related concepts are activated or primed (O’Brien & Myers, 1999 as cited in McNamara & Kendeou, 2011).

Therefore, prior knowledge impacts word recognition and word recognition intern improves reading comprehension because a person’s understanding of the topic may aid in word identification. Generating inferences depends on prior knowledge. If the reader does not possess sufficient knowledge, inferences are likely to be unsuccessful. Thus, comprehension problems will become serious problem.

**2.8.1 Build and activate prior knowledge:**

Since background knowledge is an important factor for creating meaning, and teachers should help students activate prior knowledge. Pordo (2004) by quoting Duke (2003), Keene & Zimmermann (1997) and Miller (2002) suggested the following strategies to activate students prior knowledge:

- By using information books, students build world knowledge so that they will have the appropriate information to activate at a later time.
- Teachers also support students' acquisition of world knowledge by establishing and maintaining a rich, literate environment, full of texts that provide students with numerous opportunities to learn content in a wide variety of topics.
- Another way teachers help students build background knowledge is to create visual or graphic organizers that help students to see not only new concepts but also how previously known concepts are related and connected to the new ones.

**2.9 Motivation**

Motivation is essential in reading. Guthrie, Coddington, and Wigfield (2009) as quoted in Sanford (2015) acknowledged that motivation is positively correlated to reading achievement; conversely, avoidant motivation has been negatively correlated to reading achievement.
To increase motivation, it will be essential to ascertain that students connect what they read to reality. It will be vital to provide motivating material, give specific reading instructions, and model how to read a variety of texts. In addition, Teachers who give students choices, challenging tasks, and collaborative learning structures increase their motivation to read and comprehend text. (RAND Reading study group, 2002). If students are interested in reading, they are more apt to pick up a book to read, which will help them become better comprehenders. Students with high motivation invest more effort and concentration in the reading than students with low reading motivation, and they portray more perseverance and ability to handle and overcome challenges in the reading process, resulting in reading excessively more than readers with low motivation. As excessive reading facilitates decoding and understanding of vocabulary, it gives knowledge and gives experience in using different reading strategies, it is evident that excessive reading influences reading comprehension. In turn, excessive reading is influenced by motivation, and the three components are interdependent. High motivation for reading leads to excessive reading, and the reading itself helps develop good reading comprehension. 

The students’ attitude to reading is important for reading comprehension, and is intertwined with motivation. Students who have an inner motivation for reading read and like reading all types of texts. It is important to increase students’ motivation in the reading process, as for instance in choosing a varied and differentiated material in a variety of genres and text types, using material appropriate for the students’ level of understanding, teaching them different reading strategies, and giving feedback that emphasizes progress.

2.10 Vocabulary:

To understand the meaning of a text effectively, the reader must understand its sentence structures and word meanings, yet some readers can certainly read something without understanding every word. The processes involved in reading comprehension include, in part, focusing on relevant and important information from a passage and making connections between that information and prior knowledge. But students must also understand the meaning of words as well as integrate the many internal connections among important and relevant pieces of information within a passage (Baker, 1985; Cook & Mayer, 1988 as cited in Johnson & Zabrucky, 2011). According to Freebody & Anderson (1983) as cited in RAND Reading Study
Group (2002) vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to reading comprehension. Therefore, vocabulary knowledge may be the most important single factor in reading comprehension. However, vocabulary knowledge while important is not the only factor affecting comprehension. Similarly Cook as explained the importance of knowing word, as quoted in Hansen (2016), knowing a word means knowing “its spoken and written forms, its grammatical and lexical properties and its meaning. It impinges on all areas of language acquisition and is not just learning sets of words and meanings” (2008:52). Based on these evidences, it is believable that there is a clear connection between pupils’ vocabulary and their reading comprehension and a good vocabulary will ascertain reading development which will lead to increased reading comprehension.

As it is described earlier in this report, vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to reading comprehension and there is reason to believe that vocabulary knowledge is an especially important factor in understanding the reading problems experienced by second-language learners. This relationship between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension is extremely complex, confounded, as it is, by the complexity of relationships among vocabulary knowledge, conceptual and cultural knowledge, and instructional opportunities (RAND Reading study group, 2002). In fact, using the comprehension processes, readers are able to increase their vocabulary as they read. For effective reading, students need knowledge of word meanings and language. As one reads, the reader also acquires new word meanings and gains experience with language. The more students read, the more word meanings and language they acquire. In other word, reading comprehension depends on vocabulary knowledge and vice versa. The more students read, the better their vocabulary becomes. And the more vocabulary they know, the better they can read. Thus, teachers need to encourage students with reading problems to read as much as possible.

2.11 The Text:

It is important to realize that particular features of the text create difficulty for particular readers engaged in particular activities; texts are not difficult or easy in and of themselves, but they become difficult or easy at the interface with readers and the purpose of the activity. According to RAND Reading Study Group (2002),
Texts can be difficult or easy, depending on factors inherent in the text, on the relationship between the text and the knowledge and abilities of the reader, and on the activities in which the reader is engaged. For example, the content presented in the text has a critical bearing on reading comprehension. A reader’s domain knowledge interacts with the content of the text in comprehension. In addition to content, the vocabulary load of the text and its linguistic structure, discourse style, and genre also interact with the reader’s knowledge. When too many of these factors are not matched to a reader’s knowledge and experience, the text may be too difficult for optimal comprehension to occur.

Language and discourse researchers have identified that some texts are inaccurate, poorly organized, contain too many vocabulary concepts, present too many ideas at once, and lack clarity. Several of these characteristics would appear to fly in the face of fundamental processes that affect ease of text comprehension. For example, the expository texts used for reading are often low in cohesiveness and too demanding for students with little background knowledge in a particular content area rather than narrative structure which is more familiar to students (Munamara, Ozuru & Floys, 2011), and further as explained, the expository texts used in school classrooms are often low in cohesiveness and too demanding for students with little background knowledge in a particular content area. Experts who write such expository texts often inaccurately assume that students possess prior knowledge of subject matter similar to the writer’s prior knowledge. As noted by Best, Floyd, and McNamara (2008) "In contrast to narrative texts, expository texts tend to place increased processing demands on the reader due to their greater structural complexity, greater informational density, and greater knowledge demands" (p.140). Similarly, understanding variability in the text dimension requires paying attention to several components and levels of the text being read. According to RAND Reading Study Group (2002), Comprehension does not occur by simply extracting meaning from text, during reading, the reader constructs different representations of the text that are important for comprehension. These representations include, for example, the surface code (the exact wording of the text), the text base (idea units representing the meaning), and a representation of the mental models embedded in the text. It is noticeable that using text structures, in fact, includes the use of knowledge of how text is organized in terms of the main ideas and relevant ideas in it. Knowing how to identify transitions, or signal words, is the most convenient stage of text...
structure reading strategy that can be readily taught to low proficient L2 readers. Likewise, when relationships between ideas in the text are explicit by using connectives such as because, consequently, therefore, and likewise, the reader is more likely to understand the text content better. Readers who have low levels of background knowledge need high-cohesion text to understand and remember the content (Munamara, Ozuru & Floys, 2011).
CHAPTER THREE
3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study investigates factors affecting secondary students reading comprehension skill. In order to answer this purpose, one of the main steps was collecting data that enable the researcher to reach suggested solutions for the problems identified. This chapter presents the research design, the research approach, participants of the study, sampling techniques and sample size, data gathering instruments and methods of data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

A descriptive research design was employed to assess factors that affect students’ reading comprehension since the study is mainly concerned with describing data observed through questionnaires and interviews. Moreover, the researcher felt that it would enable him to have these instruments of gathering information.

3.2. Research Approach

The research approach that is employed for this study was quantitative and qualitative. In order to achieve the intended objectives of the study mixed research method in which the researcher incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the research question are required. Because both quantitative and qualitative data helped the researcher to better understand the research problem. According to Cresswell (2012:535), the basic assumption behind using this approach is that using both quantitative and qualitative approaches provide better understanding of the research problem and answer the research questions than any other approach. In quantitative phase, data are collected with questionnaire and collected quantitative data (it involved collecting numerical data) and then followed up with qualitative interview data to help explain the initial quantitative results (it involved collecting descriptive information). Therefore, the researcher incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods.

3.3. Sampling and sampling techniques

3.3.1 Selection of the schools and woreda

Although there are many woredas and governmental schools that the researcher knows in north showa zone, only one of them (one woreda high school) is included in this study because of
some reasons. First, all of them are far from the researcher's work place and residence that may lead to high cost in terms of time and money. Second, the researcher is not familiar to this schools’ directors, teachers, students etc. that could create difficulty during administrating the instruments. Finally, Since the researcher has worked in this school and taught in this selected section, observed the problem only on these students very well. Thus, the researcher choose only one school which is nearer and familiar to him.

3.3.2 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

It is impossible to take the whole population if they are many for a research purpose by a single researcher. Hence, sampling is necessary to avoid a large amount of data that would be too difficult to manipulate. So, random sampling was employed for students so as to give the population equal chance to act upon the information gathering process. For the research 50 students (about 10% of the total population) was selected from the population of 563 students by random sampling. This random sampling helped the researcher to give equal chance for the targeted population and to get relevant information for the research by the selected students answering the questionnaires and ten students for interview which was prepared for this purpose.

3.3.3 Participants of the Study

The target populations of this study were grade 9 students since the researcher has teaching experience in this grade. So the researcher believed that this opportunity creates good relation between the researcher and these students that help him to get genuine response from them. Other grade level may not give genuine response. The selected student participated in answering questionnaires and a few students to interview which was adapted by the researcher for this purpose to answer the research questions.

3.4 Data Collecting Instruments

For the purpose of gathering satisfactory information, questionnaire and interview were employed. It was through these instruments that the descriptive research method is better analyzed. Further detailed description of each instrument is given below:
3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaire was one of the data elicitation techniques used for securing pertinent information for the study. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions that help to answer the research questions. With three categorizes, questionnaires with five-point Likert type scale were developed for students. The questionnaire contained twenty five statements. Questionnaire was used because the researcher was interested to collect large amount of information at the same time within a short period of time and to get necessary information on students’ feeling about the issue or their opinion on what factors affecting their reading comprehension skill. The data that were collected through questionnaire were mainly quantitative. The researcher was contacted those selected students to help him for the administration of questionnaire and to answer each question. The questionnaire was first (30 items) tried out and filled by selected students (pilote test). Then, students were asked to give comment on the questionnaire difficulty and clarity after they had filled them. Based on the obtained comments, some of the questions were revised or amended. On certain words, sentences, and expressions modification was made; that is, words that were difficult were simplified, some long sentences were made shorter, and some technical words and expressions were changed and made clearer. Those questions returned incomplete were discarded and the remaining 25 items (the revised and amended questions) were finally administered to the main sampled group. That means Fifty items were incorporated in the main study. This instrument was used because it enabled the researcher to obtain primary data for the study and factual information was desired.

3.4.2 Interview

To get further information the researcher employed semi-structured interview. Denscombe (2007:177) suggests that with semi-structured interview, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and perhaps more significantly to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issue raised by the researcher. As an additional or supportive tool, 10 students participated in the interview. It was conducted on the basis of questioner. To obtain more accurate and genuine responses, the interviewer explained and clarified both the purpose of the research and individual questions. In addition, the researcher followed upon incomplete or unclear responses by asking additional probing questions. In order to avoid ambiguity or lack of information because of English language
difficulties, the students were interviewed in Amharic and the researcher transcribed it into the target language.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The procedure of data collection was carried out in a significant way. First, the questionnaire was administered to students. The questionnaires were prepared in English. Since the questions were clear short and unambiguous, the Amharic version was not needed by the students to ease their understanding. After the questionnaires’ data collection process was over, interview was carried out by the researcher for students so as to substantiated or verified the information gathered through the questionnaire.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

The data obtained through the questionnaire, the interview, were organized and analyzed. To analyze the data from the questionnaire quantitative method was employed and were presented in the form of table by using tabular method and analyzed and interpreted numerically through using frequency and percentage. The data gained from interview were presented through descriptive written report qualitatively. They were transcribed and summarized.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Findings

In order to keep the validity and reliability of the findings, different efforts have been made because researchers must be concerned about the validity and reliability of the scores derived from instruments used in a study and must include this information in the research report. If a researcher’s data are not obtained with instruments that allow valid and reliable interpretations, one can have little faith in the results obtained or in the conclusions based on the results. Therefore, First, to judging whether the instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure and to see if there are any ambiguities which the researcher have not noticed, he asked people who have not been involved in its construction to read it through(i.e by using peer and other researchers examination), It helped him to take correction. Second, pilot test was conducted to identify whether respondents were able to respond to the questions in the questionnaire and to identify the possibility of using the questionnaire. For this purpose, the questionnaire which is constructed in Lickert scale, a total of 30 items were administered to 10 students who were
randomly selected from the population in which this study did not include. Then, analysis was made to see items reliability. Hence, to calculate the reliability split half method was used and the internal consistency reliability was: $r_{xx} = 0.98$. After the test five items were rejected, the remaining was modified and the total of 25 items was administered for actual data gathering process. Asking respondents whether the instrument or test looks valid to them was also one of the efforts to establish face validity, because respondents were judging whether the instrument looks ok to them. Third, an extensive search of the literature on the concept was made to help the researcher to achieve content validity (Content validity refers to whether or not the content of the manifest variables or items of a test or questions of a questionnaire is right to measure that the researcher was trying to measure). Moreover, asking advisor to comment on the scale, was meant to test the content validity of the instrument. The instrument (the questioner) was also constructed based on questionnaire design check list so as to keep its validity.
CHAPTER FOUR
Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of data

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the results of the study. The data gathered through questionnaire and interview. These tools were used because it was hoped that the results obtained through them would be valid. The finding is organized into two major sections. The first section presents the students’ questionnaire, the last section presents the interview results.

4.2 Data analysis and discussion of students’ Questioners

Questionnaire was the main tool of this study. Data was gathered from students in the study area mainly through questionnaire. In this section the data from students’ questionnaire was organized and presented in tables by applying percentage.

Table-1 What problems students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill?

It is assumed that students’ poor reading comprehension skill leads to problems of straggling reading to take meaning from reading text. Hence, finding out what problems students face is important before generalizing factors affecting students' reading comprehension skill. The aim of this questioner is to find out these problems. Therefore, six items are included to obtain what students feel towards these problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When I read, I understand almost everything.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I can talk to others about what I am reading.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>When I answer comprehension question about what I have read, I can answer it easily.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I like it when the comprehension questions make me think.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>When we are in a group talking about what we are reading.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 1, respondents were asked if they understand almost everything when they read, from the total number of respondents 35(70%) replied never. The table also show that some of the respondents 6(12%) said rarely. Below a quarter of the total participants, 7(14%) replied always and very few students 2(4%) said often. Therefore, from the afore-mentioned discussion it is perhaps easy to conceptualize that most students due to their low comprehension skill can't understand everything they read.

In the table, respondents were also asked if they can talk to others about what they read, from the total number of respondents 19(38%) replied 'rarely', and 24(48%) ‘never’. However, there are also some students 4(8%) and 3(6%) who replied that always and often. Similarly in the same table under item 6, respondents were asked if they can talk to others about what they read when they are in group, 21(42%) of the respondents replied rarely and another 21(42%) respondents replied 'never'. On the other hand very few respondents, 5(10%) and 3(6%) replied always and often respectively.
Regarding the students’ ability to answer comprehension questions, students were asked if they can also answer comprehension questions easily, but as the table shows that 15(30%) of the respondents said 'rarely' and 28(56%) 'never' that they can't answer comprehension questions easily. While others 5(10%) can always answer comprehension questions easily and 2(10%) can often answer comprehension questions easily.

In the same table under the third item, it was intended to collect information on their ability of writing short summary about what they read. As the result shows that, 15 (30%) of the students replied 'rarely' and 31(62%) of the students 'never'. On the other hand, 3(6%) and 1(2%) said always and often respectively. Therefore, these result shows that most students can't write short summary about what they are reading.

Finally, in table 1, respondents were asked if they are interested when the comprehension questions make them think, from the total number of students 23(46%) replied that they never like when the comprehension questions make them think and 8(16%) said that they rarely like when the comprehension questions make them think. However, a few number of students 4(8%) and another 4(8%) students replied always and often and still some students 11(22%) said sometimes.

Generally, from the afore-mentioned discussions it is perhaps easy to conceptualize that students due to their low comprehension skill can't understand everything they read, can't share someone what they read, can't write short summary about what they read and can't answer any comprehension question easily or even they are not interested to answer comprehension question which makes them to think. As a result they are suffering a lot with these problems.

**Table-2: Students related factors.**

Looking at the above discussion, one can infer that Seladingay secondary school grade nine students had serious problem to comprehend written text. Hence, so as to minimize these problems as effective as possible, finding out factors that affect students' reading comprehension skill is important. In this regard as Pardo (2004) stated, once teachers understand what is involved in comprehending and how the factors of reader, text, and context interact to create meaning, they can more easily teach their students to be effective comprehender. So the aim of this part was to find out students related factors that affect their reading comprehension skill.
Under this category, seven items are included to obtain what students feel towards factors that affect their reading comprehension skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My low-prior knowledge affects me not to understand the text.</td>
<td>F 38 7 - - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My poor vocabulary knowledge (world knowledge) prohibits me from understanding text meaning.</td>
<td>F 33 11 1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I can't understand a passage which is difficult words loaded.</td>
<td>F 29 12 3 3 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I read a text without understanding almost many words</td>
<td>F 25 19 2 2 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I guess the meaning of words and phrases that I don’t know</td>
<td>F 13 8 7 15 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I don’t like reading something when the words are too difficult.</td>
<td>F 33 10 1 2 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I think reading is an interesting way to get information and entertainment</td>
<td>F 11 2 2 14 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 2, Students were asked if their low-prior knowledge affects them not to understand reading text. 38(76%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 7(14%) agreed with the item. However, small number of respondents 5(10%) strongly disagree with the item. Thus, it seems that lack of prior knowledge (background knowledge) affects students' reading comprehension skill. In order to achieve efficient comprehension, the reader needs to be able to use his or her prior knowledge and relate it to the textual material. For example, A child who doesn't have a scenario about farming is unlikely to understand a story about farming.
Besides, many studies in the field of reading comprehension revealed that the better a reader is able to access background knowledge about either the content area of a text or formal structure of a text, the better that reader will be able to comprehend, store in long-term memory, and recall. (see chapter two). Therefore, it is possible to say their low-prior knowledge affects them not to generate inferences and understand the text.

In the table for item 8 above, regarding the knowledge of vocabulary, the table shows that 33(66%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 11(22%) agreed with the item. However, a few students 2(4%) replied disagree and 3(6%) strongly disagree and still 1(2%) undecided.

Likewise, under item 9 above, in which the respondents were asked their feeling about the amount of difficult words in a text, 29(58%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 12(24%) of the respondents agreed that they can't understand a passage which is difficult words loaded. While 3(6%) and others 3(6%) disagree and strongly disagree and still other 3(6%) neither agree nor disagree with the item.

In the same table, respondents were also asked if they read a text without understanding almost many words, the majority of students 25 (50%) and 19 (38%) showed their agreement with the idea that they read a text without understanding almost many words. On the other hand, very few students 2 (4%) and other 2 (4%) disagree and strongly disagree with the item and still others 3(6%) undecided.

In the same table as to item 11, Students asked their practice of using word guessing technique to solve word problem but almost half of the respondents 15 (30%) and 7 (14%) showed their disagreement that they don't guess the meaning of words and phrases even they don’t know it. On the other hand, 13 (26%) and 8 (16%) showed their agreement and they use the technique but other respondents 7(14%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Regarding word difficulty, most of the respondents (66% and 20%) as replied they don’t like reading something when the words are too difficult. On the other hand, a few students 2(4%) and 4(8%) opposed the item and said that they like reading when words are challenging and 1(2%) student undecided. Therefore, it seems lack of vocabulary knowledge affects students' reading comprehension skill because of inability to use word recognition strategies (guessing from
context clues....). In this regard pardo (2004) as explained If there are too many words that a reader does not know, he or she will have to spend too much mental energy figuring out the unknown word(s) and will not be able to understand the passage as a whole. Moreover, a reader who unable to use word recognition strategies, such as Context clues, morphemic analysis, Word analysis/word families, Asking a friend, Phonics etc. can't recognize new word and comprehension problem for him/her becomes more dangerous. (Johnson ,2008:47). Similarly, According to Freebody & Anderson (1983) as cited in RAND Reading Study Group (2002) vocabulary knowledge is strongly linked to reading comprehension. Therefore, Vocabulary knowledge may be the most important single factor in reading comprehension.

Finally, In table 2, students were also asked if they think reading is an interesting way to get information and entertainment, 28% and 34% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the item while others 11(22%) and 2(4%) strongly agreed and agreed. 2(4%) neither agreed nor disagreed. This clearly show that lack of interest can be a factor for students to be unwilling to read the text for the purpose of getting information and entertainment. It is unquestionable that a reader who is egger, interested and purposeful, can extract meaning and entertain or learn from a text.

**Table-3: Responses of the students about text related factors.**

The main aim of this part was to find out text related factors that affect students 'reading comprehension skill. Under this category, four items were included to obtain students' responses on the issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A reading text with complicated stories are difficult to understand.</td>
<td>F 32 10 1 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% 64% 20% 2% 6% 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Poorly organized or low cohesive texts are difficult to understand.</td>
<td>F 28 6 3 5 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% 56% 12% 6% 10% 16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Expository texts are more difficult to understand than narrative texts.</td>
<td>F 32 12 1 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>% 64% 24% 2% 4% 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the feature of the text that a particular reader engaged in, students were asked if the reading text with complicated stories are difficult to understand, about 10(20%) and 32(64%) of the respondents have agreed and strongly agreed respectively. However, there are also few respondents 3(6%) and 4(8%) who replied disagree and strongly disagree. 1(2%) student also replied neither agree nor disagree. From the analysis we can deduce that complicatedness of the text affects students' reading comprehension skill.

In table 3 in which students were also asked If poorly organized or low cohesive text affect their reading comprehension skill, 6(12%) and 28(56%) of the respondents have agreed and strongly agreed respectively with the item. Very few students 3(6%) also said neither agree nor disagree. However, some respondents 5(10%) and 8(16%) revealed their disagreement. Therefore, from the data it is possible to deduce that poorly organized or low cohesive text affect students' reading comprehension skill. Regarding the text organization Munamara, Ozuru & Floys (2011) as explained readers who have low levels of background knowledge need high-cohesion text to understand and remember the content.

Respondents were also asked about the genre of the reading texts, under item16, about 12(24%) and 32(64%) of the respondents have agreed and strongly agreed respectively that expository texts are more difficult to understand than narrative texts. 1(2%) of the respondents also said neither agree nor disagree. On the other hand very few students 2(4%) and 3(6%) showed their disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Thus, from the response one can infer that the genre of the reading text affect students' reading comprehension skill. In this regarded for example Munamara, Ozuru & Floys (2011) as explained, expository texts used for reading are often low in cohesiveness and too demanding for students with little background knowledge in a particular content area rather than narrative structure which is more familiar to students,

As far as the text's topic unfamiliarity, as it can be seen under table-3 item 17, most students (70%) strongly agreed that a text with unfamiliar topic/subject matter is always difficult to them to comprehend. 1(2%) respondent also said neither agree nor disagree while others 7(14%) and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>70%</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>2%</th>
<th>14%</th>
<th>4%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A text with unfamiliar topic/subject matter is always difficult to me to comprehend.</td>
<td>F 35</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 17   | A text with unfamiliar topic/subject matter is always difficult to me to comprehend. | F 35       | 5   | 1   | 7  | 2   |

| 17   | A text with unfamiliar topic/subject matter is always difficult to me to comprehend. | F 35       | 5   | 1   | 7  | 2   |
2(4%) replied disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Therefore, from the data it is possible to deduce that unfamiliar texts affect students' reading comprehension skill. Good reader can associate text content with the appropriate prior-knowledge sources, the faster the comprehension will be. This is possible when the text topic/content is familiar to the reader. Studies have shown that readers who are familiar with the text content, whether in their first or second language, comprehend and recall more than those who are not as familiar with the text topic/content (Example, Alderson, 2000).

Hence, from the findings it is possible to infer that students' reading comprehension skill is affected by text characteristics such as genre of the text, poor organization, lack of familiarity, lack of cohesiveness. RAND Reading study group (2002) asserted as the features of any given text have a large impact on comprehension. While reading, the reader constructs various representations of the text that are important for comprehension. Those representations include the surface code (the exact wording of the text), the text base (idea units representing the meaning of the text), and the mental models (the way in which information is processed for meaning) that are embedded in the text.

**Table-4 Do students use appropriate strategies to comprehend a text?**

This part aimed to investigate whether students use reading comprehension strategies /techniques/ to comprehend a text. Under this table eight items were included. The items were meant to get the students' reactions about techniques that can be used in order to achieve the highest and the best outcome (comprehension) of our reading of any text.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I make pictures in my mind when I read.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I guess what the materials are about before I read.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I ask myself question to check my understanding</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I reread the text to help me remember it.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I summarize a text when I read.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I think aloud as I read to remember what I read.</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>When I read, I can connect current text information to information that was previously encountered in the text</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above, students were asked to express how often they make pictures about what they read in their mind when they read, from the total number of respondents 11(22%) replied rarely and 34(68%) said never. Very few students 2(4%) also said sometimes. On the other hand, some respondents 2(4%) and 1(2%) replied always and often.

In the table, respondents were asked to reply how often they guess what the materials are about before they read. Most participants 34(68%) and 11(22%) responded never and rarely respectively for the item that they do not guess what the materials are about before they read. However, 1(2%) and 5(10%) of the respondents said always and often.

Concerning the use of other strategy which are stated under items 20, 26(52%) respondents rarely ask themselves question to check their understanding but 20(40%) of respondents never do. However, very few respondents 5(10%) and 2(4%) replied always and often respectively. 1(2%) of the respondent also replied sometimes.

Similarly for item 21, students were asked whether they reread the text to help them remember information in the text, more than half of the respondents (32% always and 24% often do it) but
there are still some students 8(16%) and 12(24%) who do not use and consider these strategy. Very few students 2(4%) also said sometimes.

In the same table, under item 22 above in which the respondents were asked how often they summarize a text when they read, 14(28%) and 30(60%) of the respondents replied ‘rarely’ and ‘never’ respectively. On the other hand, very few respondents said always and often. only 1 (2%) student said sometimes. This also possibly shows that this activity (strategy) is less practicable by students.

In the table item 23 which asked how often students use other strategy (thinking aloud) the majority of the respondents 33(66%) replied never and 12(24%) of respondents replied rarely. However very few respondents 2(4%)and 3(6%) respondents replied always and often. This also shows that their inability to use this strategy.

Table 5 (item 24) also revealed, about 19(38%) and 25(50 %) of the respondents responded rarely and never respectively so that they can't connect current text information to information that was previously encountered in the text. There are, however, some students 2(4%) and 1(2%) who replied that they always and often use this strategy. Only 3(6%) of the students also said sometimes do it.

Finally, In the table 4 (item 25), respondents also asked how often they reflect the information of what they read, many respondents 28 (56%) and 17(34%) replied that they ‘never’ reflect the information of what they read and rarely do it respectively. On the other hand, 3(6%) and 2(45) replied always and often.

Hence, it seems that there is failure to use the strategies or techniques that can develop and facilitate the students’ reading comprehension skill. As a result, It can hinder their successful development of making sense of what they read or their reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension strategies indicate how readers conceive a task, what textual cues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read, and what they do when they do not understand etc. In this regard Peregoy and Boyle (2004) as sited in Linse (2005 ) as explained the purpose of strategies for second language learners, there are three different elements which impact reading: the students back ground knowledge, the students linguistic knowledge of the target knowledge and the strategies or techniques the student uses to tackle the text.
4.3. Analysis and Discussion of the Students’ Interview data

For the purpose of this study, ten students were selected by the researcher randomly. They were interrogated in Amharic about their attitudes towards reading comprehension skill in order to investigate factors that impede their progress using four questions, which are semi structured. Interview was believed to give deeper information in the area of assessing factors that affect reading comprehension skill. The analysis was made on the data from the students bringing together because the interview items used were similar for all participants.

**Question 1: What is your opinion towards your reading comprehension skill. For instance, when you read, can you understand what you read, talk others about what you read and answer comprehension questions easily?**

Concerning their reading comprehension skill, the first question that was raised for the students was to tell their opinion towards their reading comprehension skill. For instance, when they read, if they can understand what they read, if they can talk others about what they read and answer comprehension questions easily? For this question, all the respondents gave similar responses. They mentioned that they can't understand what they read, they can't talk others about what they read and they can't answer comprehension questions easily. In addition one interviewee said that he can't score good mark on reading comprehension test as well as on other subjects' tests and exams because he can't understand the subject contents which are written in English when he prepared for exams and tests. Therefore, from the interviewees' response it is possible to come to an agreement that there are a lot of problems that students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill.

**Question 2: What are factors that lead you to these problems? Do you think lack of vocabulary knowledge, lack of back ground /prior/ knowledge and interest to read are factors?**

Similarly, all the interviewees said that the reason behind these problems is lack of vocabulary knowledge. As they said, when the reading text is loaded with difficult words it becomes impossible to them to understand the meaning of the text effectively because of their inability to use word strategies like contextual guessing and word family clues etc. Students were also asked
to add another factors which contribute for these problems, and most of them responded that lack of prior knowledge (the knowledge that they have on a reading text’s topic before reading about it). As stated in chapter two, background knowledge is important in comprehension. If the text presents completely different things from what we already know comprehension may not occur. For example, If a child who doesn’t have a scenario about farming is unlikely to understand a story about farming or references to farming in a textbook. Readers who have low levels of background knowledge need high-cohesion text to understand and remember the content (Munamara, Ozuru & Floys, 2011). Besides as they expressed, lack of interest to read and understand are another factors that affect their reading comprehension skill.

**Question 3: Do you think text related factors like poor text organization/lack of cohesion/, unfamiliarity of the text and the genre of the text/ being expository of the text/ affect your reading comprehension skill?**

Regarding this question as they expressed, Unfamiliarity of the topic of the text can affect their comprehension skill. It is unquestionable that ESL/EFL readers can encounter this problem due to a lack of familiarity with the culture-specific content the text presumes. Minimizing students reading difficulties by providing them with familiar contents that include relevant cultural information is very important. As they also indicated lack of cohesiveness of the text affects their comprehension skill. Text cohesion (the extent to which a text explicitly provides background information and cues to help readers relate information distributed across different parts of the text) also helps them to understand the text. Likewise, Students were asked deeply which text is difficult for them to understand science text which is expository text or story which is narrative text. Regarding this question they replied ‘expository text’. From this one can understand that the genre of the text can affect their reading comprehension skill. For example the expository texts used for reading are often low in cohesiveness and too demanding for students with little background knowledge in a particular content area rather than narrative structure which is more familiar to students (Munamara, Ozuru & Floys, 2011)

**Question 3: Do you use a variety of comprehension strategies such as reread, prediction, questioning, visualization, connection, think aloud etc. to build deeper meaning when you read?**
Regarding the factors related to the reading comprehension strategies, all of the respondents' responses show that their inability to use reading comprehension strategies such as rereading, prediction, Making Connections, Visualize, Ask Questions, (Ask questions of the author, yourself, and the text), Inferring (drawing conclusions based on background knowledge and clues in the text), Synthesizing (combining new information from their reading with existing knowledge in order to form new ideas or interpretations) affect their reading comprehension skill. So that it is possible to say falling to use reading comprehension strategies can affect their reading comprehension skill.
CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter presents the Summary and the conclusions derived from the findings in the preceding chapter. Recommendations are also made based on the findings and in line with the objectives of the study.

5.1 Summary

As mentioned in chapter one, this study was mainly concerned with identifying the factors that affect students' reading comprehension skill in Seladingay General and higher education preparatory School. Pertaining to the general objective, the study aims to attain the following specific objectives: Pertaining to the general objective, the study aims to attain the following specific objectives:

● To probing what problem students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill.
● To find out personal factors affecting students' comprehension skill.
● To find out textual factors affecting students' comprehension skill.
● To investigate whether students use reading comprehension strategies/techniques to comprehend a text.

In order to achieve the afore-mentioned objectives, the study had also the following research questions:

1. What problems students face due to their poor reading comprehension skill?
2. What are the students-related factors that affect their reading comprehension skills?
3. What are the reading texts-related factors that affect students’ reading comprehension skills?
4. Do students use appropriate strategies to comprehend a text?

In line with these questions, two techniques of data gathering were devised. In other words, in order to achieve these objectives, data were gathered from students using questionnaire and interview and were subjected to both quantitative and qualitative analysis as presented in chapter four. To elicit the relevant information a total of twenty five questionnaire items and four
interview questions for the students were used. After carefully gathering the relevant data using the two instruments of data collection, the data was analyzed in an integrated manner using descriptive analysis. Therefore, frequency counting, percentage and description of some qualitative data were applied to analyze and describe the data. Lastly, based on the findings obtained, conclusions and recommendations were forwarded.

5.2 Conclusions

To finalize all the issues that have been presented, discussed and analyzed in this paper so far related to the factors affecting students’ reading comprehension skills, the following conclusions were drawn:

• The study confirmed that the target students encountered different difficulties. Among these comprehension problems, when they read, can't understand almost everything, they can't talk to others about what they read, they can't write short summary about what they read, when they answer comprehension question about what they have read, they can't answer it easily. These difficulties emerged due to the following factors:
  • It is unquestionable that the sufficient knowledge of vocabulary is needed to comprehend a reading text. To be able to read and understand the meaning of the text, one has to know almost all of the words in the text but the study found out that students read a text without understanding almost many words and their poor vocabulary knowledge affects their reading comprehension skill.
  • Most of the students seem to have limited prior knowledge (the knowledge that they have on a reading text's topic before reading about it). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, based on the findings, students' poor background knowledge affects their reading comprehension skill.
  • Based on the findings, we can conclude that students easily understand narrative text better than expository text and text with high cohesion better than text with low cohesion. Thus, the text genre and cohesiveness of the text affects students' reading comprehension skill. Similarly, if the contents of the texts are unfamiliar to the students so that they do not activate the schema of the learners. This means the reading text and the students do not mostly have shared experiences. This makes comprehending reading text challenging. In this regard, the data revealed that the unfamiliarity of the topic and contents of the texts affect students' reading comprehension skill.
• It is palpable that the activity of students is vital for facilitating their reading comprehension skill. To do so, students are expected to use collaborative reading comprehension strategies when they read a text. However, the study showed that students were not using any strategy except rereading. Among the techniques and strategies those were not employed by the students were: prediction, Questioning, Visualizing, Inferring, Summarizing etc. Therefore, inability to use these strategies were among the factors affecting students’ reading comprehension skills related to their use of the techniques and strategies.

• Finally, as the data revealed, another factor that affect students’ reading comprehension is lack of interest. That means students are not curiosity to perform an activity for exploring new ideas and developing knowledge especially if the passage which is difficult words loaded.

5.3 Recommendations

On the bases of the conclusions made, the following recommendations are forwarded:
• If there are too many words that a reader do not know, they will not be able to understand the passage as a whole. So they should cultivate their vocabulary by rote memorization and repetition. Moreover, guessing words in context, word structure analysis, structural analysis (ability to recognize the parts of unknown words, such as prefixes and affixes), context clues (skills in recognizing clues in the sentences to help recognize a word) are important strategies that should be implemented. Generally, students should use strategies related to ascertaining the meaning of unknown words, as well as general vocabulary. Similarly, apart from these tasks, which lead directly to English vocabulary acquisition, the important thing to bear in mind is that the best way to make themselves learn new words is making them read extensively: the more texts are read, the more words one can recognize and remember.

• In order to achieve efficient comprehension, the reader needs to be able to use his or her prior knowledge and relate it to the textual material. For example, if we read a story about a woman at the supermarket, we begin to relate this story automatically with what we already know about supermarket or situations which usually take place in a supermarket. Consequently, we can comprehend the story easily. Contrariwise, we have already seen that poor prior knowledge influences students’ success in understanding a text, in order to minimize this problem they should activate their prior knowledge by doing activities such as pre-reading discussions on the topic which aim at making students develop background knowledge on the topic of the text,
as asking themselves for predictions on what they are going to read, and use semantic mapping. The latter refers talking to or asking others about the topic of the text, which means starting from a key word, choosing difficult words, and then giving related words or defining, which are expected to be found later while reading the passage. All these activities can make the reading comprehension easier and, at the same time, they can encourage students’ interest and motivation, by lowering expected difficulties.

• Another aspect to take into consideration regarding material selection is text genre. high cohesive narrative texts should be provided especially for younger readers for better understanding the text meaning, students should also be encouraged to see reading in English not only as an academic experience but also as a source of pleasure by varying materials.

• Similarly, this study showed that lack of prior familiarity with the content area of the text affects their reading comprehension. Therefore, the cultural specificity of text must be taken into account during selection reading material to fill this gap and students should do Pre-reading activities which aim at making students develop awareness to minimize it's un familiarity of the content or should select appropriate reading materials by deciding what they are most interested in reading.

• The reader's task has great value in order to comprehend reading text. This is why it can be asserted that different meanings are realized by different readers or by the same reader who changes attitude towards the same text, realizing a different process. As a consequence, it is essentially necessary to consider not only the nature of a written text but also the way readers interact with what they are reading. Therefore, A reader should know and use reading comprehension strategies as well or students should be encouraged to use various reading strategies to improve comprehension and thus become successful and proficient readers because the goal of these strategies are the facilitation of reading comprehension.

• Nowadays, due to rapid grows of technology, the interest of our most students to read as well as to comprehend written text becoming low because there are many films, videos, television programs that make students to be busy. Therefore students should be encouraged to be interested in order to read written text rather than spending time seeing films. Students should also choose suitable content(a content that makes them interested to read) to read as well as in order to rise their interest.
Bibliography


RAND Reading Study Group. (2002). Reading for understanding: Toward an R&D program in reading comprehension. Santa Monica, CA: Science and Technology Policy Institute, RAND Education.


Appendix-A: Questionnaire for Students

Dear respondents,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather information on the attitude of students toward the factors affecting their reading comprehension skills. This study is conducting as a partial fulfillment of the requirement of Master Degree on Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at Debre Brhan University. As your response is very crucial for the over-all result of the study, you are kindly requested to give a genuine response to each of the item included in this questionnaire. Hopefully, the result of this study will create better awareness about factors affecting students’ reading comprehension skills. Therefore, the information you provide through this questionnaire will guarantee the success of this study. So, be honest and feel free to provide genuine information because your responses will be kept in strictest confidential. Your contribution to the success of this study is highly appreciated.

Notice: Please, do not hesitate to ask for explanation in case you face anything which is not clear while responding.

Thank you very much for your cooperation

I. Background Information
School Name: ________________________________________________
Age: ____
Sex: [Please put a tick (√)] Male [ ] Female [ ]
School : _____ Grade : ______
Section : _____ Year/Semester: _____

Direction: Indicate the extent to which the factors below make your reading difficult by putting a tick mark (✓) on one of the four point scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>When I read, I understand almost everything.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I can talk to others about what I am reading.

I can write short summary about what I am reading.

When I answer comprehension question about what I have read, I can't answer it easily.

I like it when the comprehension questions make me think.

When we are in a group talking about what we are reading.

**Part-2 students' related factors**

**Direction:** The following statements are about your role. Read them through carefully and put a tick mark (√) in a column corresponding to your answer, to show the degree to which you agree. Use the measurement scales below. The responses range from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

1= strongly agree 2= agree 3= neither agree nor disagree 4= disagree 5= strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My low-prior knowledge affects me not to generate inferences and understand the text.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My poor vocabulary knowledge( world knowledge) prohibits me from understanding text meaning.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I can't understand a passage which is difficult words loaded.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I read a text without understanding almost many words</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I guess the meaning of words and phrases that I don’t know</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I don't like reading something when the words are too difficult.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I think reading is an interesting way to get information and entertainment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART-3 Text related factors.**

**Direction:** The following statements are about texts that you read to get information or for entertainment in your daily activity. Read them through carefully and put a tick mark (√) in a column corresponding to your answer, to show the degree to which you agree. Use the measurement scales below. The responses range from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”.

1= strongly agree 3= neither agree nor disagree 5= strongly disagree 2= agree 4= disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>A text with complicated stories are difficult to understand.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I enjoy a long, involved story or fiction book.</td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expository texts are more difficult than narrative texts.

Unfamiliar topic/subject matter interfered with my reading comprehension.

**Part-4: Comprehension strategies related factors.**

**Direction:** Read the following statements through carefully, they are about comprehension strategies you use to facilitate your skills. Please place a tick (✓) mark in the column corresponding to your answer that best represent your opinion. Use the scales below. The responses range from “always” to “never”.

1 = always   2 = often   3 = sometimes   4 = rarely   5 = never

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Alternatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I make pictures in my mind when I read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I guess what the materials are about before I read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I ask myself question to check my understanding.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I reread the text to help me remember it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I summarize a text when I read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I think aloud as I read to remember what I read.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>When I read, I can connect current text information to information that was previously encountered in the text (inferences).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I can reflect the information of what I read (synthesize).</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX -B

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN CHECKLIST

• Make your questionnaire as short as possible.
• Make sure people will be able to answer your questions.
• Start with easy to answer questions. Keep complex questions for the end.
• Ask for personal information at the end.
• Use a mix of question formats.
• Don’t cause offence, frustration, sadness or anger.
• Avoid double questions.
• Avoid words with emotional connotations.
• Avoid negative questions.
  • Avoid jargon and technical words.
  • Avoid words with multiple meanings.
  • Avoid leading questions.
  • Avoid vague words such as ‘often’ and ‘sometimes’.
• Provide all possible responses in a closed question.
• Consider as many alternatives as possible.
  • Use specific place frames, e.g. ‘In which country were you born?’
  • Is the questionnaire relevant to the lives, attitudes and beliefs of the respondents?
  • Can the respondents read if they are to be given a self-administered questionnaire?
  • Do you need to translate the questionnaire into another language?
  • Are your intended respondents likely to co-operate?
  • Is the questionnaire well constructed and well laid out?
  • Is it clear, concise and uncluttered?
  • Are the instructions straightforward and realistic about how long it will take to complete?
• Has the respondent been told who the research is for and what will happen to the results?
• Has the respondent been reassured that you understand and will comply with the Data Protection Act?
• Has the questionnaire been piloted to iron out any problems?
• Can your respondents see some personal benefit to be gained by completing the questionnaire?

Appendix C

Has the questionnaire been piloted to iron out any problems?
Appendix-D

Calculating reliability (by split half method)

<table>
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<table>
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<th>O²</th>
<th>EO</th>
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<td>1600</td>
<td>1444</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ΣE=381 ΣO=379 ΣE²=14611 ΣO²=14420 ΣEO=14511
\[ r_{oe} = \frac{N\Sigma E_0 - \Sigma E \Sigma O}{\sqrt{[N\Sigma O^2 - (\Sigma O)^2][N\Sigma E^2 - (\Sigma E)^2]}} \]

\[ r_{oe} = \frac{10 \times 14511 - 381 \times 379}{\sqrt{(10 \times 14420 - 143641)(10 \times 14611 - 145161)}} \]

\[ r_{oe} = 0.97 \]

\[ r_{xx'} = \frac{2x r_{oe}}{1 + r_{oe}} \]

\[ r_{xx'} = \frac{2 \times 0.97}{1 + 0.97} \]

\[ = 0.98 \]