JIMMA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF JIMMA: GRADE 12 IN FOCUS

BY

TAREKEGN WONDIMU

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Abstract

So as t0 find out whether there is difference in reading comprehension skill between the governmental and non-governmental grade 12 preparatory school students of Jimma town, necessary and relevant data were collected by using reading comprehension test, questionnaire for students and for teachers. The data so collected were analyzed quantitatively using statistical techniques of percentage and mean.

According to the findings of the study the students of JUCPS (Jimma university community preparatory school) have obtained a better result in the reading comprehension test than the students of JPS. The fact that the reading comprehension strategies, which the students of JUCPS used, such as: being able to guess the meaning of new words in context and from word formation rather than turning to dictionaries now and then and skipping new words, being able to predict the main idea of the whole text from titles and keywords, grasping the gist of the material by quickly reading the first and the last paragraph, background experience and motivation that they got from parents and from their elementary and secondary school teachers, full support and belief of their current teachers to let them use different strategies in their reading comprehension activities every time, were the main factors or reasons that contributed to the difference.

Finally recommendations believed to help develop the reading comprehension skill of the students of JPS (who obtained less result in the test) were made. These include: 1. EFL teachers should be made to change their belief about reading comprehension strategies and help their students to use them in any reading comprehension tasks. 2. In order to overcome the problem of shortage of time, EFL teachers should provide ample reading comprehension activities which worth some points to their students to be done as homework so that the students will practice and improve their reading comprehension skill. 3. Parents also should play their role in helping and motivating their children to develop the interest of reading and comprehending a written material. 4. EFL teachers and the English departments of both schools should arrange a program to discuss and share knowledge and experience related to reading comprehension skill between them. 5. Further research should be done to find out more insight into the issue of the difference in the reading comprehension skill between the students of different schools and institutions.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

For many language learners reading is ranked first among the academic skills that they wish to gain mastery over (Grabe & Stoller, 2001; Richards and Renandya, 2002). This comes from the growing number of countries moving toward giving English instruction importance from a younger age (Ediger, 2001). It is believed that consolidating and extending one's knowledge of language and gaining wide general information (world knowledge) as well as improving a skill like writing can take place by means of reading (Harmer, 2000; Rivers, 1981). Besides, it is reported that 10 to 15 percent of students experience difficulty in reading (Mercer, 2001). Reading is viewed to understand an unobservable internal and mental process (Ur, 1996; Vacca, Vacca and Gove; 2000).

Among the four language skills, the ability to read academic text is considered one of the most important skills that high school and university students of English as a second language and foreign language need to acquire (Levine et al., 2000). To understand and complete the large amount of reading material by means of contributory reading strategies is essential for college students. Unfortunately, many students enter universities unprepared for the reading demands placed upon them. Reading requires reader's coordination of attention, memory, perceptual and comprehension processes (Kern, 1989). Research has demonstrated that reading comprehension does not just understand words, sentences, or texts, but involving a complex integration of the reader's prior knowledge, language proficiency and their metacognitive strategies (Hammadou, 1991).

It is very easy to imagine the effect of not being able to comprehend the dosage directions on a bottle of medicine or warning on a container of dangerous chemicals. In order to survive in the world, any person should be able to comprehend texts of any sort like agreements, contracts,

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bills, etc. Reading without comprehension is nothing than tracking symbols on a page with our eyes and sounding them out.

Any reading can be done for many reasons, but understanding it is the main purpose and is one of the essential things to life. If people have the ability to comprehend what they read, they are able not only to live safely and productively, but also continue to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

If reading is meant comprehending and if comprehending is so important for one's life, due attention should be given to the young boys and girls of any educational level so that they can develop their reading and comprehending skill effectively. Regarding this point, do our students of secondary or university level read and comprehend their academic materials adequately? What is the effect of this on their academic performances? It seems that some teachers in some governmental secondary schools give less attention in teaching reading comprehension skill. Most of the students also seem not to be so interested and effective in the skill mentioned.

Are there such kind situations in non-governmental secondary school teachers and students? If there is difference between the two types of schools (governmental and non-governmental), what are the factors that made it so? It is therefore essential to assess the efficacy of the reading skill in general and comprehension skill in particular of the preparatory students by the teachers themselves and by the researchers as well.

Thus, this study attempted to investigate and compare the practice undertaken to teach and learn reading comprehension skill between the governmental and non-governmental preparatory school students of Jimma town.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

A reading comprehension skill is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention. In order to make students develop the skills, teachers are expected to teach reading comprehension skills and strategies at all levels of reading development. A reading comprehension strategy is an overt process consciously selected and used by the reader to construct meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading comprehension skill.

"Reading is a basic and complementary skill in language learning." (Chastain,1988:216). Second language learners need to read and to read greater and greater quantities of authentic materials for communication. The word "reading" of course has a number of common interpretations by language teachers. It may mean reading aloud, a very complex skill, which involves understanding the printed words first and then the production of the right noises. It may also mean an activity in which students read a passage for comprehension (also called silent reading). Whatever the case, reading involves comprehension and when readers do not comprehend, they are not reading. What does a foreign language learner then need to learn if s/he is to become an efficient reader of that language? Why some people who are efficient readers in their own language cannot read efficiently in a foreign language?

The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend a text. Reading comprehension is therefore the most essential requirement for students to be successful in their academic work and life.

The point to be raised in line with this is that, do all teachers in governmental and nongovernmental preparatory schools try their best to help their students to develop the reading comprehension skill so that they can construct meaning from texts effectively, immediately and with little conscious attention? Is it the governmental or non- governmental preparatory school students that have better performance in reading comprehension? This

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study therefore tried to discover the practice of reading comprehension in private and governmental preparatory schools of Jimma town.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

This study generally aimed to compare the reading comprehension skill between the governmental and nongovernmental grade 12 preparatory school students of jimma town.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

This study also had the following specific objectives. It tried to:

- Find out if there is difference in reading comprehension skill between the two preparatory school students.
- Identify factors in the students that hindered or enhanced the development of their reading comprehension skill.
- Discover the reading comprehension strategies that the students use whenever they are engaged in reading comprehension activities.
- Spot out teacher-related factors that contributed positively or negatively to the development of the students' reading comprehension skill.
- Find out the students' background that contributed to their present reading comprehension skill.

1.4. Research Questions

This study attempted to provide answers to the research questions mentioned below:

- Which school students are better in their reading comprehension test performance?
- What kind of strategies do the students use whenever they deal with reading comprehension tasks?
- What are student related factors that contributed to the difference in their reading comprehension skill?
- What are teacher-related factors that affected the development of the students' reading comprehension skill?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The findings of this research are believed to be of some help in the following ways:

- First and for most it is believed to create an awareness among English language teachers at secondary and tertiary level to give attention to reading comprehension and help their students develop their skills in this regard.
- Secondly, it could help the students who are thought by those teachers who favor the development of reading comprehension skill to be motivated to improve their reading comprehension skill on their own in addition to what is given in the classroom.
- Moreover, the study could give an insight to the syllabus designers and material writers to consider the case and try to include appropriate activities and strategies that will motivate the students to continue practicing with interest.
- Lastly, the study is believed to initiate other researchers to make further investigation on reading in general and reading comprehension in particular.

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1.6. Scope of the Study

This study was confined to the two preparatory schools found in Jimma town- i.e Jimma Preparatory School (governmental) and Community Preparatory School in Jimma university (Non-governmental). The study mainly focused on whether there was difference in the reading comprehension skill among the students of both preparatory schools or not. In addition to this, the notable factors for the hindrance or development of the reading comprehension skills were assessed.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

As it can be seen in most research works, this study had its own limitations. In the first place, it was limited to only two preparatory schools found in Jimma. On the other hand, 20% of sample students were taken out of the 650 aggregate populations. Giving only a reading comprehension test to find out of their comprehension skills was also another limitation. Furthermore, due to financial and material shortage, this research could not try to discover "all" the factors that affected or facilitated the reading comprehension skills in English. These limitations or drawbacks might affect the generalizability of the findings.

1.8. Definitions of terms

- ❖ **Reading Comprehension (RC):** perceiving the words printed and deriving meaning out of them
- ❖ **Reading comprehension strategy:** a process of plan that readers carry out skillfully with the intention of constructing meaning by interacting with a text before, during and after reading it.
- ❖ **EFL:** teaching or learning English as Foreign Language.
- ❖ **ESL:** teaching or learning English as Second Language.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. What is reading?

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

'Reading' is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the intention of constructing or deriving meaning (reading comprehension). It is the mastery of basic cognitive processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed for the analysis of meaning.

Reading is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Like all language, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practices, development, and refinement.

According to Gough (1972), reading is an unidirectional process from letters to sounds to meaning. Like Gough, LaBerge and Samuels (1974) also depict reading as a linear process though they emphasize more the aspect of automaticity in reading functioned through memories. Goodman (1967) views reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, allowing readers to rely more on their existing syntactic and semantic knowledge structures than on the knowledge of graphic and sounds. Rumelhart (1977) delineates reading as involving flexible processing and multiple information sources, depending upon contextual circumstances. To the early 80s, a fairly general consensus was reached that reading is a complex process in which cognitive and psychological functions of different levels interact with each other in making sense of the meanings of the text. In this process, readers need to utilize all the knowledge they have, including their linguistic knowledge, their background knowledge of the topic being

discussed in the text, and their knowledge of the cognitive and meta cognitive reading strategies.

The history of reading dates back to the invention of writing during the 4th millennium BC. Although reading print text is now an important way for the general population to access information, this has not always been the case. With some exceptions, only a small percentage of the population in many countries was considered literate before the Industrial Revolution. Some of the pre-modern societies with generally high literacy rates included classical Athens and the Islamic Caliphate. In the latter case, the widespread adoption of paper and the emergence of the Maktab and Madrasah educational institutions played a fundamental role.

2.2 Theories of reading

Just like teaching methodology, reading theories have had their shifts and transitions. Starting from the traditional view which focused on the printed form of a text and moving to the cognitive view that enhanced the role of background knowledge in addition to what appeared on the printed page; they ultimately culminated in the metacognitive view which is now in vogue. It is based on the control and manipulation that a reader can have on the act of comprehending a text.

The traditional view

According to Dole et al. (1991), in the traditional view of reading, novice readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills that sequentially build toward comprehension ability. Having mastered these skills, readers are viewed as experts who comprehend what they read.

- Readers are passive recipients of information in the text. Meaning resides in the text and the reader has to reproduce meaning.

- According to Nunan (1991), reading in this view is basically a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the quest for making sense of the text. He referred to this process as the **'*bottom-up*'** view of reading.

- McCarthy (1999) has called this view **'outside-in'** processing; referring to the idea that meaning exists in the printed page and is interpreted by the reader then taken in.

- This model of reading has almost always been under attack as being insufficient and defective for the main reason that it relies on the formal features of the language, mainly words and structure.

Although it is possible to accept this rejection for the fact that there is over-reliance on structure in this view, it must be confessed that knowledge of linguistic features is also necessary for comprehension to take place. To counteract over-reliance on form in the traditional view of reading, the cognitive view was introduced.

The cognitive view

The **'*top-down*'** model is in direct opposition to the **'*bottom-up*'** model. According to Nunan (1991) and Dubin and Bycina (1991), the psycholinguistic model of reading and the top-down model are in exact concordance.

- Goodman (1967; cited in Paran, 1996) presented reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth. Here, the reader rather than the text is at the heart of the reading process.

- The schema theory of reading also fits within the cognitively based view of reading. Rumelhart (1977) has described schemata as **"*building blocks of cognition*"** which are

used in the process of interpreting sensory data, in retrieving information from memory, in organising goals and subgoals, in allocating resources, and in guiding the flow of the processing system.

- Rumelhart (1977) has also stated that if our schemata are incomplete and do not provide an understanding of the incoming data from the text we will have problems processing and understanding the text.

Cognitively based views of reading comprehension emphasize the interactive nature of reading and the constructive nature of comprehension. Dole et al. (1991) have stated that, besides knowledge brought to bear on the reading process, a set of flexible, adaptable strategies are used to make sense of a text and to monitor ongoing understanding.

The metacognitive view

According to Block (1992), there is now no more debate on *"whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process."* It is also no more problematic to accept the influence of background knowledge on both L1 and L2 readers. Research has gone even further to define the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text. This control, Block (1992) has referred to as metacognition. Metacognition involves thinking about what one is doing while reading. Klein et al. (1991) stated that strategic readers attempt the following while reading:

- Identifying the purpose of the reading before reading

- Identifying the form or type of the text before reading

- Thinking about the general character and features of the form or type of the text. For instance, they try to locate a topic sentence and follow supporting details toward a conclusion

- Projecting the author's purpose for writing the text (while reading it),

- Choosing, scanning, or reading in detail

- Making continuous predictions about what will occur next, based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages.

- Moreover, they attempt to form a summary of what was read. Carrying out the previous steps requires the reader to be able to classify sequence, establish whole-part relationships, compare and contrast, determine cause-effect, summarize, hypothesize and predict, infer, and conclude.

2.3. The Simple View of Reading

In spite of its importance in the world of reading research, many practicing educators do not know about the Simple View of Reading. It is a formula based on the widely accepted view that reading has two basic components: word recognition (decoding) and comprehension. The Simple View formula has been supported and validated by a number of research studies. Understanding the formula can help educators with assessing reading weaknesses and providing appropriate instruction. The Simple View formula presented by Gough and Tunmer in 1986 is:

Decoding (D) x Language Comprehension (LC) = Reading Comprehension (RC)

The Simple View formula and supporting studies show that a student's reading comprehension

(RC) score can be predicted if decoding (D) skills and language comprehension (LC) abilities are known. Notice that D and LC are not added together to predict RC. They are multiplied. In the Simple View formula, the values of D and LC must be between 0 and 1 (or 0% and 100%).

A score of 0 means no skill or ability at all and 1 indicates perfection. (Examples of how the formula works are presented later in this article.)

Gough and Tunmer (1986) proposed the Simple View of Reading to clarify the role of decoding in reading. Many educators believe that strong decoding skills are not necessary to achieve reading comprehension. Beginning and struggling readers are often taught to compensate for weak decoding by guessing an unfamiliar word based on the first letter or the picture, then asking themselves if the word makes sense after reading the sentence. In contrast, when decoding is the focus of instruction, students are taught to sound out unfamiliar words using all the letters.

This article discusses the following so that educators can take advantage of the Simple View of Reading to help all students achieve their maximum reading potential.

1. **The Simple View formula makes clear that strong reading comprehension cannot occur unless both decoding skills and language comprehension abilities are strong.**
   We must teach students to decode expertly as early as possible. When students can decode expertly, their reading comprehension capabilities equal their language comprehension abilities. We must provide students with strong content knowledge in many domains at all grade levels in order for them to develop adequate language comprehension abilities.

2. **Intervention for struggling readers is effective only when it addresses the student's specific weakness, which may be decoding, language comprehension, or both.**

- Intervention instruction focused on developing content knowledge or comprehension strategies will benefit struggling readers only they have a weakness in language comprehension.
- Struggling readers of all ages can have decoding weaknesses; explicit instruction in decoding will be necessary to improve their reading comprehension.

3. **Decoding and language comprehension skills are separable for both assessment and teaching, although both are required to achieve reading comprehension.**

- Scores from reading comprehension (RC) assessments are not enough data to identify students' areas of weakness (D or LC) with certainty.
- Assessment for students of all ages must supply enough information to specifically identify decoding skills and language comprehension abilities.

4. **The Simple View of Reading is a mathematical formula with three variables. If we have two variables, the third can be estimated using the formula.**

5. **The Simple View of Reading is supported by scientific research.**

Definitions

For purposes of the Simple View of Reading, skilled **decoding (D)** is defined as "efficient word recognition" (Hoover & Gough, 1990). This definition goes beyond the traditional definition of decoding as the ability to sound out words based on phonics rules. The meaning of decoding expands to include fast and accurate reading of familiar and unfamiliar words in both lists and connected text (Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

Language comprehension (LC) is called by several other names in various studies, including linguistic comprehension, listening comprehension, and comprehension. All of these terms are defined as the ability to derive meaning from spoken words when they are part of sentences or

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other discourse. Language comprehension abilities, at a minimum, encompass "receptive vocabulary, grammatical understanding, and discourse comprehension" (Catts, Adlof, & Weismer, 2006).

Reading comprehension (RC) differs from language comprehension because of the reliance on print, as opposed to oral language, to perceive the words and derive meaning (Hoover & Gough, 1990). In other words, language comprehension becomes reading comprehension when word meaning is derived from print. It is possible to have strong language comprehension and still be a poor reader if there is difficulty with decoding.

Kamhi (2007) eloquently describes the differences between decoding (word recognition) and comprehension. Decoding is "a teachable skill" compared to comprehension, which "is not a skill and is not easily taught." Kamhi explains that word recognition is a teachable skill because it "involves a narrow scope of knowledge (e.g. letters, sounds, words) and processes (decoding) that, once acquired, will lead to fast, accurate word recognition."

Kamhi further writes that comprehension "is not a skill. It is a complex of higher-level mental processes that include thinking, reasoning, imagining, and interpreting." The processes involved in comprehension are dependent on having specific knowledge in a content area. This makes comprehension largely knowledge-based, not skills based.

2.3.1. Important Findings from the Simple View of Reading

Three important findings from research supporting the Simple View of Reading have major implications for providing reading instruction and assessment.

1. **Reading comprehension results from skills and knowledge that can be broken into two distinct and identifiable categories: decoding (D) and language comprehension (LC).** Although reading is complex, the Simple View of Reading shows that the complexities can be assigned to

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one of the two categories. A deficit in decoding is related to the student's ability to read printed words accurately and rapidly. Any deficit in language comprehension is not specific to reading, but related to a knowledge domain or to higher order thinking skills such as reasoning, imagining or interpreting.

2. **All reading difficulties fall into one of three general types.** The Simple View demonstrates that reading difficulties fall into three basic types:

A. **Poor at Language Comprehension** – Has adequate decoding skills and weak language comprehension skills. The extreme example of this profile is a hyperlexic student (a student with severe language comprehension issues and excellent decoding skills).

B. **Poor at Decoding** – Has adequate language comprehension and weak decoding skills. The extreme example of this profile is a dyslexic student (a student with language comprehension abilities that are at least average and severe decoding difficulties that do not respond to research-based decoding intervention).

C. **Weaknesses in Both Areas** – Has weaknesses in both areas; sometimes referred to as the "Garden Variety" poor reader.

3. **Both decoding (D) skills and language comprehension (LC) abilities are necessary for reading, and both must be strong. Strength in one area (D or LC) cannot compensate for a deficit in the other area.**

☐ **a student with excellent decoding skills will achieve reading comprehension equal to his language comprehension skills in the subject area being tested.**

The Simple View shows that for a student with D equal to 1.0, the RC score will be equal to the LC score. For instance, a student with a D score of 100% and an LC score of 50% will have an RC score of 50%, as shown below.

RC = D x LC

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.50 = 1.0 x .50

Any improvement in this student's language comprehension skills will result in an equal improvement in reading comprehension. Improving the LC score to 70% will result in a concurrent increase in RC to 70%.

RC = D x LC

.70 = 1.0 x .70

When decoding (D) skills are strong, the only limitation to high reading comprehension (RC) is the student's language comprehension (LC) abilities with regard to the material being read.

A student with strong language comprehension abilities in the subject area being tested will achieve reading comprehension equal to his decoding skills. For instance, a student with an LC score of 100% and D of 30% will have an RC score equal to 30%, as shown below.

RC = D x LC

.30 = .30 x 1.0

Any improvement in this student's decoding abilities will result in an equal improvement in reading comprehension. Improving the D score to 75% will result in a concurrent increase in RC to 75%.

RC = D x LC

.75 = .75 x 1.0

When language comprehension (LC) abilities with regard to the subject area of reading are strong, the only limitation to high reading comprehension (RC) is the student's decoding (D) skills.

☐ **a weakness in one area will be exacerbated by a weakness in the other area.** For instance, a student with scores of 75% for both D and LC will have an RC score of 56%, as shown below.

RC = D x LC

.56 = .75 x .75

Because of the multiplier effect in the Simple View formula, the RC score is significantly lower than either of the component scores. Both D and LC scores will need to improve for this student to achieve high reading comprehension scores. If the D score improves to 100%, the student's RC improves only to 75% as shown below:

RC = D x LC

.75 = 1.00 x .75

Intervention in both D and LC is necessary in order for this student to achieve maximum RC scores.

The Simple View of Reading shows that reading comprehension abilities are dependent on decoding skills and language comprehension abilities. These categories can be taught and assessed separately.

The Simple View of Reading provides clear guidance for necessary assessment of students with reading comprehension scores below grade level expectations. We need more data than just an RC score. We must also have data to understand the student's decoding skills and language comprehension abilities in order to determine effective and efficient reading intervention.

The Simple View of Reading also is clear about the components of effective reading instruction.

At every grade level we must insure that students have sufficient content knowledge and higher order thinking skills to understand what they read. We must provide early reading instruction that insures students become strong decoders because once decoding is strong, the only limit

to reading comprehension is the student's knowledge of the subject he is reading about and his ability to synthesize the information

2.4. Schema Theory of reading comprehension

Linguists, cognitive psychologists, and psycholinguists have used the **concept of schema** (plural: schemata) to understand the interaction of key factors affecting the comprehension process. Simply put, **schema theory states** that all knowledge is organized into units. Within these units of knowledge, or schemata, is stored information.

A **schema,** then, is a generalized description or a conceptual system for understanding knowledge-how knowledge is represented and how it is used. According to this theory, **schemata** represent knowledge about concepts: objects and the relationships they have with other objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions, and sequences of actions.

What does all this have to do with reading comprehension?

Individuals have schemata for everything. Long before students come to school, they develop **schemata** (units of knowledge) about everything they experience. Schemata become theories about reality. These theories not only affect the way information is interpreted, thus affecting comprehension, but also continue to change as new information is received.

As stated by Rumelhart (1980), schemata can represent knowledge at all levels-from ideologies and cultural truths to knowledge about the meaning of a particular word, to knowledge about what patterns of excitations are associated with what letters of the alphabet. We have schemata to represent all levels of our experience, at all levels of abstraction. Finally, **our schemata are our knowledge**. All of our generic knowledge is embedded in schemata. (p. 41). The importance of **schema theory to reading comprehension** also lies in how the reader uses

schemata. This issue has not yet been resolved by research, although investigators agree that some mechanism activates just those schemata most relevant to the reader's task

2.4.1. Reading Comprehension as Cognitive-Based Processing

There are several models based on cognitive processing (see Ruddell, Ruddell, & Singer, 1994, p. 813). For example, the LaBerge-Samuels Model of Automatic Information Processing

(Samuels, 1994) emphasizes **internal aspects of attention** as crucial to comprehension. Samuels (1994, pp. 818-819) defines three characteristics of **internal attention**. The first, *alertness,* is the reader's active attempt to access relevant schemata involving letter-sound relationships, syntactic knowledge, and word meanings. Selectivity, the second characteristic, refers to the reader's ability to attend selectively to only that information requiring processing.

The third characteristic, limited *capacity* refers to the fact that our human brain has a limited amount of cognitive energy available for use in processing information. In other words, if a reader's **cognitive energy** is focused on decoding and attention cannot be directed at integrating, relating, and combining the meanings of the words decoded, then comprehension will suffer. "Automaticity in information processing, then, simply means that information is processed with little attention" (Samuels, 1994, p. 823). Comprehension difficulties occur when the reader cannot rapidly and automatically access the concepts and knowledge stored in the schemata

One other example of a **cognitive-based model** is Rumelhart's (1994) **Interactive Model**. Information from several knowledge sources (schemata for letter-sound relationships, word meanings, syntactic relationships, event sequences, and so forth) are considered *simultaneously.* The implication is that when information from one source, such as word recognition, is deficient, the reader will rely on information from another source, for example, contextual clues or previous experience.

Stanovich (1980) terms the latter kind of processing **interactive-compensatory** because the reader *(any reader)* compensates for deficiencies in one or more of the knowledge sources by using information from remaining knowledge sources. Those sources that are more concerned with concepts and semantic relationships are termed *higher level stimuli;* sources dealing with the print itself that are phonics sight words, and other word-attack skills, are termed lower *level stimuli.*

The **interactive-compensatory model** implies that the reader will rely on higher-level processes when lower-level processes are inadequate, and vice versa. Stanovich (1980) extensively reviews research demonstrating such compensation in both good and poor readers.

2.4.2. Reading Comprehension as Socio cognitive Processing

A socio cognitive processing model takes a constructivist view of reading comprehension; that is, the reader, the text, the teacher, and the classroom communities are all involved in the **construction of meaning**. Ruddell and Ruddell (1994, 813) state, "The role of the classroom's social context and the influence of the teacher on the reader's meaning negotiation and construction are central to this model [developed by Ruddell and Unrau] as it explores the notion that participants in literacy events form and reform meanings in a hermeneutic interpretation] circle." In other words, this model views comprehension as a process that **involves meaning negotiation** among text, readers, teachers, and other members of the classroom community. Schema for text meanings, academic tasks, sources of authority (i.e., residing within the text, the reader, the teacher, the classroom community, or some interaction of these), and socio cultural settings are all brought to the negotiation task. The teacher's role is one of orchestration of the instructional setting, and being knowledgeable about teaching/learning strategies and about the world.

2.4.3. Reading Comprehension *as Transactional*

The **transactional** model takes into account the dynamic nature of language and both aesthetic and cognitive aspects of reading. According to Rosenblatt (1994,p. 1063), "Every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. Instead of two fixed entities acting on one another, the reader and the text are two aspects of **a total dynamic situation**.

The 'meaning' does not reside ready-made 'in' the text or 'in' the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text." Thus, text without a reader is merely a set of marks capable of being interpreted as written language. However, when a reader transacts with the text, meaning happens.

Schemata are not viewed as static but rather as active, developing, and ever changing. **As readers transact with text they are changed or transformed**, as is the text. Similarly, "The same text take on different meanings in transactions with different readers or even with the same readers in different contexts or times" (Rosenblatt, 1994, 1078).

2.4.4. Reading Comprehension as Transactional-Socio psycholinguistic

Building on Rosenblatt's transactional model, Goodman (1994) conceptualizes literacy processing as including reading, writing, and written texts. He states, Texts are constructed by authors to be comprehended by readers. The meaning is in the author and the reader. The **text has a potential to evoke meaning but has no meaning in itself**; meaning is not a characteristic of texts. This does not mean the characteristics of the text are unimportant or that either writer or reader is independent of them. How well the writer constructs the text and how well the reader reconstructs it and constructs meaning will influence comprehension. But meaning does not pass between writer and reader. It is represented by a writer in a text and constructed from a text by a reader. Characteristics of writer, text, and reader will all influence the resultant meaning (p.1103).

In a transactional-socio psycholinguistic view, the reader has a highly active role. It is the **individual transactions between a reader and the text characteristics that result in meaning**. These characteristics include physical characteristics such as orthography the alphabetic system, spelling, punctuation; format characteristics such as paragraphing, lists, schedules, bibliographies; macrostructure or text grammar such as that found in telephone books, recipe books, newspapers, and letters; and wording of texts such as the differences found in narrative and expository text.

Understanding is limited, however, by the reader's schemata, **making what the reader brings to the text as important as the text itself**. The writer also plays an important role in comprehension.

Additionally, readers' and writers' schemata are changed through transactions with the text as meaning is constructed. Readers' schemata are changed as new knowledge is assimilated and accommodated. Writers' schemata are changed as new ways of organizing text to express meaning are developed. According to Goodman (1994):

> *How well the writer knows the audience and has built the text to suit that audience makes a major difference in text predictability and comprehension. However, since comprehension results from reader-text transactions, what the reader knows who the reader is, what values guide the reader, and what purposes or interests the reader has will play vital roles in the reading process. It follows that what is comprehended from a given text varies among readers. Meaning is ultimately created by each reader (1127).*

2.4.5. Reading Comprehension as Influenced by Attitude

Mathewson's (1994) Model of Attitude Influence upon Reading and Learning to Read is derived from the area of social psychology. This model attempts to explain **the roles of affect and cognition in reading comprehension**.

The core of the attitude-influence model explains that a reader's whole **attitude** toward reading (i.e., prevailing feelings and evaluative beliefs about reading and action readiness for reading) will **influence the intention to read**, in turn influencing reading behavior. *Intention to read* is proposed as the primary mediator between attitude and reading. Intention is defined as "commitment to a plan for achieving one or more reading purposes at a more or less specified time in the future" (Mathewson, 1994, 1135). All other moderator variables (e.g., extrinsic motivation, involvement, prior knowledge, and purpose) are viewed as affecting the attitude reading relationship by **influencing the intention to read**.

Therefore, classroom environments that include well-stocked libraries, magazines, reading tables, and areas with comfortable chairs will **enhance students' intentions to read**. Mathewson (1994, p. 1148) states, "Favorable attitudes toward reading thus sustain intention to read and reading as long as readers continue to be satisfied with reading outcomes.

2.5. Simple Ideas about Reading Comprehension

This simple idea that the acquisition of reading comprehension is learning to understand writing as well as one understands spoken language has empirical justification. At the beginning of learning to read, the correlations between reading and spoken language comprehension are small (Curtis, 1980; Sticht & James, 1984). This is because at the beginning, children are learning to decode and identify words, so it is these word-reading processes that limit comprehension. However, as children move beyond the beginnings of learning to read, the correlations between reading comprehension and spoken language comprehension increase and then level out by high school (Sticht & James, 1984). As children learn to read words, the limiting factor in reading comprehension shifts from word recognition to spoken language comprehension. For adult college student samples, SSR13 11/27/04 10:54 AM Page 227 the correlation between scores on reading comprehension and listening comprehension tests reaches r = .90 (Gernsbacher, 1990).

2.5.1. Higher-Level Factors in Comprehension

Among the components of the comprehension framework are three that we highlight in this section: *sensitivity to story structure*, *inference making*, and *comprehension monitoring*. We begin with the last two, which have been proposed as important sources of comprehension development and comprehension problems.

Inferences

The language of any text, spoken or written, is not completely explicit. Deeper comprehension—building a situation model – requires that the reader make inferences that bridge elements in the text or otherwise support the coherence necessary for comprehension. Inferences come in a variety of forms, and various taxonomies have been proposed (e.g., Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998). Among those that appear most necessary for comprehension are inferences that are needed to make a text coherent. Additionally, skilled readers make causal inferences that make sense of otherwise unconnected actions in a story (Graesser & Kruez, 1993; Trabasso & Suh, 1993). However, readers do not routinely make predictive inferences and other elaborative inferences that are not compelled by a need for either textual or causal coherence (Graesser et al., 1994; McKoon & Ratcliff, 1992).

Comprehension monitoring

Readers who strive for coherence in their representation of a text must be able to monitor their comprehension. Monitoring allows the reader to verify his or her understanding and to make repairs where this understanding is not sensible. Skilled readers can use the detection of a comprehension breakdown (e.g., an apparent inconsistency) as a signal for rereading and repair. Less-skilled readers may not engage this monitoring process (Baker, 1984; Garner, 1980). Again the question is why not

Low reading comprehension appears to be associated with low monitoring performance at all age levels. In the study by Hacker (1997), eleventh-grade low-skill readers were no better than ninth-grade low-skill readers and not as good as seventh-grade skilled readers. The cause of this monitoring problem evades easy explanation. When students were given an additional chance to find the errors with an examiner pointing to the line containing an error, performance improved. However, the least skilled group of readers failed to improve as much as the more skilled groups. This certainly suggests that relevant knowledge is not always used in monitoring and that there are knowledge and basic processing differences that limit monitoring among some low-skilled readers. Thus, not all the problems can be due to a "monitoring deficit." Again, reading with a certain coherence standard is necessary for monitoring to be engaged.

Sensitivity to story structure

The genre of texts (narrative, descriptive, etc.), their linguistic styles, and the various layouts of texts all can present novel problems that are solved only by experience in reading. Among the many text genre possibilities, the simple story of the sort encountered by children in schools has attracted the most attention, and we focus here on this specific text type.

The developmental research on this topic has focused on the understanding of story structure (e.g., Smiley, Oakley, Worthen, Campione, & Brown, 1977; Stein & Glenn, 1979). What is interesting about this development is its earliness. Stein and Albro (1997) argue that story understanding depends on knowledge about the intentions that motivate human action, and

conclude that this knowledge is typically acquired by age 3. If so, although the application of narrative understanding to written texts can undergo further development with reading experience, we would not expect that story structure "deficits" would limit comprehension skill. Beyond the conceptual bases for narrative, however, is the understanding that the text itself honors the narrative structure through coherence devices. Differences in this sensitivity to text coherence could lead to differences in comprehension. Indeed, a study by Yuill and Oakhill (1991) demonstrated that, when they were required to narrate a story from a picture sequence, the less-skilled comprehenders produced fewer causal connectives and made more ambiguous use of referential ties than did skilled comprehenders. The less-skilled comprehenders also had difficulties in using linguistic elements to make their stories well structured and integrated.

2.6. Research-Based Reading Comprehension Instruction

2.6.1. Overview of Research

The last 25 years have yielded most of what researchers know about reading comprehension. Most of the results are based on studies of how good readers interact with text. Researchers have found that good readers are active or strategic readers who use a variety of comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading a text. Good readers use comprehension strategies to facilitate the construction of meaning. These strategies include previewing, self-questioning, making connections, visualizing, knowing how words work, monitoring, summarizing, and evaluating. Researchers believe that using such strategies helps students become metacognitive readers (McLaughlin & Allen, 2002). Some people intuitively become strategic readers. All readers, no matter what their skill levels, benefit greatly from direct instruction in how to interact with a text and process information.

The rationale for the explicit teaching of comprehension skills is that comprehension can be improved by teaching students to use specific cognitive strategies or to reason strategically when they encounter barriers to understanding what they are reading … explicit or formal

instruction in the application of comprehension strategies has been shown to be highly effective in enhancing understanding (National Reading Panel, 2002).

Students on all grade levels need to practice being active readers as they encounter increasingly difficult reading materials on each grade level. The *Focus on Reading Strategies* program is designed for a grade span of three through eight. The reading and interest levels of each Student Book match the intended grade level. Instruction in active reading strategies is scaffolded throughout the program so that each level builds upon and expands what students have learned previously

Focus on Reading Strategies brings research - based instruction to the classroom. The program focuses on directly teaching active reading strategies that research has proven to most effectively improve reading comprehension.

- Previewing Text
- Self-Questioning

- Making Connections
- Visualizing

- Knowing How Words Work
- Monitoring

- Summarizing
- Evaluating

Previewing Text / Predicting

We learn new information by connecting it to what we already know to construct meaning. This prior knowledge is called schemata and reflects the experiences, conceptual understanding, attitudes, values, and skills a reader brings to a text situation. "...readers are in a better position to comprehend what they are reading whenever they use prior knowledge (schemata) to construct meaning" (Vacca, 2002).

As they read, good readers frequently make predictions about what is to come." —*Duke & Pearson, 2002*

Predicting is also a previewing strategy. Good readers hypothesize about what a text may be about based on textual clues or their own experiences. This previewing strategy helps readers set a goal for reading and focus their thinking.

Self-Questioning/Making Connections/Monitoring

"Strategic learning during reading is all about monitoring reading and making sense. Skilled readers know how to monitor and keep track of whether the author is making sense by asking questions…"

—Vacca, 2002

Students are prompted to self-question as they read the fiction and nonfiction selections in *Focus on Reading Strategies.* Each selection is accompanied by questions for the reader that are highlighted within the text. Columns are provided for students to sketch answers to these running questions as they read. Students might be asked what they'd like to know more about, what predictions they can make, if a particular detail is important, how something compares to their experiences, what they think the writer means, and so on. As students respond, they are connecting with the text and checking their understanding—essential strategies for successful readers.

Visualizing

"There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to comprehension, this saying might be paraphrased, 'a visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember some of those thousand words.'"—*Duke & Pearson, 2002*

Visual representations of text help a reader see the information again. A graphic "re-presentation" allow readers to see relationships, understand organization, connect ideas, and make abstract ideas concrete.

Knowing How Words Work

Research conducted in the past ten years reveals that vocabulary knowledge is the single most important factor contributing to reading comprehension. Moreover, studies conducted on the importance of vocabulary instruction demonstrate that it plays a major role in improving comprehension." —*Laflamme, 1997*

For decades, research has shown a direct link between vocabulary development and reading comprehension. Students who read well have a good vocabulary. Balanced language arts programs include a strong component of vocabulary instruction. Good readers can decipher the meaning of words as they read. They know how to use context clues, base words, word parts, and even a dictionary, when necessary, to understand a new word in text. "Because of the enormous number of words which a mature reader needs to understand, it is important for student to learn how to learn the meanings of new words" (Carr & Wixson, 1986)

Summarizing

"…research suggests instruction and practice in summarizing not only improves students' ability to summarize text, but also their overall comprehension of text content." —*Duke & Pearson, 2002*

Summarizing is a difficult task. Students must sift through text, identify unimportant and important ideas, and synthesize the important ideas to create a new text that stands for the original. This skill needs to be reviewed and practiced as students encounter increasingly challenging texts.

Evaluating

"Effective readers are strategic. They make predictions, organize information, and interact with text. They evaluate the ideas they are reading about in light of what they already know." —*Barton & Billmeyer, 1998*

As good readers interact with text, they evaluate before, during, and after reading. They intuitively consider if the title is something that interests them, if the author is accurately representing the world as they know it, if the author is exaggerating or distorting ideas, if they would recommend the text to another reader, and whom that reader would be. In this way, they are monitoring their Understanding and making connections with the text.

2.7. Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension

2.7.1. Effective Individual Comprehension Strategies

Prediction. We have labeled the first strategy prediction, although it is better conceived as a family of strategies than a single, identifiable strategy. At its core is making predictions and then reading to see how they turned out, but it also entails activities that come with different labels, such as activating prior knowledge, previewing, and over viewing. What all these variants have in common is encouraging students to use their existing knowledge to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in text.

Although these strategies have some earlier roots (e.g., Ausabel, 1968; Stauffer, 1976, 1980), these activities are most clearly the legacy of the 1980s, with its emphasis on schema theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984) and comprehension as the bridge between the known and the new (Pearson &Johnson, 1978).

These studies suggest a variety of productive ways of encouraging students to engage their knowledge and experience prior to reading. They also suggest that in nearly all cases, the impact on story understanding is positive, at least for narrative texts in which themes and topics are likely to be highly familiar. The situation may be quite different in reading expository texts, especially if students' existing knowledge is riddled with misconceptions about matters of science and prejudices in the realm of human experience (see, for example, Guzzetti,Snyder, Glass, & Gamas, 1993).

Think-aloud. Another proven instructional technique for improving comprehension is think-aloud. As its name implies, 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. Think-aloud has been shown to improve students' comprehension both when students themselves engage in the practice during reading and also when teachers routinely think aloud while reading to students.

Teacher think-aloud. Teacher think-aloud is typically conceived of as a form of teacher modeling. By thinking aloud, teachers demonstrate effective comprehension strategies and, at least as importantly, when and when not to apply them. For example, in the following teacher think-aloud, the teacher demonstrates the use of visualization and prediction strategies:

Student think-aloud. Instruction that entails students thinking aloud themselves also has proven effective at improving comprehension (see Kucan & Beck, 1997, for a review). A classic study by Bereiter and Bird (1985) showed that students who were asked to think aloud while reading had better comprehension than students who were not taught to think aloud, according to a question-and-answer comprehension test. A compelling study by Silven and Vauras (1992) demonstrated that students who were prompted to think aloud as part of their comprehension training were better at summarizing information in a text than students whose training did not include think-aloud.

Several scholars have theorized about why student think-aloud is effective at improving comprehension. One popular theory is that getting students to think aloud decreases their impulsiveness (Meichebaum & Asnarow, 1979). Rather than jumping to conclusions about text meaning or moving ahead in the text without having sufficiently understood what had already been read, think-aloud may lead to more thoughtful, strategic reading.

Text structure. Beginning in the late 1970s and extending throughout the 1980s into the early 1990s, we witnessed an explosion of research about the efficacy of teaching children to use the structure of texts, both narrative and expository, to organize their understanding and recall of

important ideas. Most of the research emphasized the structural aspects of text organization rather than the substance of the ideas, the logic being that it was structure, not content, that would transfer to new texts that students would meet on their own.

Story structure. The research on story structure uses a few consistent heuristics to help students organize their story understanding and recall. Usually, these are organized into a story grammar (see Mandler, 1978; Stein & Glenn, 1979), or as it is commonly called in instructional parlance, a story map (see Pearson, 1981), which includes categories such as setting, problem, goal, action, outcome, resolution, and theme. Instruction typically consists of modeling, guided practice, and independent practice in recognizing parts of the stories under discussion that instantiate, or "fill," each category. Although there are situations, texts, and populations in which this sort of instruction does not appear helpful, in the main, story structure shows positive effects for a wide range of students,

Informational text structure. Most of the research establishing the positive impact of helping students learn to use the structural features of informational texts as aides to understanding and recall has been conducted since the appearance of elaborate text analysis schemes in the late 1970s (e.g., Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978; Meyer, 1975; see also Meyer & Rice, 1984, for a complete review of this early work). The early work documented the significance of attention to text structure, pointing out that students—for whatever reasons, including the fact that they are simply better readers—who are more knowledgeable about text structure recall more textual information than those who are less knowledgeable (Barlett, 1978; Meyer, Brandt, & Bluth, 1980).

Visual representations of text. There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. When it comes to comprehension, this saying might be paraphrased, "a visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember some of those thousand words." Compare the short text on digestion to the flow chart in Figure 10.2. The text is verbal, abstract, and eminently forgettable; by contrast, the flowchart is visual, concrete, and arguably more memorable.

Much of the research cited in the previous section on text structure applies to the use of visual displays. Most notable, because of their consistent use of visual displays over an extended time period, is the work of Armbruster, Anderson, and Ostertag (1987) and Gallagher and Pearson (1989). Armbruster and colleagues (1987) employed the heuristic of a general frame to assist students in learning from expository text.

Summarization. Teaching students to summarize what they read is another way to improve their overall comprehension of text. Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) describe summarizing as follows:

> *Often confused with determining importance, summarizing is a broader, more synthetic activity for which determining importance is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition. The ability to summarize information requires readers to sift through large units of text, differentiate important from unimportant ideas, and then synthesize those ideas and create a new coherent text that stands for, by substantive criteria, the original. This sounds difficult, and the research demonstrates that, in fact, it is. (p. 244)*

In rule-governed approaches, students are taught to follow a set of step by- step procedures to develop summaries. For example, McNeil and Donant (1982) teach the following rules,

Rule 1: Delete unnecessary material.

Rule 2: Delete redundant material.

Rule 3: Compose a word to replace a list of items.

Rule 4: Compose a word to replace individual parts of an action.

Rule 5: Select a topic sentence.

Rule 6: Invent a topic sentence if one is not available.

Through teacher modeling, group practice, and individual practice, students learn to apply these rules to create brief summaries of text.

Questions/questioning. No comprehension activity has a longer or more pervasive tradition than asking students questions about their reading whether this occurs before, during, or after the reading (see Durkin, 1978, for compelling evidence of the ubiquity of this practice). We also know much about the effect of asking different types of questions on students' understanding and recall of text, with the overall finding that students' understanding and recall can be readily shaped by the types of questions to which they become accustomed (the classic review is Anderson & Biddle, 1975, but see also Levin & Pressley, 1981; Pressey, 1926; Rickards, 1976). Thus, if students receive a steady diet of factual detail questions, they tend, in future encounters with text, to focus their efforts on factual detail

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1. Research Design

3.1.1. The Subjects

The subjects of this study were from the two preparatory schools found in Jimma town. The schools were Jimma Preparatory School (governmental) and Jimma University Community Preparatory School (Non-governmental). The two schools were different in administration and student population and were selected for the purpose of investigating whether there was difference in reading comprehension skills among the students or not.

The study was conducted on grade 12 that incorporated the students and the English teachers as the subjects of the study. The choice was made for the reason that these were students who would join university by the year to come, and were expected to read and understand a lot by themselves at the university. It was therefore necessary to know their level of comprehension skills in order to facilitate conducive situations for the students before they joined university.

A total of 122 randomly selected sample students were taken from the two schools out of the 650 total populations. All the eleven English instructors from both schools (9 from Jimma Preparatory and 2 from J U, Community Preparatory School) were included in the study.

The students were given a reading comprehension test in addition to a questionnaire that they had to respond to it. The English teachers were provided a questionnaire to indicate their views regarding reading and comprehension teaching and learning situations in their respective schools.

3.1.2. Sampling Design

Three sampling techniques: stratified sampling, systematic sampling and comprehensive sampling were used in this study. Stratified sampling was used to divide the whole population in to homogeneous subgroups i.e. students of Jimma University Community Preparatory School (JUCPS) and Jimma Preparatory School (JPS). From these two groups, sample subjects were selected by using systematic random sampling. Comprehensive sampling was used to take the whole eleven English teachers who teach in the preparatory classes of both schools.

3.2. Research Methodology

In this study, quantitative method was applied to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire and reading comprehension test.

3.2.1 Data Gathering Instruments

In this study the main tools used to gather the data useful for the research were questionnaire and reading comprehension test.

3.2.1.1 Questionnaire:

The questionnaires used in this study were two, one for the students and another for the English teachers of both schools. The questionnaire for the students consisted 24 items while the questionnaire for the teachers consisted 12 items. Most of the items in both questionnaires were of close ended and rating types. Students' questionnaire included items of using strategies and their background to reading comprehension skill. Questionnaire for teachers contained items that are about teachers and their students, about their belief and attitude towards reading comprehension.

3.2.1.2 Reading Comprehension Test

A reading comprehension test of 12 items was prepared and used for the sample students of both schools to find out whose performance was better in the skill. An attempt was made to find a reading comprehension test that was appropriate to the level and interest of the students, and this was used after it was commented by colleagues and this thesis advisor and after a pilot study was made. These data obtained from the questionnaire and the comprehension test were collated and inferred statistically. It was from these two data sources that the conclusion of this study was made.

3.3 Data Collecting Procedure

The data collecting process in this study took place in the following steps. Firstly data gathering tools were subjected to comments of colleagues and the researcher's thesis advisor for validity and reliability. Then the consent of the officials of the target schools and the cooperation of the teachers concerned were obtained. Following this, the selection of the sample students that represent the total population was carried out by using their name list. Finally time and place were arranged for the students to administer the test and questionnaire. The teachers were provided the questionnaire according to the time convenient for them. The data obtained in these ways were analyzed quantitatively and statistical inference was made in the end.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Two methods (Questionnaire and Reading Comprehension Test) were used in order to answer the research questions and achieve the objective mentioned in chapter one of this thesis. The data collected in this way were analyzed statistically and interpretations were made to reach to possible conclusions.

4.1. Analysis of Data obtained from reading comprehension test.

A reading comprehension test of 12 questions was prepared for 122 sample students of both schools. The test included narrative questions, sentence relationship questions, vocabulary and reference questions. Before administering, the test was commented by this research advisor and colleagues. This comprehension test was administered for the sample students of both governmental and nongovernmental grade 12 preparatory students of Jimma town. The test was given for the sample students at the same day and time in their respective school by the assistants who are assigned as invigilators in both schools. After the sample students finished doing the test, they were given the questionnaire to respond to and were collected on-the-spot.

According to the objective of this research, the purpose of the reading comprehension test was to find out which school students were better in their reading comprehension skill. The data obtained from the test was analyzed in the following way.

Table: 4.1. Reading comprehension test results of JUCPS and JPS

No	school	0-10%		11-20%		21-30%		31-40%		41-50%		51-60%		61-70%		71-80%		81-90%		91-100%		total		mean
		no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	
1	JUCPS	_	_	1	5	2	9	2	9	9	41	1	5	4	18	3	14	_	_	_	_	22	100	49.36
2	JPS	3	3	8	8	13	13	19	19	40	40	12	12	4	4	1	1	_	_	_	_	100	100	39.51

As it is indicated in table 1, sample students of JUCPS (Jimma university community preparatory school) have shown a better performance than the sample students of JPS (Jimma preparatory school). The least mark obtained was 17% by one (or 5%) student of JUCPS, whereas 3 (3%) of students of JPS obtained from 0-10% result.14% of the sample students of JUCPS have obtained the highest mark (result) 71-80%.Concerning the sample students of JPS ,it was only 1% of the students who got that highest result. When we look at the result where most of the students are in, 41% of JUCPS have obtained 41-50% and 40% of JPS students have obtained the same result.

The mean (average) result of the sample students also have shown that it is the JUCPS which showed a better performance in the test i.e. 49.36. On the other hand, the mean (average) result of JPS students was 39.51. From these reading comprehension test result, it can be generalized that students of JUCPS are better in their reading comprehension skill than the students of JPS.

4.2. Analysis of data of questionnaires

In order to find out whether there were factors that created difference or similarity in the reading comprehension skill of the students in both governmental and non- governmental preparatory students of Jimma town, questionnaires for the students as well as for the English teachers were prepared and used.

4.2.1. Data from students' Questionnaire

One hundred twenty two copies of questionnaire were prepared and distributed to the student respondents of both school. The questionnaires were given before they did the reading comprehension test .They were briefed how to respond to the questionnaire and were given enough time to fill it. The sample students from both schools were taken to their respective hall or classroom where it can accommodate all of them and they filled and returned them on-the-spot.

Students' questionnaire was prepared in such a way that they can respond to it by rating. It consists of twenty four items classified in to three main groups, i.e. items related to text-initiated strategies, reader-initiated strategies and previous experience related to reading skill. The data obtained from such kind of questionnaire for students were presented in tables and analyzed quantitatively (decimal values were taken to the nearest whole number)

Table 4. 2 A.   Strategies related to focus on vocabulary (of JUCPS)

N O	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
1.	I turn to dictionaries when coming across new words in the English reading	2	9	_	_	3	14	11	50	6	27	22	100
2.	I guess the meaning of new words by analyzing their roots or prefixes or suffixes	_	_	6	27	4	18	8	36	4	18	22	100
3.	When I read English articles. I skip the words that are new to me.	4	18	8	36	5	23	4	18	1	5	22	100
4.	I guess the meaning of new words in context when reading in English.	_	_	2	9	5	23	6	27	9	41	22	100
5.	I use simple words to replace difficult ones in sentence understanding.	1	5	1	5	9	41	5	23	6	27	22	100

NB. 1= never true of me   **2**=not true of me   **3**=somewhat true of me   **4**=true of me 5=completely true of me

According to table 2A, the response of JUCPS students shows that it is somewhat true for 50% of them to turn to dictionaries when coming across new words while reading. For 27% of the students, it is completely true of them to turn to dictionaries for the meaning of new words

when they read. For 36%of the students, guessing the meaning of new words from the word formation was usually true of them while it was not true for 27% of them, skipping new words when reading in English was not true for 36% and never true for 18% of the students. This means that most of the students don't skip new words; instead they guess the meanings from the word formation. In addition to this, it is completely true for 41% of them and usually true for 27% of the respondent to guess the meaning of new words in context when reading in English.

These kinds of reading comprehension strategies concerning vocabulary use has helped most of the students of JUCPS to develop their skill of understanding the idea and meaning of a written text, and that is why they showed a better performance in the reading comprehension test.

Table 4. 2. B Strategies related to Focus on vocabulary (of JPS)

NO	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
1.	I turn to dictionaries when coming across new words in the English reading	0	0	8	8	25	25	42	42	25	25	100	100
2.	I guess the meaning of new words by analyzing their roots or prefixes or suffixes	0	0	9	9	33	33	34	34	24	24	100	100
3.	When I read English articles. I skip the words that are new to me.	4	4	18	18	22	22	33	33	23	23	100	100
4.	I guess the meaning of new words in context when reading in English.	3	3	8	8	20	20	34	34	35	35	100	100
5.	I use simple words to replace difficult ones in sentence understanding.	8	8	7	7	24	24	38	38	23	23	100	100

NB. 1= never true of me   2=not true of me   3=somewhat true of me   4=true of me   5=completely true of me

With regard to the response of JPS students, as shown in table 2B, it is usually true for 42% or majority of the respondents to turn to dictionaries when coming across new words while reading. 34% of the respondents of JPS guess the meaning of words from word formation while 33% of them skip words that are new to them. It is only 35% of them that guess the meaning of new words in contexts. 38% of the students use simple words to replace the difficult ones to

understand the sentence. From this,it can be said that most of JPS students frequently turn to dictionaries when they come across new words while they are reading. Those who guess the meaning of new words from word formation and in context are few when compared to that 0f the students of JUCPS.Most of them also skip words that are new to them. These reading comprehension strategies that they use have affected their reading comprehension skill and that is why they showed less performance in the reading comprehension test than the students of JUCPS.

Table 4. 3A Summarizing Strategy (of JPS)

no	Item	1		2		3		4		5		total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
6	I do not bother with the grammatical structure of sentences while reading in English	13	13	28	28	40	40	11	11	8	8	100	100
7.	I grasp the gist of the reading material through quickly reading the first and the last paragraphs	6	6	24	24	38	38	24	24	8	8	100	100
8.	I grasp the main idea of the material while reading English.	6	6	14	14	38	38	31	31	11	11	100	100
9	I pause and analyze the structure of sentences when reading in English.	8	8	12	12	24	24	38	38	18	18	100	100
10.	I try to understand complicated sentences by analyzing their structure.	_	_	19	19	24	24	33	33	24	24	100	100
11.	I try to grasp the general idea of a sentence before going to read the next sentence.	9	9	21	21	32	32	24	24	14	14	100	100
12.	I try to guess the main ideas of the text on the basis of pictures, charts or figures.	6	6	10	10	29	29	30	30	25	24	100	100

Table 4.3B Summarizing Strategy (of JUCPS)

no	Item	1		2		3		4		5		total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
6	I do not bother with the grammatical structure of sentences while reading in English	1	5	8	36	8	36	5	23	_	_	22	100
7	I grasp the gist of the reading material through quickly reading the first and the last paragraphs	1	5	4	18	8	36	7	32	2	9	22	100
8	I grasp the main idea of the material while reading English.	_	_	_	_	8	36	9	41	5	23	22	100
9	I pause and analyze the structure of sentences when reading in English.	2	9	3	14	5	23	9	41	3	14	22	100
10	I try to understand complicated sentences by analyzing their structure.	1	5	3	14	7	32	7	32	4	18	22	100
11	I try to grasp the general idea of a sentence before going to read the next sentence.	2	9	4	18	5	23	10	45	1	5	22	100
12	I try to guess the main ideas of the text on the basis of pictures, charts or figures.	2	9	2	9	4	18	10	45	4	18	22	100

NB. 1=never true of me   2= not true of me   3= somewhat true of me   4= usually true of me   5=completely true of me

Table 3 A and 3B are meant to compare how effectively the sample students of both preparatory school use the summarizing strategy in order to deal with the reading comprehension activities. According to the two tables shown here, 40 % of JPS students don't bother with the grammatical structure of sentences where as it is only 36 % with the respondents of JUCPS students. This showed that most of JPS students face problem in comprehending a text for they don't pay attention to the grammatical structure of the sentences.

Concerning item 7, it is true and usually true for 36% + 32% i, e. for 68% of the respondents of JUCPS to grasp the gist of the reading material by reading the first and the last paragraphs. This is true and usually true for 38 % and 24% (altogether for 62%) of the JPS students. This also indicates that JUCPS students are better than JPS students in this regard.

With regard to item 8, it is true, usually true and completely true for (36% + 41% + 23% respectively) i,e.100% of the sample population of JUCPS. This shows that these students are

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100 % capable in grasping the main idea of reading materials. On the other hand, this holds true only for (38% +31% + 11%) 80% of the students of JPS.

Pausing and analyzing the structure of complicated sentences (item 9 & 10) to make the summary of the idea of the given text is true for (23% +41% + 14%) =78% of the sample students of JUCPS,where as it is true for 80% (24% + 38% +18%) of JPS students. In this regard, JPS students are a little better in pausing and analyzing the structure of sentences. In addition to this JPS students also seem to be better in guessing the main ideas of the text on the basis of pictures, charts or figures than the students of JUCPS. This is shown on the table with 84% and 81% respectively in general.

Table 4. 4A   Reader-initiated strategies (of JPS)

NO	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
13.	I try to interpret the writer's intention while reading in English.	2	2	16	16	41	41	34	34	7	7	100	100
14	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from its title or subtitle.	7	7	14	14	20	20	41	41	18	18	100	100
15	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from key words.	0	0	14	14	31	31	30	30	25	25	100	100
16	I do not pay attention to the implied meaning of the reading material.	40	40	30	30	15	15	9	9	6	6	100	100
17	I overlook the sentences with complicated structures.	7	7	21	21	32	32	34	34	6	6	100	100

Table 4. 4B Reader-initiated strategies (of JUCPS)

NO	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
13.	I try to interpret the writer's intention while reading in English.	1	5	3	14	7	32	8	36	3	14	22	100
14	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from its title or subtitle.	1	5	2	9	6	27	10	45	3	14	22	100
15	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from key words.	2	9	3	14	8	36	7	32	2	9	22	100
16	I do not pay attention to the implied meaning of the reading material.	7	32	7	32	3	14	4	18	1	5	22	100
17.	I overlook the sentences with complicated structures.	4	18	4	18	5	23	7	32	2	9	22	100

NB. 1=never true of me   **2**= not true of me   **3**= somewhat true of me   **4**= usually true of me   **5**=completely true

The above two tables (Table 4A &table 4B) are used to compare the reader-initiated strategies that are used by the students of the two target preparatory schools so that we can deduce how these strategies contributed to their reading comprehension skill.As it is shown in the tables, the students of both schools are similar in the strategy of trying to interpret the writer's intention while reading. This shows that they have developed the skill that helps them very much in comprehending a written text.

According to the response indicated in the table, 86% (27% + 41% + 14%) holds true for JUCPS students in predicting the main idea of the whole passage from the titles and subtitles (Item 14) while it is 79% (20% + 41% + 18%) true for the respondents of JPS .

When coming to predicting the main idea of the whole passage from keywords, students of JPS were better than JUCPS students, because 86% (31% + 30%+25%) goes to JPS students and 77% (36% + 32% +9%) to JUCPS students.

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Paying attention to the implied meaning of the reading material is not true for 64% of sample students of JUCPS and 70% of JPS students. This means that JPS students are better than JUCPS students in giving attention to the implied meaning of a written material.

Table 4. 5A Background experience related to reading skill (of JPS)

NO	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
18	My parents are educated and they always read books at home and motivate me to read too.	17	17	15	15	18	18	25	25	25	25	100	100
19	I have been practicing reading and comprehending texts when I was in elementary and secondary school.	9	9	14	14	22	22	24	24	31	31	100	100
20	I regularly go to library to read books.	5	5	9	9	22	22	37	37	27	27	100	100
21	My teachers encourage me to read and comprehend written texts.	13	13	9	9	24	24	35	35	19	19	100	100
22	I sit for longer hours if I am reading an interesting book.	4	4	8	8	25	25	35	35	28	28	100	100
23	From all sorts of gifts, I prefer to be given books.	11	11	12	12	28	28	28	28	21	21	100	100
24	I frequently do reading comprehension exercises by myself in the order to develop the skill for my future study.	8	8	8	8	14	14	32	32	38	38	100	100

NB. 1=never true of me   **2**= not true of me   **3**= somewhat true of me   **4**= usually true of me
5=completely true of me

Table 4.5B Background experience related to reading skill (of JUCPS)

NO	ITEM	1		2		3		4		5		Total	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	No	%
18	My parents are educated and they always read books at home and motivate me to read too.	3	14	3	14	3	14	6	27	7	32	22	100
19	I have been practicing reading and comprehending texts when I was in elementary and secondary school.	1	5	4	18	7	32	5	23	5	23	22	100
20	I regularly go to library to read books.	4	18	3	14	6	27	8	36	1	5	22	100
21	My teachers encourage me to read and comprehend written texts.	3	14	3	14	7	32	5	23	4	18	22	100
22	I sit for longer hours if I am reading an interesting book.	2	9	2	9	5	23	6	27	7	32	22	100
23	From all sorts of gifts, I prefer to be given books.	3	14	3	14	7	32	4	18	5	23	22	100
24	I frequently do reading comprehension exercises by myself in order to develop the skill for my future study.	1	4	3	14	4	18	8	36	6	27	22	100

NB. 1=never true of me   2= not true of me   3= somewhat true of me   4= usually true of me   5=completely true of me

Tables 5A & 5B are designed to compare the past experience related to reading that the students of the two schools had before they joined secondary and preparatory schools. This is aimed to assess what impact has this practice played in their present reading and comprehending skill. As it is shown in the table, 73% (14% + 32%) of the students of JUCPS were being motivated by their parents who are educated and read books at home, where as this is true for 68% (18% + 25% + 25%) of the students of JPS. This shows that JUCPS students are better motivated for reading than the JPS students.

When we compare the practice of reading and comprehending text while they were in elementary and secondary school (item 19), the highest number I.e. 78% (32% + 23% + 23%)again goes to JUCPS students while 77% (22% + 24% +31%) goes to JPS students. From this it can be said that JUCPS students are better exposed for reading starting from their early ages and this has helped them to be good at their present reading comprehension skill.

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Concerning item 20 & 21 i.e. going to library regularly to read books and being encouraged by teachers to read and comprehend written text, respondents of JPS have exhibited a better result, 86% (22% + 37%+27%)AND 78% (24% + 35% + 19%) respectively than the students of JUCPS whose result was 68% (27% + 36% + 5%) and 73%(32% + 23% + 18%).This has indicated that students of JPS have got a better chance to be encouraged by their teachers and to visit library and read books. Sitting for longer hours when reading interesting books (item 22) was true for 82% (23% + 27% + 32%) of the students of JUCPS. On the other hand this is 78% (25% + 35% + 28%) true for JPS students.

Regarding this, JUCPS students have patience to sit and read a written material for longer hours and this practice has helped them to develop their reading and comprehending skill which is manifested in their reading and comprehension test result. On the contrary, 84% (14% + 32% + 38%) of JPS students are found to do reading comprehension exercises by themselves in order

to develop their skill for future study, where as this is 81% (81% + 36%+ 27%) true for JUCPS students.

4.3. Data from Teacher's Questionnaire

A questionnaire with twelve items was prepared and distributed to EFL/EFL teachers of both target preparatory schools. The numbers of teachers from both schools were eleven (two from JUCPS and nine from JPS). All of the teachers were males except one from JPS. Their age ranges from 32-57 year and their service year from 10-37 years.

The items included in the questionnaire were categorized in three groups: EFL teachers and their students, EFL teacher's belief and EFL teacher's attitude towards reading comprehension skill. The item were prepared in such a way that respondents could rate each item from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaires were collected after two days of their

distribution. The responses were tallied and changed into percent in a table. The discussion and result were put in the following way.

Table 4.6 ESL teachers and their students

NO	ITEMS	Response of JUCPS teachers												Response of JPS teachers											
		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total	
		no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
1	MY ESL/EFL students are eager to do reading comprehension tests in English.	–	–	2	100	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	–	–	2	22	–	–	5	56	2	22	9	100
2.	MY ESL/EFL students benefit from the reading strategies they use in reading comprehension tests.	1	50	1	50	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	1	11	7	78	–	–	1	11	-	–	9	100
3.	MY ESL/EFL students enjoy reading and comprehending a text.	1	50	1	50	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	–	–	3	33	2	22	4	44	–	–	9	100
4.	As ESL/EFL teacher I give different reading comprehension activities to help students develop their R.C.skill.	2	100	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	1	11	7	78	1	11	–	–	–	–	9	100

NB.   **SA**= strongly Agree   **A**= Agree   **UND**= undecided   **D**= Disagree   **SD**= Strongly Disagree

As it is shown in the above table, 100% of the teachers of JUCPS have expressed their agreement for item 1 which says that their EFL students were eager to do reading comprehension tests. But it is only 22% of the teachers of JPS who showed their agreement to this item while the majority, i.e. 78% (56% + 22%) of them expressed their disagreement. This result witnessed that JPS students don't like reading comprehension activities. Regarding item 2, 100% (50% + 50%) of the teachers of JUCPS agree that their students benefit from the reading strategies that they use in reading comprehension tests. It is only 89% (11% + 78%) of

the JPS teachers that agreed with this item, while 11% of them disagreed. JUCPS students have therefore showed this benefit on their reading comprehension test result.

When coming to item 3, 100% (50% + 50%) of the teachers of JUCPS have agreed that their students enjoy reading and comprehending a written text. The teachers of JPS who agreed with this idea were only 33% of them, while 44% of them disagreed.

Most teachers of JUCPS, have strongly agreed that they give different reading comprehension activities to enable their students develop reading comprehension skill. But, 89% (11% + 78%) of teachers of JPS have agreed to this point while the rest of them could not decide anything.

The above table generally shows that students and teachers of JUCPS are doing well towards the development of reading comprehension skill. The reading comprehension test results of JUCPS students have witnessed this fact.

Table 4.7 EFL Teacher's belief concerning R. C.

NO	Item	Response of JUCPS teachers												Response of JPS teachers											
		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total	
		no	%	%	no	%	no	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
5.	EFL teachers should let their students practice different strategies and skills of reading compr.	2	100	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	3	33	6	67	-	-	–	–	–	–	9	100
6.	EFL teachers should use supportive language technique to raise their students' self esteem before reading comprehension activities.	1	50	1	50	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	100	3	33	6	67	–	–	–	–	–	–	9	100
7.	There are sufficient text books for the students to conduct reading comprehension activities in class.	–	–	–	–	2	100	–	–	–	–	2	100	–	–	1	11	–	–	6	67	2	22	9	100
8.	*There is shortage of time to conduct reading comprehension exercises in class regularly.*	–	–	–	–	1	50	1	50	–	–	2	100	3	33	3	33	2	22	1	11	-	–	9	100

NB. **SA=** strongly Agree **A=** Agree **UND=** undecided **D=** Disagree **SD=** Strongly Disagree

In the above table 7, it is tried to show what EFL teacher's belief is regarding reading comprehension skill. Teachers of JUCPS strongly believed (100%) that EFL teachers should let their students practice using different strategies to develop their reading comprehension skill. When it comes to JPS teachers, it is only 33% of them that agreed to this point strongly while the other 67% of them showed their simple agreement.

With regard to item 6, teachers of both schools have expressed their beliefs similarly. That means all of them have agreed without any exception that EFL teachers should use supportive language technique before a reading comprehension activities.

Hundred percent of the teachers of JUCPS were not in a position to agree or disagree regarding the availability of enough text books for the students to conduct reading comprehension activities in class. This indirectly shows that they are not using the students' text book for reading comprehension exercises. On the other hand, 89% of the teachers of JPS have confirmed that there are no enough text books for the students to conduct a reading comprehension activity in class. From the response of the teachers for this item 7, it is possible to say that all of the teachers in both schools face shortage of books to conduct a reading comprehension lesson. If there are shortages of books in the schools, it would have negative impact on the reading comprehension skill of the students.

For item 8, which says that there is shortage of time to conduct reading comprehension exercises in class regularly, 50% of JUCPS teachers disagree with this idea while 66% of JPS teachers agree with it. This means that JUCPS teachers believed that there was time to conduct the reading comprehension exercise in class regularly, while teachers of JPS said that there is no enough time for reading comprehension activities in class.

Table 4. 8. EFL Teachers attitude towards reading comprehension

no	item	Response of JUCPS teachers												Response of JPS teachers											
		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total		SA		A		UND		D		SD		total	
		no	%	%	no	%	no	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%	no	%
9.	It is up to first language teachers to teach reading strategies and not EFL teachers.	_	_	_	_	_	_	1	50	1	50	2	100	_	_	_	_	3	33	3	33	3	33	9	100
10.	EFL students don't need reading strategies to do reading comprehension test in English	_	_	_	_	_	_	1	50	1	50	2	100	1	11	3	33	5	56	_	_	_	_	9	100
11.	The curriculum and the R.C. activities in the text book are appropriate to the level and interest of the students.	_	_	_	_	2	100	_	_	_	_	2	100	1	11	3	33	5	56	_	_	_	_	9	100
12.	---------- Of my EFL students are /were very good in their reading comprehension results.	most		some		many		none		A few				most		some		many		none		A few			
		1	50	1	50	_	_	_	_			2	100	_	_	8	89	1	11	_	_	_	_	9	100

NB.   SA= strongly Agree   **A**= Agree   **UND**= undecided   **D**= Disagree   **SD**= Strongly Disagree

In table 8 shown above, the data about the feeling of the teachers of both schools are clearly indicated. For item 9, which says that it is the first language teacher who should teach reading strategies to students and not the EFS teachers, 100%of the teachers of JUCPS have expressed their disagreement.

The attitude of JPS teachers towards this point is not similar to that of the teachers of JUCPS. 33% of them are in doubt whether to agree or not while 66% of JUCPS feel that ESL teachers have responsibility to teach different reading comprehension strategies to their students so that their students will develop and be efficient in their reading comprehension skill.

Item 10 says that ESL students don't need reading strategies to do a reading comprehension test effectively. Regarding this point, JUCPS teachers have totally (100%) disagreed while it is 78% for the teachers of JPS. 11% of the JPS have strongly agreed that students don't need reading strategies and 11% these teachers are not able to agree or disagree. This tells that the teachers of JUCPS have got a positive feeling about reading strategies and if they have this feeling, they are expected to help their students in this aspect

For item 11, which says that the curriculum and the R.C. activities in the text book are appropriate to the interest of the students, teachers of JUCPS were totally (100%) unable to decide whether to agree or disagree with this point. But 44% of teachers of JPS have expressed their agreement while 56% of them were not able to decide. The response to this point indicated that the majority of the teachers in both schools are not sure about the appropriateness of the curriculum to the level of their students.

The last item of the questionnaire for teachers, I.e. item 12, which asked the teachers to show the number of their students who were very good in their reading comprehension, 50% of the teachers of JUCPS responded that **most** of their students were very good while the remaining 50% said that it is only **some** of their students who were very good in R.C skills. When this point is referred to the teachers of JPS, 89% of them said that it is some of their students who are very good in the skills mentioned. From this witness of the teachers we can say that JUCPS

students are relatively better than the students of JPS in their reading comprehension activities and skills.

From the questionnaire of the teachers, it has become possible to generalize the following points:-

a. Students of JUCPS like and enjoy reading comprehension activities and obtain a good help from their teachers to develop their skill when compared to that of the students of JPS.
b. In teacher's belief about reading comprehension, there is no much difference between the teachers of the two schools.
c. Concerning the attitude of the teachers towards reading comprehension strategies and activities teachers of JUCPS have showed a better responsibility to the development of the reading comprehension skill of their students.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary

In order to find out whether there was difference in reading comprehension skill or not between governmental (JPS) and non- governmental (JUCPS) grade 12 preparatory students found in Jimma town, the necessary data were collected using reading comprehension test, questionnaire for students and questionnaire for teachers. The result obtained through quantitative analysis of the data has enabled the researcher to arrive at the following findings:-

1. According to the data obtained from the result of the reading comprehension test the sample students of JUCPS have obtained 49.36 average results while the average result of JPS students was 39.51. In addition,14% of the sample students of JUCPS were the ones who got the highest mark while it was 1% for the sample students of JPS. Three percent of the students of JPS have also obtained the least mark, i.e.0 out 100; but there is no student from JUCPS who got 0 out of 100.

2. The data from the questionnaire of the students showed that 68% sample students of JUCPS used guessing strategy for the meanings of new words in the context and from word formation. It was only 34% of the respondents of JPS that guessed the meaning of new words in context. The majority of JPS students' i.e. 42% of them turned to dictionaries whenever they come across new words in the text they were reading.

3. From the students who filled the questionnaire, 100% of the sample populations of JUCPS were capable of grasping the main idea of the reading material while this was true for 80% of the sample population of JPS.

5.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions were made based on the findings mentioned above.

1. The result of the reading comprehension test indicated that students of JUCPS got a better result in all aspects of the test. This test result has shown that the students of JUCPS are better in their reading comprehension perfomance when compared to that of the students of JPS.

2. The fact that the majority of JPS students turn to dictionaries whenever they come across new words while reading, and skipping some of the new words have affected their understanding of the material that they are reading. Because of this they can be said that they are not doing well in their reading comprehension skill.

3. The ability of JUCPS students to grasp the main idea of the reading material and to predict the main idea of the whole text from its titles tells that these students have a better practice and experience than the students of JPS in using variety of reading comprehension strategies for a quick understanding of the written material that they are reading.

4. Concerning the students' background related to reading and comprehending, the students of JUCPS had a better chance and motivation for reading and for practicing reading comprehension exercises while they were in elementary & secondary schools indicated that these students had a better background for reading comprehension skill than the students of JPS.

5. Hundred percent of teachers of JUCPS have witnessed that their students are interested and enjoyed doing reading comprehension activities. This showed that the teachers and students in this school have good relationship and mutual understanding towards the development of the reading comprehension skills.

6. Teachers of both schools have confirmed that there is shortage of text books for students to conduct reading comprehension exercises in class. These situations pointed the problem what teachers in both schools were facing to help their students develop

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their reading comprehension skill, and this impinges a negative impact on the skill development of the students.

7. The issue of letting the students use different reading comprehension strategies, which was fully supported by all the teachers of JUCPS, showed that the teachers of this school had a positive awareness about reading strategies and a feeling of responsibility to help their students to practice and develop their reading comprehension skill. It is this and all the other mentioned points that enabled the students of JUCPS to be a better performer in the reading comprehension test given than the students of JPS students.

5.3. Recommendations

The recommendations that are listed below were made on the basis of the findings mentioned earlier.

1. First and foremost, ESL teachers should be made to change their attitude and belief about reading and comprehending a text as something not important and suitable in language teaching. It is then that they can create an interest and responsibility in students to read and comprehend any written text be it in class or outside on their own.

2. ESL teachers of JPS should let and help their students to use different reading comprehension strategies such as guessing meanings in contexts, form word formation, predicting the main idea of the text form titles, keyword, summarizing, etc. So that their students will be better performers in reading comprehension test than what they have done in this study.

3. In order to overcome the shortage of time to deal with reading comprehension activities in class, ESL teachers should provide ample reading comprehension tasks which worth some marks to be done as home work so that the students will practice and improve their reading comprehension skill through time.

4. At home, parents should encourage and motivate their children to read and comprehend a written material in any way they can and do so that their children will be efficient in their academic performance and further study.

5. Shortage of text books should be solved by the collaboration of the stakeholders for it is not possible or is hard for teachers to deal with reading comprehension activities in class or at home without text books.

6. Schools and ESL teachers should discuss and arrange program to meet with partner schools and share knowledge and experience on how to deal with reading comprehension activities and improve the skill of their students in this regard and other language skills.

7. Curriculum and text book designers should give due consideration in including texts that are appropriate to the level and interest of the learners with the time that is enough to deal with it.

8. Lastly, further and comprehensive investigations should be made on the issue so that the problem of reading comprehension skill among the Ethiopian secondary and college students will get deep understand for finding and implementing a lasting solution.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire for students on English Reading Comprehension

Jimma university, School of graduate studies, College of Social Science and Law, Department of English and Literature, MA in TEFL

School -- Sex _____ Age _____

Dear students

This questionnaire is designed for research purpose. The information collected will not be used for any other uses. There are no right or wrong answers. We will appreciate your cooperation and help.

Directions: Please answer each question by circling the number that can best indicate what you really do while reading in English. The numbers stand for the following responses.

> 1=this statement is never or almost never true of me
>
> 2= this statement is usually not true of me
>
> 3= this statement is somewhat true of me
>
> 4= this statement is usually true of me
>
> 5= this statement is completely or almost completely true of me

*Please **circle** a number quickly after you finish reading each statement.*

1.	I grasp the main idea of the material while reading English.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I turn to dictionaries when coming across new words in the English reading.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I do not bother with the grammatical structure of sentences while reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from its title or subtitles.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I guess the meaning of new words by analyzing their roots or prefixes or suffixes.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I do not pay attention to the implied meaning of the reading material.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	When I read English articles, I skip the words that are new to me.	1	2	3	4	5

8.	I pause and analyze the structure of sentences when reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	I try to guess the main ideas of the text on the basis of pictures, charts or figures.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	I try to understand complicated sentences by analyzing their structure.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	I grasp the gist of the reading material through quickly reading the first and the last paragraphs.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	I guess the meanings of new words in context when reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	I try to interpret the writer's intention while reading in English.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I overlook the sentences with complicated structures.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I use simple words to replace difficult ones in sentence understanding.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	I predict the main idea of the whole passage from key words.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I try to grasp the general idea of a sentence before going to read the next sentence	1	2	3	4	5
18.	My parents are educated and they always read books at home and motivate me to read too.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I have been practicing reading and comprehending texts when I was in elementary and secondary school.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	I regularly go to library to read books	1	2	3	4	5
21.	My teachers encourage me to read and comprehend written texts.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I sit for longer hours if I am reading an interesting book.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	From all sorts of gifts I prefer to be given books	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I frequently do reading comprehension exercises by myself in order to develop the skill for my future study	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B: Questionnaire for EFL teachers

Jimma university, School of graduate studies, College of Social Science and Law, Department of English and Literature, MA in TEFL

Dear Teachers

You are invited to participate in this study. The study is specifically for English as second/foreign language learners and their teachers. The survey is part of an Action Research Project on improving EFL students' achievements on reading comprehension tests. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. Your opinions are very important to the study. Your responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential

Thank you very much for your time and co-operation.

. School: --------------------------------------- Sex------------- Age---------- Service year--------------

Indicate your response by putting an X mark in the circle.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. My EFL students are eager to do reading comprehension tests in English. *	○	○	○	○	○
2. My EFL students benefit from the reading strategies they use in reading comprehension tests. *	○	○	○	○	○
3. My EFL students enjoy reading and comprehending a text. *	○	○	○	○	○
4. As EFL teacher I give different reading comprehen activities to help students	○	○	○	○	○

develop their R.C.skill. *

5. EFL teachers should let their
    students practice different
    strategies and skills of
    reading compr. *

6.   EFL teachers should use
     supportive language
     technique to raise their
     students' self esteem before
     a reading comprehension
     activities. *

7.   There are sufficient text
     books for the students to
     conduct reading
     comprehension activities in
     class. *

8. There is shortage of time to
    conduct reading
    comprehensio exercises in
    class regularly. *

9. It is up to first language
    teachers to teach reading
    strategies and not EFL
    teachers. *

10. EFL students don't need   O   O   O   O   O
    reading strategies to do a
    reading comprehensio test in
    English.
11. The curriculum and the
     R.C.activities in the text book
     are appropriate to the level
     and interest of the students.

12. ------------ of my EFL students are/were very good in their reading comprehension results.

. a) most   b) some   c) Many   d) None   e) A few

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APPENDIX C: Reading Comprehension Test

Jimma university, School of graduate studies, College of Social Science and Law, Department of English and Literature, MA in TEFL

Name----------- -------------------------------- School------------------------- Grade & section_____

Narrative Question:
Read the statement or passage and then choose the best answer to the question. Answer the question on the basis of what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.

There are two types of pottery that I do. There is production pottery-mugs, tableware, the kinds of things that sell easily. These pay for my time to do other work, which is more creative and satisfies my needs as an artist.

1. The author of this passage implies that:

  ⦿
    A)artists have a tendency to waste valuable time

  ○
    B)creativity and mass-production are incompatible

  ○
    C)most people do not appreciate good art

  ○
    D) pottery is not produced by creative people

Sentence Relationship Question:
Two underlined sentences are followed by a question or statement about them. Read each pair of sentences and then choose the best answer to the question or the best completion of the statement.

The Midwest is experiencing its worst drought in fifteen years.
Corn and soybean prices are expected to be very high this year.

2. What does the second sentence do?

  ⦿
    A) It restates the idea found in the first.

  ○
    B) It states an effect.

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C) It gives an example.

D) It analyzes the statement made in the first.

Read the statement of passage and then choose the best answer

to the question. Answer the question based on what is stated or implied in the statement or passage.

3. Myths are stories, the products of fertile imagination, sometimes simple, often containing profound truths. They are not meant to be taken too literally. Details may sometimes appear childish, but most myths express a culture's most serious beliefs about human beings, eternity and God.

The main idea of this passage is that myths

A. are created primarily to entertain young children.

B. are purposely written for the reader who lacks imagination.

C. provide the reader with a means of escape from reality.

D. illustrate the values that are considered important to a society.

4. In the words of Thomas DeQuincy, "It is notorious that the memory strengthens as you lay burdens upon it." If, like most people, you have trouble recalling the names of those you have just met, try this: The next time you are introduced, plan to remember the names. Say to yourself, "I'll listen carefully; I'll repeat each person's name to be sure I've got it, and I will remember." You'll discover how effective this technique is and probably recall those names for the rest of your life.

The main idea of the paragraph maintains that the memory

A. always operates at peak efficiency.

B. breaks down under great strain.

C. improves if it is used often.

D. becomes unreliable if it tires.

5. The ultimate source of energy for all plants and animals is sunlight. But the sun's energy can be harnessed by plants, through photosynthesis, and stored in molecules of carbohydrates. When animals eat these enzymes, large amounts of energy become available. Animals immediately convert this energy into molecules of high-energy ATP (adenosine triphosphate) – the universal currency of energy in living things. Excluding only the very first stages in carbohydrate breakdown, which are called glycolysis, the entire complicated process of energy transfer to ATP takes place within the mitochondria.

Glycolysis refers to

A. the initial stages of carbohydrate breakdown.

    B. the process of plants producing oxygen and carbohydrates.

    C. the production of ATP.

    D. the production of body heat which occurs in the mitochondria.

6. Unemployment was the overriding fact of life when Franklin D. Roosevelt became President of the United States on March 4, 1933. An anomaly of the time was that the government did not systematically collect statistics of joblessness; actually it did not start doing so until 1940. The Bureau of Labor Statistics later estimated that 12,830,000 persons were out of work in 1933, about one-fourth of a civilian labor force of over 51,000,000.

Roosevelt signed the Federal Emergency Relief Act on May 12, 1933. The President selected Harry L. Hopkins, who headed the New York relief program, to run FERA. A gifted administrator, Hopkins quickly put the program into high gear. He gathered a small staff in Washington and brought the state relief organizations into the FERA system. While the agency tried to provide all the necessities, food came first. City dwellers usually got an allowance for fuel, and rent for one month was provided in case of eviction. FERA paid for medicine, some doctor bills, but no hospital costs, work-relief, sewing rooms, and renovated hand-me-down clothing.

This passage is primarily about

    A. unemployment in the 1930's.

    B. the effect of unemployment on United States families.

    C. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency.

    D. President Roosevelt's FERA program.

7. It is said that a smile is universally understood. And nothing triggers a smile more universally than a taste of sugar. Nearly everyone loves sugar. Infant studies indicate that humans are born with an innate love of sweets. Based on statistics, a lot of people in Great Britain must be smiling, because on average, every man, woman and child in that country consumes 95 pounds of sugar each year.

From this passage it seems safe to conclude that the English

    A. do not know that too much sugar is unhealthy.

    B. eat desserts at every meal.

    C. are fonder of sweets than most people.

    D. have more cavities than any other people.

8. With varying success, many women around the world today struggle for equal rights. Historically, women have achieved greater quality with men during periods of social adversity. The following factors initiated the greatest number of improvements for women: violent revolution, world war, and the rigors of pioneering in an undeveloped land. In all three cases, the essential element that improved the status of women was a shortage of men, which required women to perform many of society's vital tasks.

We can conclude from the information in this passage that

    A. women today are highly successful in winning equal rights.

B. only pioneer women have been considered equal to men.

C. historically, women have only achieved equality through force.

D. Historically, the principle of equality alone has not been enough to secure women equal rights.

9. Plastics are synthetic materials that are so common today that we barely notice them. The process of making plastics, called polymerization, is a little over a hundred years old. Vinyl chloride was polymerized in 1838, acrylics in 1843, and polyester in 1847. Oddly, those newly synthesized plastics languished in polymer laboratories for decades because no one had yet found a use for the new materials.

We can see from the information in this passage that

A. commercial use of a material does not always rapidly follow its discovery.

B. people had no need for plastics in the 1800s.

C. the introduction of plastics in the 1800s would have upset the world economy.

D. no practical types of plastics were invented until the 20th century.

10. Primitive people tended to be highly superstitious. Anything out of the ordinary that happened was regarded with superstitious fear. Most people throughout history have been right-handed. For that reason, left-handedness was regarded as an evil omen. The Latin word for left is sinister. Since many people regarded left-handedness as bad, the word sinister entered the English language meaning "evil."

From this passage we can conclude that fear and superstition usually grew from

A. lack of knowledge.

B. left-handedness.

C. evil omens.

D. terrifying circumstances.

11. In 1848, Charles Burton of New York City made the first baby carriage, but people strongly objected to the vehicles because they said the carriage operators hit too many pedestrians. Still convinced that he had a good idea, Burton opened a factory in England. He obtained orders for the baby carriages from Queen Isabella II of Spain, Queen Victoria of England, and the Pasha of Egypt. The United States had to wait another ten years before it got a carriage factory, and the first year only 75 carriages were sold.

Even after the success of baby carriages in England,

A. Charles Burton was a poor man.

B. Americans were still reluctant to buy baby carriages.

C. Americans purchased thousands of baby carriages.

D. the United States bought more carriages than any other country.

12. All water molecules form six-sided structures as they freeze and become snow crystals. Temperature, vapor, and wind conditions in the upper atmosphere determine the shape of the crystal. Snow crystals are always symmetrical because these conditions affect all six sides simultaneously.

The purpose of the passage is to present

   A. a personal observation.

   B. a solution to a problem.

   C. actual information.

   D. opposing scientific theories.

APPENDIX D: students' test result (of JUCPS)

NO	TEST TAKERS' CODE	SEX	RESULT (100%)
1.	001	F	42
2.	002	F	42
3.	003	M	25
4.	004	F	50
5.	005	M	67
6.	006	M	75
7.	007	M	67
8.	008	M	42
9.	009	F	33
10.	010	M	75
11.	011	M	67
12.	012	F	42
13.	013	M	58
14.	014	M	42
15.	015	F	50
16.	016	F	75
17.	017	F	33
18.	018	M	17
19.	019	F	42
20.	020	F	67
21.	021	F	25
22.	022	M	50
	TOTAL		1086
	MEAN		49.36

APPENDIX E: Student's Test Result (of JPS)

NO	TEST TAKERS' CODE	SEX	AGE	Result (100%)
1.	001`	f	18	33
2.	002	f	18	67
3.	003	f	18	58
4.	004	M	19	50
5.	Oo5	f	16	50
6.	006	F	18	33
7.	007	M	16	33
8.	008	F	16	42
9.	009	M	17	58
10.	010	F	19	17
11.	011	M	17	42
12.	012	M	18	50
13.	013	F	19	25
14.	014	F		33
15.	015	M	18	33
16.	016	F	19	17
17.	017	F	21	08
18.	018	F	20	25
19.	019	M	17	42
20.	020	F	18	50
21.	021	M	20	42
22.	022	M	20	25
23.	023	F	18	25
24.	024	M	18	50
25.	025	M	17	50
26.	026	F	17	50
27.	027	F	18	25
28.	028	M	18	58
29.	029	F	17	58
30.	030	M	21	42
31.	031	F	18	50
32.	032	F	16	42
33.	033	M	28	58
34.	034	M	18	33
35.	035	F	17	50
36.	036	F	17	50
37.	037	F	17	67
38.	038	F	19	58
39.	039	F	17	50
40.	040	M	18	33

41.	041	F	19	42
42.	042	M	18	42
43.	043	F	17	58
44	044	M	18	25
45	045	M	16	42
46	046	M	16	42
47	047	M	17	42
48	048	M	16	42
49	049	M	20	17
50	050	M	19	50
51	051	F	19	42
52	052	F	18	25
53	053	F	16	25
54	054	F	16	58
55	055	M	18	58
56	056	M	16	58
57	057	F	17	33
58	058	M	16	33
59	059	F	19	42
60	060	M	25	42
61	061	M	20	25
62	062	F	16	33
63	063	M	17	33
64	064	M	16	33
65	065	F	17	33
66	066	F	16	33
67	067	M	17	67
68	068	M	15	58
69	069	M	17	33
70	070	F	18	08
71	071	F	18	50
72	072	F	17	33
73	073	F	18	42
74	074	F	17	17
75	075	F	18	50
76	076	M	18	42
77	077	F	18	25
78	078	F	18	25
79	079	M	18	67
80	080	M	19	42
81	081	F	17	50
82	082	F	17	33
83	083	F	17	25
84	084	F	18	17
85	085	M	18	0
86	086	M	17	42
87	087	F	20	42
88	088	F	17	42
89	089	F	17	33
90	090	F	17	75
91	091	M	18	42
92	092	F	17	33
93	093	M	17	58

94	094	M	19	17
95	095	M	17	42
96	096	F	18	50
97.	097	M	20	17
98	098	F	20	17
99	099	M	17	42
100	100	M	17	25
	TOTAL			3951
	AVERAGE			39.51

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, not presented for any degree in any universities, and that all the sources used for it are duly acknowledged.

Tarekegn Wondimu

_____

January 2012

Confirmation

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

Yemanebirhan Kelemework

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_____

January, 2012

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