

**Jimma University**

**College of Social Sciences and Humanities**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)**

**The Effect of Pre-Reading Instruction in Comprehending English**

**Language Texts: Gembe Secondary School Grade 9 in Focus**

**By**

**DebisaTerefe**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for**

**Master of Arts in TEFL**

**August 2015**

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**Declaration, confirmation, approval and evaluation**

Research Title: The Effect of Pre-Reading Instruction in Comprehending English Language Texts: Gembe Secondary School Grade 9 in Focus

**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.

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**Confirmation and Approval**

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

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## **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English language texts. An experiment was designed and conducted to investigate the significant difference between control and comparison groups. Four pre-reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) were used for the treatment. A pre-test and post-test reading comprehension and vocabulary test, a questionnaire and classroom observations were employed in the study to collect data. The pre and post-tests aimed at measuring reading comprehension and vocabulary skills of the students. The subjects of the study were 104, control group (n=52) and comparison group (n=52) of Grade 9 students and one English teacher who taught the control group. To get a representative sample, random sampling method that is lottery method was used for selecting the participants as a sample. After the administration of the tests, the data were collected and subjected to statistical analysis. An independent sample t-test was used to test the hypotheses in this study. The test score of the two groups were analyzed using the SPSS version 16 statistical software program. The major finding obtained from the statistical analysis shows that teaching pre-reading activities had brought about a significant improvement between the pre-test and post-test of the comparison group than the control group. Finally, the result of the questionnaire and classroom observation showed that the classroom teacher did not teach essential pre-reading activities which help to comprehend the text by activating the students prior knowledge. It is recommended that English language teachers need to teach pre-reading activities by activating students' background knowledge to comprehend the text.*



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## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL**

**MoE**

**PRI**

**SPSS**





## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

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

Reading is an important skill that could be mastered. It is important to improve the students' need to become efficient and proficient readers. However, English language text students tend to experience considerable difficulty in understanding text. To enhance text comprehension for English language text readers then, many researchers found that teaching English should be perceived as a means of improving students' proficiency in all language skills in general and reading skill in particular (Hung,1990; Ur, 1991 & Usen, 1993). Thus, many actions that a strategic reader engages in designed to help the reader comprehend, evaluate, and remember the information in a text and to control attention and anxiety.

In recent years, the focus in the study of English language reading comprehension has shifted from the texts to the interaction between the texts and readers (Ajideh, 2003). This means, the text itself cannot be comprehended unless the readers bring their own experience to the text to interpret it. In addition, Rasi (2010, as cited in Rokhsari, 2012) states that reading comprehension is essential particularly to many English as foreign language (EFL) learners who rarely have chance to speak English in their daily lives. Reader moreover engages in thinking about the text he/she is reading in terms of deciphering meaning how it relates to his/her previous knowledge of other things, predicting the next information to encounter, reflecting on the value and attraction of the text.

Reading is a higher-level process that requires readers to go beyond the text presented. In order to achieve this, teachers and readers must work together towards comprehension utilizing pre-reading strategies. Reading comprehension occurs when readers build relationships between the text, their knowledge, and their experience (Gambrell & Jawitz, 1993, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011).

Teachers should try to facilitate the process of reading in which readers use their prior knowledge and their knowledge of new text in their mind (Rokni & Hajilari, 2013). In fact, English language teachers need to be aware of the process of reading in the classroom as it is very important that learners comprehend what they read. In addition, English as Foreign language teacher must arouse and/or provide the students' background knowledge he/she lacks, and also needs to teach the students how to make a link between existing knowledge and new knowledge, which is required for text comprehension (Carrel & Floyd, 1987, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011). Therefore, this study tried to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in facilitating comprehension text. It also examines whether teacher teaches his/her students pre-reading comprehension/pre-reading activities while teaching reading lesson.

In the past few years, much discussion has been centered on the importance of the reader's contribution, in the form of his/her background knowledge or schemata, to reading process. To attain meaning, the reader has to interact with and reconstruct the text he/she is reading with what already exists in his/her head (Hung, 1990). Contrary to earlier speculations, the reader is an active participant in his/her attempt to make sense of what he/she is reading.

A number of investigators have concluded that language proficiency is an important variable to consider in EFL reading. Due to their imperfect knowledge of the language of the text, meaning often deludes readers. According to Hung (1990), this is hardly surprising as they are inclined to read in small chunks and pay more attention to syntactic and graphophonic information instead of concentrating on the semantic content. In other words, the lower their proficiency in the language of the text, the more these readers are dependent on the linguistic aspects of the text.

A growing body of research has indicated that the amount of prior knowledge English language text readers possess influences their reading comprehension. Accordingly, as Madaoui's (2013) finding shows, EFL learners tend to experience considerable difficulty in understanding English texts. This researcher also noticed that not only do these texts

most often contain unfamiliar vocabulary, but they also contain unfamiliar concepts and cultural contents that make comprehension difficult. Traditionally, attempts to develop text comprehension for English language text, students have focused on familiarizing them with the vocabulary needed to comprehend the passage. As a result, the current researcher was motivated to investigate the effect of pre-reading instruction in comprehending the text in teaching reading.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The current language education policy regards English as a subject and medium of instruction in Ethiopian secondary schools and higher education as well (MoE, 2005). The education policy, moreover, insists that teachers develop learners' proficiency in using English language and make them critical readers with comprehension, especially when they enter secondary school. However, according to the researcher's observation and experience as a teacher, there is a concern that learners in secondary schools are still experiencing problems with reading comprehension. Furthermore, learners do not pay attention to the stages of reading (pre-reading, while reading and post reading) which help them comprehend better the text they read.

In addition to this, teachers do not teach the learners reading activities at each stages of reading, especially pre-reading activities rather skipping on the activities given before reading the text. Since pre-reading phase is the standpoint for the three stages of reading, teachers need to consider activating students' prior knowledge and develop learners' reading comprehension. The students also need to bring their background knowledge to the texts they are going to read in order to better comprehend.

Bilokcuoglu (2011) points out the reasons why it is sometimes not easy to get appropriate answer(s). This researcher listed three reasons why pre-reading activities/questions are difficult to answer. The first reason may be the reading text itself. This is in other words, reading material may not be at the readers' level and may contain complex structures and unfamiliar vocabulary. The second reason may come from the reader himself/herself. If

he/she is unmotivated and feels no need for reading, then he/she cannot be expected to be successful in reading. The third reason may be the reader's schema, which is reader's background knowledge that he/she can activate and reflect knowledge towards the reading passage in answering question.

Failure to comprehend a text may be attributed to the reader not having appropriate schemata. Different researchers realized the contribution of schema (background knowledge) in text comprehension and the extent to which that knowledge is activated during the reading process (Ajideh, 2003; O'Brien, 2007; Madaoui, 2013). Accordingly, in pre-reading instructions, efficient comprehension requires readers to relate the material to their background knowledge.

To be successful in reading comprehension then, the readers' ability depends on sufficient schemata. Thus, several studies have been conducted to investigate the role of pre-reading activities focusing only on two strategies which are classroom discussion and vocabulary definition at college and university level. Chen and Graves (1995, as cited in Rokhsari, 2012) examined the efficiency of previewing and providing background knowledge and they concluded that previewing is the more effective than providing background knowledge.

Madaoui (2013) studied effects of pre-reading activities on EFL reading comprehension by Moroccan college students. Madaoui's finding revealed that the two pre-reading strategies (classroom discussion and vocabulary definition) are more facilitative than other strategies.

Here, with this regard, the present study is different from other researchers in that, it was concerned to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English language texts at secondary school. As far as the present researcher's knowledge is concerned, no study has been conducted in Ethiopia at secondary school level on the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English language text.

Therefore, the aim of the present study was to further investigate the effect of pre-reading instruction (PRI) considering the significance difference between comparison group and control group in comprehending English language text the learners read. The study also focuses on teacher activation of students' prior knowledge. Specifically, the effects of four pre-reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) were considered in this study.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main Objective**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending text with the contribution of vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge and students' schemata activation.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

The study intended to achieve the following specific objectives:

- to investigate the effects of pre-reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) in comprehending of the text in reading classroom,
- to investigate to what extent English language teachers activate their students to use their background knowledge (schemata) to comprehend the text.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

In this study, the researcher tried to investigate if language teachers teach their students pre-reading activities while teaching reading lesson at Gembe Secondary school and students bring their prior knowledge to the new text. Hence, the study aimed to find answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent do pre-reading instructions improve English language text learners' reading comprehension?
2. Do English language teachers use pre-reading instructions to activate students' background knowledge in comprehending the text?

### **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

**Alternative hypothesis:** There is a significant difference in comprehending text between students who are engaged in pre-reading activities and those who are not.

**Null hypothesis:** There is no a significant difference in comprehending text between students who are engaged in pre-reading activities and those who are not.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is significant in the following ways. Firstly, it provides teachers as well as curriculum designers with a fundamental background about the effects of pre-reading instruction to comprehend the text and the use of activating students' schemata. Especially, the study provides classroom teachers with deep understanding about pre-reading stage to make decision on how and what teachers will do to keep the students much more involved in pre-reading activities. Secondly, students are cultivated with the use of relating their background knowledge to understand the text they read. Finally, it could be stepping stone for other researchers who are interested to study in similar area.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

The study covered the effects of pre-reading instruction on the comprehension of the text, explaining the role of schema-theory to understand written texts and explaining to what extent English language teachers activate their students to use their background knowledge to understand the text. This study was limited to two groups: one comparison group, and the other as the control group. There were 5 sections in which Grade Nine

students were learning. But this study covered only two sections. The study also limited to Grade Nine students and English language teacher of Gembe Secondary School.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

As the study attempted to find out the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English language text, the researcher employed an experimental research. The researcher also delimited the scope of the study to one Secondary School and one grade level, grade Nine, in Gembe Secondary School, Gomma Woreda. Of five Grade Nine classes in the selected School, only two Grade Nine sections were randomly selected for the purpose of this study.

The reason to focus on two Grade Nine sections in one Secondary School was the researcher decided that the selected Grade Nine sections could represent other classes/sections that may had similar situations. The other reason why the school was selected was the proximity and easy access for the researcher to obtain the required data, to tackle pressing time schedule for completion of the research work and also the financial resources limitation.

### **1.9 Definition of Key Terms**

**Conceptual framework:** a set of ideas that used to better comprehend the given text.

**Prior knowledge/background knowledge:** is subject matter knowledge, strategy knowledge, personal knowledge, and self-knowledge (Strangman & Hall, 2004).

**Pre-reading instruction:** pre-teaching the learners necessary information about the text they are going to read.

**Schema-theory:** is an active strategy coding technique necessary for facilitating the recall of knowledge (Ajideh, 2006).

**Schema (plural schemata):** the organized background knowledge, which leads us to make expectations or predictions (Ajideh, 2006).

## **CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Concepts of Reading**

Reading is one of the most important skills among the four skills of language learning. Many researchers define reading as a process of extracting and understanding the required information from a text (Widdowson, 1979; Nunan, 1989; Ur, 1991). For example, Nunan (1989) defines reading as a process of decoding written symbols, working from smaller units (individual letters) to large ones (words, clauses, and sentences) in order to arrive at a meaning. According to Ur (1991) reading means reading and understanding. From this idea we can understand that reading is not only making sound but also comprehending and interpreting the text. On the other hand, Widdowson (1979) mentioned that reading is viewed as a reasoning activity whereby the reader is creating meaning on the basis of textual clues.

Over the time the meaning of reading has been changed. Reader plays a very important role in reading and seen as active participants who bring his/her stored knowledge in understanding the text with out just heavily relying on the reading material (Haque, 2010). In most cases, reading is more related to a comprehension process. According to Grabe (2009, as cited in Abebe, 2012) “We read to understand what the writer intended to convey in writing, though we also do more” (p.31).

### **2.2 Phases of Reading**

In teaching and learning reading lesson, the teacher and students have different activities in each phases of reading to comprehend the text. Different researches explained what teachers and students have to do at each phase of reading as follows.



### **2.2.1 Pre-reading Phase**

The pre-reading plan begins with the teacher introducing a key word, concept or picture to stimulate a discussion. By having the students say anything that initially comes to their mind and having that information recorded on the black board, participants are able to see the associations. Likewise, by asking the students questions, such as, “What made you think of...?” they become aware of their network of associations (Ajideh, 2003).

Pre-reading phase which paved the way for the rest phases of reading is a place where teachers stimulate students’ interest to follow the lesson attentively. In pre-reading stage, prior experience is important because it is too difficult to comprehend the text without background knowledge. Petros (2011) pointed out in his study that “schemata can be applied pre-reading because students bring their knowledge of world to the learning environment where new concepts will be disclosed” (p. 12). Thus, the pre-reading stage helps in activating the relevant schema.

Most teachers tend to neglect the pre-reading procedure claiming that there is not enough time. Moreover, Williams (1984) and Brown (2000) explained that pre-reading stage aims at introducing the reading text, activating prior knowledge, pre-teaching key vocabulary, and developing a general framework of a reading lesson. It is also a phase where students are encouraged to use different strategies of reading such as skimming, scanning, and predicting.

Many writers on interactive approaches to teaching reading agree that there are some main activities to be carried out before reading. These are: activating prior knowledge, purpose setting for a reading text and previewing the text to build expectations about the passage to be read (Abebe, 2012). Therefore, an interactive approach to teaching reading takes the pre-reading phase of reading lesson presentation as a springboard since it makes the readers feel relaxed and prepared to comprehend the main issues raised in the text.

### **2.2.2 While-reading phase**

Through reading, exercises which follow pre-reading help students develop reading strategies, improve their control of the foreign language, and to decode problematic text passages. Abebe (2012) in his study suggested that helping students to employ strategies while reading can be difficult because individual students control and need different strategies. However, to avoid this problem the teacher can identify valuable strategies, explain which strategies individuals most need to practice, and offer concrete exercises in the form of ‘guided reading’ activity sheets.

Such practice exercises might include guessing the meanings new words by using context clues, word formation clues, or cognate practice, considering syntax and sentence structure by noting the grammatical functions of unknown words, analyzing reference words, and predicting text content, reading for specific pieces of information, drawing pictures to show what you see in your mind’s eye skipping unknown words, and learning to use the dictionary effectively.

### **2.2.3 Post-reading stage**

The post reading stage of reading lesson presentation is intended to review the content of the passage and to consolidate what the students have read and at the same time to relate the textual information to the learners' knowledge, interest and opinions. Moreover, this stage of reading lesson treatment focuses on linguistic elements such as grammar, vocabulary, discourse features and rhetorical organizations (Williams, 1984 & Melkamu, 2002). This means students at the end of the lesson focus on the exercises of linguistic elements grammar points, vocabulary in context and discourse features of the passage.

Reviewing the content of the passage and reflecting upon what the students have read can be carried out in this stage. Thus, to facilitate this post-reading lesson presentation, the teacher should engage the students in individual, pair or group work to give answers to the comprehension activities since the comprehension questions vary greatly in what they ask the students (Melkamu, 2002). As a result, the students benefit much from the

thoughts, experiences and knowledge of their classmates or peers and small group discussion of the post reading stage.

In post-reading exercises, the teacher first checks students' comprehension and then lead students to a deeper analysis of the text when necessary. Because the goals of most real world reading are not to memorize an author's point of view or to summarize text content, but rather to see into another mind, or to meet new information into what one already knows. Moreover, students better comprehend the text if they relate their background knowledge to the given text.

### **2.3 Pre-reading Instruction**

Pre-reading instruction, as its name implies, happens before English language text readers read a particular text or begin a particular unit or lesson. In a sense, pre-reading instruction (PRI) is pre-teaching the learners necessary information with the intension of they comprehend the given text better while teaching reading lesson. It includes activating learners' prior knowledge/background knowledge, because it helps them to understand the written material by bringing the information they have to the given topic.

In other words, directly teaching of background knowledge on the topic of instruction would benefit students when reading passages on that topic. Stevens (1982, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011) in his study suggests that instruction of prior to reading on text related information improve students reading comprehension. In fact, pre-reading instruction makes reading a more enjoyable task.

### **2.4 Pre-reading Activities**

Pre-reading activities can be defined as the activities that are used with the students prior to the actual reading material (Bilokcuoglu, 2011). These activities aim to provide students with required background knowledge that will be needed to have a better comprehension when they interact with a text.

Pre-reading activities are positively correlated with reading comprehension. These activities are aimed to existing schemata, and provide information to the teacher about what the students know. Moreover, Chen and Graves (1995, as cited in Rokhsari, 2012) defined pre-reading as a device for bridging the gap between the texts content and the readers' schemata. They added various activities and materials can help the teacher introduce key vocabulary and reinforce concept association to activate both formal and content schemata. Formal schemata will be activated by employing devices such as advance organizers and overviews to draw attention to the structure of a text. The content schemata will be activated by using various pre-reading activities to help learners brainstorm and predict how the information fits in with their previous knowledge.

In his study, Ajideh (2006) provides that pre-reading activities can be helpful in three ways: by building new schemata, by activating existing schemata, and by informing the teacher what the students know. Therefore, pre-reading activities are useful for both teacher and students on reading comprehension. It moreover links readers with the given text. Ajideh also expressed in this whole class activity, learners are given a valuable opportunity to bring their own prior knowledge and ideas about a particular issue and at the same time activate their related schema.

In addition, pre-reading tasks make the activity more interesting, let the students have a purpose in reading, and give the teacher a chance to see how well the text can be understood with the help of the tasks given before/after reading. In fact, pre-reading activities motivate students before the actual reading takes place. In order to bring learners knowledge and experience while reading, pre-reading activities are of great necessity. There are various pre-reading activities though type of the activities depends on the teacher and the type of the text that learners will read. A teacher must provide pre-reading activities that would match with the text to be read.

For example, teachers can ask students questions that arouse their interest while previewing the text. As Abebe (2012) states that pre-reading activities include: asking questions based on the title, brainstorming, reviewing familiar stories, considering

illustrations and titles, making predictions based on previewing, skimming and scanning (for structure, main points, and future directions), reading the introduction and conclusion first.

## **2.5 The Importance of Pre-reading Activities in Reading Comprehension**

Pre-reading activities refer to tasks to be carried out before reading a text to create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text. Hence, many reading experts stressed the importance of pre-reading activities in teaching reading skills. For instance, Aebersold and Field (1997, as cited in Melkamu, 2002) argued that skipping the basic pre-reading activities could create comprehension failure to a reader. In the same manner, Abebe (2012) in his study has found that pre-reading assistance is particularly useful in reading classroom because it helps to establish a proper mental set for the reading and discussion of the passage. In addition to this, it also the relevant background information supplied by the teacher as introduction and/or pre-reading discussion that involves the students themselves and gives the necessary motivation for reading the passage.

Therefore, pre-reading activities are useful tools for setting up a purpose for reading. That is why, different researchers can be considered as vital activities that should be done as the learners schema should be activated to prevent any failure in comprehending a piece of written text. Through the use of pre-reading activities, students get familiar with the topic, vocabulary, or complex structures in the passage.

The effectiveness of pre-reading activities can especially be seen on providing the motivation for reading, as well as on teaching key cultural concepts which prepare the readers for reading activities (Chastain, 1988, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011). Moreover, the students can finish the activity better without spending too much effort and are more willing to take part in the activity as they have gained confidence. So, teachers need to give value to pre-reading activities to activate the students' schema by helping them recognize the knowledge that they already have about the topic of the text. This can be

achieved by the discussion of titles, subtitles, photographs, identifying text structure, previewing, vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming, providing background knowledge, ect.

One of the most important pre-reading activities proposed by schematic theorists is prediction. According to Goodman (1988, as cited in Pardede, 2006), prediction is important because the “brain is always anticipating and predicting as it seeks order and significant in sensory input” (p.16). Moreover, Pardede (2006) defines prediction as the prior elimination of unlikely alternatives. According to him, predictions are questions the readers ask the world and comprehension is receiving the answers. This is in other words, it is prediction that makes skilled readers effective when reading that contain familiar subject matter. In addition, prediction brings potential meaning to texts, reducing ambiguity and eliminating in advance irrelevant alternatives and also it pushes the reader to comprehending the text. As a result, the readers are able to generate comprehensible experience from inert pages of print.

Another pre-reading activity is previewing, where students look at titles, headings, and pictures, and read the first few paragraphs and the last paragraph; these activities can then help students understanding what the text is about by activating their formal and content schemata and making them familiar with the topic before they begin reading in earnest. Bilokcuoglu (2011) classified and explained common pre-reading activities used to activate background knowledge as follows:

- Previewing
- Pre-questioning
- Semantic mapping
- Brainstorming
- Providing background knowledge

**Previewing:** This type of pre-reading activity is, particularly, suitable for passages that are culturally not familiar. Students are encouraged to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles, and headings. As Songyut (2011)

demonstrated it as previewing before you read can make a big difference in how well you understand what you read. The researcher added since the aim of previewing is to find out what you are going to be read before you actually read, you review to get an idea of what you will find in the text. Then your brain can begin making connections and your comprehension will be faster and better.

**Pre-questioning:** According to Bilokcuoglu (2011) pre-questioning should consist of a set of written questions. Moreover, pre-questions can stimulate student curiosity about the passage to be read, activate prior content knowledge, lead students to anticipate and elaborate what they read. Mobini (2014) used two types of pre-questions. These are inferential questions and literal (factual) questions. As Mobini, inferential questions involve information which is not explicitly stated in the text. Here, the reader can find the answer to such questions by using his experience and by inferring. The answer to the literal (factual) questions is explicitly stated in the passage. These kinds of questions are used to understand, remember, or recall the information explicitly contained in the passage (Mobini, 2014).

According to Harmer (2001, as cited in Wijayanti, 2014) there are some kinds of pre-questioning. These are: pre-questioning before reading to confirm expectations, pre-questioning before reading to extract specific information, pre-questioning before reading for general comprehension, and pre-questioning before reading for detail comprehension.

**a.** Pre-questioning before reading to confirm expectations: Pre-questioning as a tool for placing great emphasis on the lead-in stage where students are encouraged to become interested in the subject matter of the text. On the other hand, it encourages students' to predict the content of the text, and gives them an interesting and motivating purpose for reading.

**b.** Pre-questioning before reading for general comprehension: In this case pre-questioning used to build up the students' knowledge.

c. Pre-questioning before reading to extract specific information: Students are going to answer before reading the text. If they do this it will be possible for them to read in the required way, they should see the text only to extract the information the questions demand.

d. Pre-questioning before reading for detailed comprehension: This kind of pre-questioning intends to give the students some detailed information that should be found by them in the whole of the text (pp.36-37).

**Semantic mapping:** in semantic mapping, students use brainstorming strategies. Nevertheless, this strategy is organized and controlled by the teacher. As students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the teacher writes these ideas on the board.

**Brainstorming:** one of the most popular kinds of pre-reading tasks is ‘brainstorming’ in which teachers ask the students to examine together the title of the selected material they are about to read. The teacher makes a list of all the information that comes to his/her mind as students read the title on the board. These pieces of information are then used to further recall, and in the process considerable knowledge will be activated.

Brainstorming is a technique that teachers can introduce prior knowledge to reading the text. Teachers give the students a topic and allow the students to call out whatever comes to their mind, thus calling upon prior knowledge (Usen, 1993). He added that the teacher could record the student responses on an overhead projector, chart paper, or a black board in order to determine the accurate and inaccurate ideas brainstormed during the process.

Brainstorming has many advantages as a classroom procedure. First, it requires little teacher preparation; second, it allows learners considerable freedom to bring their own prior knowledge and opinions to bear on a particular issue; and third, it can involve the whole class (Ajideh, 2006). Therefore, brainstorming technique is effective in generating new ideas in the students. In addition, Feather (2004) expressed that brainstorming provides plenty of materials for making prediction. Furthermore, it is likely that through



this strategy, the reader becomes conscious concerning what he knows about a given text's topic before he goes on reading it. The researcher argues that “brainstorming enhances the activation of the reader's schema globally; so that they will know in advance about the ideas, vocabulary, culture, grammatical features and genre structures which are most probably met in the text to be read” (pp.82-84).

From the above idea, it can be concluded that brainstorming was effective of achieving student interaction in developing the cognitive skills for the purpose of generating ideas. Students who trained in brainstorming techniques were more successful at generating and organizing ideas.

**Providing background knowledge:** This activity is especially suitable for culturally unfamiliar passages. As one culture may be different from the other one, it becomes very difficult for the teacher to activate the students’ existing schema towards the target culture, which results in having a lack of comprehension to have a sufficient comprehension; students should be supported to have enough background knowledge.

**Vocabulary definition:** Unfamiliar words or phrases can interfere with students’ comprehension. Pre-teaching vocabulary may help address this vocabulary problem. Stressing the importance of vocabulary, Folse (2003, as cited in Abebe, 2012) states that without syntax meaning is hampered; but without vocabulary meaning is unthinkable or extremely difficult. In other words, vocabulary knowledge is important because it encompasses all the words we must know to access our background knowledge, express our ideas and communicate effectively, and learn about new concepts.

Sedita (2005) suggested that students’ word knowledge is linked strongly to academic success because students who have large vocabularies can understand new ideas and concepts more quickly than students with limited vocabularies. Similarly, Melkamu (2002) relates vocabulary knowledge to schema theory and background knowledge. He argues that vocabulary cannot be taught in isolation from the conceptual knowledge necessary to understand the vocabulary items. Furthermore, to be effective, an extensive

and long term vocabulary development program accompanying a parallel schemata or background knowledge program is probably called for.

## **2.6 Comprehension**

Comprehension is recognized as an acquired skill that is focused on the understanding of input. A different scholar defines comprehension as the action or fact of comprehending with the mind; understanding, grasping with the mind, power of receiving and containing ideas. For instance, Brown (2007) identifies comprehension as the process of receiving language; listening or reading; input. Thus, comprehension is the ability to take in information, analyze it in its respective segments, and come up with an understanding of the input in a cohesive and accurate manner. In addition, well-developed comprehension abilities involve interactive strategy use to come up with a meaningful understanding of the input. Above all, comprehension can be identified as an interactive strategic process when fully developed results in reading ability.

## **2.7 Reading Comprehension and Schema**

### **2.7.1 What is Reading Comprehension?**

Most studies of reading comprehension prefer a definition that emphasizes good readers concentrate on understanding. They agree that reading comprehension has active and intentional, constructing meanings and depends heavily on utilizing the text and their own prior knowledge.

Hence, reading comprehension is one of the basic skills needed to be learned. It can be seen as the process of using one's own prior experiences and the writer's prompt to make a set of meanings that are useful to the individual reader reading in a specific context. Klingner, Vaughn and Boardman (2007) besides state that reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning by coordinating a number of complex processes that include word reading, word and world knowledge, and fluency. For this reason, knowing

how to read words has ultimately little value if the student is unable to comprehend and construct meaning from text. The effective role of prior knowledge has been largely appreciated through schema-theoretic model of comprehension which claims no text by itself carries meaning (Jalilifar & Assi, 2008, as cited in Rokhsari, 2012). This is in other words, learners should bring their background information to the given text to comprehend it better.

### **2.7.2 Schema**

According to Pritchard (1990, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011) states that schemata can be defined as our theories of the way things are or as representations of one's background experiences. It is obvious that the culture one lives in influences schemata. Consistent with the above researcher, for Ajideh (2003) and Bilokcuoglu (2011) schema (plural: schemata) is a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts that are stored in memory. This means, schema is the organized background knowledge, which leads us to make expectations or predictions in our interpretation of the text.

The underlying idea is that with the appropriate schemata, readers will not become too dependent on the linguistic features of the text. Using the schema-theoretic framework, Hudson (1982, as cited in Hung, 1990) attempted to instantiate relevant background knowledge through three different types of pre-reading activities:

1. a set of visuals about the general topic of the passage, and a set of accompanying question about the visuals;
2. a vocabulary list of essential items;
3. a task in which readers have to answer a multiple choice comprehension test after reading (Hung, 1990).

### **2.8 Schema Theory**

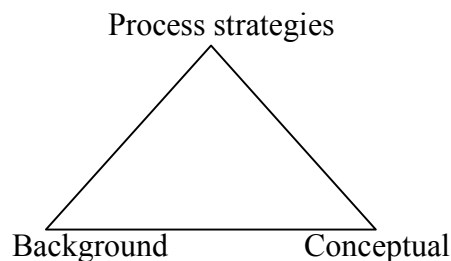
According to Brown (2001) schema theory and background knowledge was given attention in the reading comprehension so as to make meaning construction manageable.

The use of schema theory, as asserted by Brown supports readers to decide what to hold on to, and having that decision made and infer a writer's message. Schema theory is a feature in which meaning in the minds of readers is constructed and texts in their own would not bring meanings to readers' minds (Petros, 2011).

On the other hand, schema theory is a theory which is closely related to top-down processing had a major impact on reading instruction. It is based on the concept that past experiences lead to the creation of mental frame works that help a reader make sense of new experiences. Klinger, Vaughn and Boardman (2007) suggests schema theory as what we know about a topic or construct influences how much we can or will learn by reading a passage that addresses the given topic. Moreover, our knowledge and experiences related to key ideas in the text we read influence what we learn and remember about what we read.

Schema theory proposes that when individuals obtain knowledge, they attempts to fit that knowledge into some structure in memory which helps them sense of the obtained knowledge (Ajideh, 2006). The researcher also explained that schema theory is an active strategy coding technique necessary for facilitating the recall of knowledge. Moreover, this idea reminds us the new knowledge students gained from the text help them to relate their background knowledge to the text they are reading. Hence, schema theory is the result of the search for making out the correlation between background knowledge and comprehension.

Goodman (1971, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011) pointed out the process of cognition to understand the text in the following figure:



As seen in the figure, schema theory can be regarded as a model that claims to comprehend a text goes through an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge and the text itself (pp.6-7).

### **2.8.1 Types of Schema**

Many reading researchers subcategorize schema into three in order to figure out the effect of background knowledge on reading comprehension. Namely: linguistic schema, formal schema and content schema. Bilokcuoglu (2011) explained these schema types as follows:

**Linguistic knowledge:** is one of the essential parts in text comprehension, and basically linguistic schemata referring to the readers' current language proficiency in grammar, vocabulary and idioms, etc. It becomes almost impossible for the reader to decode and comprehend a text without linguistic schemata. Therefore, it is clear that the more linguistic schemata a reader stores in his/her mind, the quicker the reader acquires information and has a better understanding.

**Formal schemata:** refers to the rhetorical structures and organizational structures of written texts, which include knowledge of different text types and genres, as well as the knowledge that different types of text use, text organization, vocabulary, grammar, level of formality and various language structures. Readers activate their schematic representations towards the text through the use of fiction, poems, news paper articles, academic articles, essays and journals to aid them in comprehending the information in the text.

**Content schemata:** refers to the background knowledge of the content area of the text or the topic in question in the text that a reader may bring to a text, such as knowledge about the world, the universe, people and culture. Language should not be regarded as only the simple mixture of vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, but also carrying different levels of the language.

### **2.8.2 Activating and Building Schemata/Students Prior Knowledge**

Many researchers have been studied the contribution of prior knowledge in comprehending the text by English language learners read. Recently but, it is important to consider the accuracy of prior knowledge about the topic of the text because many learners not only lack information, rather they have inaccurate information or misconceptions about a topic (Maria & MacGinitie, 1987, as cited in Abebe, 2012). These researchers pointed out that when prior knowledge of a reader does not coincide with the new information presented, the reader's schemata must restructure through lodging. For this reason, comprehension could be impeded. Although prior knowledge is an effective pre-reading strategy for readers, poor readers rely too heavily on prior knowledge when trying to comprehend.

As a result, this factor could also have a negative effect on reading comprehension because the poor readers cannot connect the new information into information learned previously. If they try to accommodate the new information with inaccurate information, comprehension will be out of true due to the inaccuracies. Prior knowledge is important to reading comprehension. In the same manner, Young (2003) reveals that prior knowledge is essential that if teachers activate learners' prior knowledge through a variety of pre-reading activities while being careful to discuss inaccuracies in order to clear up misconceptions. He added by building students' background knowledge teachers might also help to frustrate the detrimental effects that incoherent or poorly organized texts have on comprehension.

In most cases, direct instruction on background knowledge can be embedded into an approach such as previewing, where students are presented with introductory material before they read specific texts. As Strangman and Hall (2004) explained such introductory material may include important background information such as definitions of difficult vocabulary, translations of foreign phrases, and explanations of difficult concepts. Thus, students were given both a framework for understanding about the material they read and important background information. As a result, students not only

liked the previews but made significant improvements in both text comprehension and recall.

Barr and Jonson (1997, as cited in Melkamu, 2002) defined prior knowledge as “individuals present understanding and organized of a topic, idea, concept, event, object or person” (p.16). Therefore, activating and mobilizing a reader’s existing knowledge before reading facilitate comprehension of a passage to be read. Pardede (2006) stated that since the reader plays a fundamental role in the construction of meaning, his age, gender, experience, and culture are important considerations for teachers who want to select reading texts that will motivate their students. This is because in some cases readers may not have a schema that is significant to the text, or they may need help to activate the pertinent schema to be able to comprehend the text.

#### **2.8.2.1 Schema Activation**

Our mind is stimulated by key words or phrases exist in the text or by the context activate a knowledge schema. The studies by scholars imply that we are not necessarily dealing with conscious processes, but rather with automatic cognitive responses given to external stimuli. For instance, Ajideh (2006) clarifies this view as schemata are activated in one of two ways:

1. New information from the outside world can be cognitively received and related to already known information stored in memory through retrieval or remembering. In this case, new concepts are assimilated into existing schemata which can be altered or expanded,
2. New information can be represented by new mental structures. In this case, in absence of already existing schemata, new knowledge builds up new schemata.

#### **2.8.2.2 Applying Schema Theory with the Stages of Reading**

Based on the aforementioned ideas, it is obvious that in order to teach reading effectively, the teacher’s should activate and build schemata. To achieve it, he/she should in advance

select texts that are relevant to the students' needs, preferences, individual differences, and cultures. The teacher should do this in order to provide meaningful texts for the students to understand the message, which entails activating existing schemata and helping build new schemata. The three stages of activities that teacher needs to do to activate and build the students' schemata were expressed as follows by Pardede (2006):

**1. Pre-reading activities:** is the stage in which the teacher let students think, write, and discuss everything they know about the topic, employing techniques such as prediction, semantic mapping, and reconciled reading. The objective is to make sure that students have relevant schema for understanding the text.

**2. During-reading activities:** in this phase the teacher guides and monitors the interaction between the readers and the text. One important skill teachers can impart at this stage is note-taking, which allows students to compile new vocabulary and important information and details, and to summarize information and record their reactions and opinions.

**3. Post-reading activities:** the final stage which facilitates chance to evaluate students' adequacy of interpretation, while bearing in mind that accuracy is relative and that "readership" must be respected as long as the writer's intentions are addressed. Post-reading activities focus on a wide range of questions that allow for different interpretations. While schema activation and building can occur in all three stages, the pre-reading stage deserves special attention since it is initial contact with the text, where their schemata will be activated.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section provides an overview of the research design, research population, sample and sampling techniques, research methods and tools, and data analysis procedures.

### **3.1 Design of the Study**

This study was intended to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in facilitating English language text readers' comprehension. The researcher used quantitative and descriptive research method. Based on this, quasi-experimental research design was used because the study deals with untreated control group with a pre-test and post test (Cook & Campbell, 1979, as cited in Abebe, 2012). According to these scholars, quasi-experiments are 'experimental' in that an independent variable is manipulated, but the experimental and control groups are not equivalent. Therefore, pre-test and post-test were employed for both experimental and no-experimental groups with and without teaching of pre-reading lesson respectively (Creswell, 2009).

At the first week, both groups of students (comparison and control groups) took a pre-test which revealed their initial level. This design, moreover, enabled the researcher to select a comparison group with the help of a pre-test. After this pre-test, students in the comparison group were taught through pre-reading instruction while students of control group received the usual way of learning reading lesson. After six weeks, both groups (comparison and control group) took a post-test. After the post-test, the significant difference between the comparison and control group was investigated.

### **3.2 Study Population and Sampling**

The subjects of the study were Grade Nine students and their English language teacher at Gembe Secondary School. The total number of students who were learning in grade nine at Gembe Secondary School in the academic year of 2014/15 was 285. There were 3 English language teachers in this school. There were also 5 classes in which Grade 9

students were learning. Of these classes, two classes (one class for comparison group which consisted 52 students and 52 students for control group) participated in this study.

In order to get a representative sample, the researcher used random sampling method that is lottery method for selecting the two sections as a sample to avoid bias and give equal chance for the whole sections. Thus, 104 students (both control and comparison group) participated in the study filling out questionnaire and taking tests (pre and post tests). One English language teacher who taught the selected control group was involved in the study. This setting was preferred due to two reasons. Firstly, the researcher has some experience of teaching there. Secondly, the researcher believes that it can be easier to collect data since the researcher is familiar with the students and teachers.

### **3.3 Data Collection Instruments**

To investigate whether teachers teach their students pre-reading instructions in reading comprehension and students comprehend the text better, quantitative data gathering instrument was used. A quantitative research is one where numerical data is used in order to analyze the information which has been gathered. According to Mackey and Gass (2005) quantitative research starts with an experimental design in which a research question is followed by the quantification of data and some sort of numerical analysis is carried out. Therefore, the following data gathering instruments were used to collect appropriate data from the participants.

#### **3.3.1 Pre-test and Post Test**

##### **3.3.1.1 Pre-Test**

Since, there was no standard test for this purpose, the researcher developed a test. The main objective of the pre-test in the study was to find out if there was any significant difference in comprehending the text with and without schema activation between the students of the comparison group and the control group. That is to test the two groups'

equivalence in reading comprehension, the pre-test was given. The test consisted of a text followed by 20 questions: section **I** had four True/False questions, section **II** five matching items, section **III** eight multiple choice and section **IV** had three fill in the blank spaces (see Appendix A). The students score was marked out of 30%. The time allowed for the test was 40 minutes.

Treatment was given using the four pre reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) for six weeks (two sessions a week). The texts used for the tests (pre and post-test) were entitled ‘The Media in Ethiopia’, ‘When I won the lottery’ and ‘The world in Danger’ which were taken from English for grade 9 students’ textbook. In addition, reading passage which says ‘Is there Life on the Mars?’ was also selected from College English course which was prepared in 2009.

#### **3.3.1.2 Post-Test**

In this study, after the comparison group was taught pre-reading instructions by the researcher, a post-test was given in order to find out if there is any significant difference between the control and the comparison groups in comprehending the given text. The control group was taught reading lesson as usual by other teacher (who teaches grade 9). A post-test for reading comprehension was prepared and administered for both groups. The post test has similar sections as pre-test.

The pre-test/post-test material was given to three English language teachers of Gembe Secondary School, for their comments regarding its clarity and appropriateness. They were evaluate the 20 items for pre-test and 20 items for post-test. The result shows that three English language teachers evaluated each item and gave their judgment. Based on their judgments, most of the items (18 items for pre-test and 17 items for post-test) were written and constructed properly, only 2 items of the pre-test (item 5 and 19) 3 items 8, 16 and 17 were not written correctly. This means the pre and the post-test seemed to be appropriate to use it for this study.

After getting important comments from them, some words were added and some others were dropped and the final version of the pre-test and post-test was made ready for administration. The raw data of the pre-test and post test can be seen (Appendix A & B).

### **3.3.2 Questionnaire**

The purpose of designing the questionnaire was to collect information from the students to what extent English language teachers teach pre-reading activities to activate their students' schemata. Questionnaire for students were designed to collect data because it was one of the important tools to collect information about the study. Therefore in this study, structured questionnaire was used because it has fixed alternative questions in which responses of the informants are limited to the stated alternatives (Kothari, 2004). Thus, the designed questionnaire was closed ended which requires the respondent to choose between limited numbers of answers (Hague, 1998, as cited in Abebe, 2012). The questionnaire was translated to Afan Oromo to avoid language problem. Content validity of the questionnaires was achieved using related literature review on the effect pre-reading activities to develop each questionnaire.

With regard to the questionnaire, the questionnaire presented by the researcher was evaluated for face validity by the advisor and by the three teachers at the selected school. Questionnaire was modified based on feedback. Some changes regarding the wording of statements, their order, and clarity were made to the final draft. It was formulated in Likert scale form.

### **3.3.3 Classroom Observation**

This technique was used to see the practice of pre-reading instruction in the classroom and to examine the extent to which teachers teach their students pre-reading. In this case, three observations of reading lessons, forty minutes for each observation were conducted while English language teacher teach reading lesson. During observation, field notes and checklist were used to observe whether teacher teach pre-reading activities.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

First a pre-test was prepared and administered in the parts of the reading lesson to both the control and comparison groups before the experiment was administered. At this stage, no pre-reading instruction was given to support students comprehend the given text. Six weeks later after training the comparison group using pre-reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) a post-test for both (control and comparison groups) was administered. The responses obtained from the tests were analyzed and interpreted using SPSS statistical package program.

Next, questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the sample before the post-test and classroom observations for the control group were carried out during the treatment. Finally, the data obtained through the questionnaires and the classroom observations were organized and the findings were analyzed and discussed.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The study was quantitative. Thus, quantitative data analysis techniques were used to analyze the collected data. After the administration of the tests (pre-test and post test), the significance difference between the classes were investigated. Then, since there were only two teachers who were teaching grade 9 in the selected area, one of the classes which the researcher teaches was grouped as comparison group while the other class which was selected using lottery method grouped as control group. The result of the post-test was analyzed to explore whether pre-reading instruction significantly improves the test results of both groups.

Hence, the t-test for the significance of the difference between the tests (that is pre-test and post-test) was administered for this purpose. Next, the analysis was examined to check if there is significant difference between comparison and control groups and an improvement as a result of pre-reading instruction. The data obtained for this study was analyzed using SPSS statistical software program.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

After receiving official letter of cooperation from Jimma University, the researcher communicated all institutions and individual participants legally and smoothly. The purpose of the study was made clear and understandable for all respondents. Any communication with the concerned bodies was accomplished at their voluntarily consent without harming and threatening the personal and institutional well being. In addition, all information obtained from individual respondents was kept confidential.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Findings**

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented according to the research questions stated in chapter one. In the study, tests (reading comprehension and vocabulary tests), questionnaire, and observation were used to collect data from Grade 9 students. A pre and post-test on pre-reading activities were administered to the participants. The instrument used was a pre and post-test to determine whether participants showed any significant improvement after undergoing pre-reading instruction in their reading comprehension. This chapter moreover, describes how the study data were analyzed and reports the results obtained from the study.

The scope of the discussion covers the effects of pre-reading activities in comprehending texts. Therefore, quantitative research data analyses were used to answer the two research questions. For research question one a comprehension and vocabulary test which contains 20 items was manipulated and the students score was marked out of 30% (see Chapter Three). An independent sample t-test analyses were performed to see if there is a significant difference between the two groups. In other words, independent t-test was used in research question one to assess directly whether the post-test means of the two groups were statistically different.

Thus, the test score of the two groups were analyzed using SPSS statistical analyses program. For research question two, the questionnaire and classroom observation data were analyzed and reported.

#### **4.1.1 Results of Tests (Pre and Post-tests)**

Research question one was designed to investigate to what extent pre-reading instructions improve English language learners' reading comprehension. The instrument used to answer this question was a pre and post-test on reading comprehension to test the reading

ability of students in comprehending the text they read. To evaluate this, independent sample t-test was computed. However, in the pre-test there was no significant difference in the result. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of the pre-test results for the control and comparison group. A t-test was used to test the hypotheses in the study. The t-test evaluates whether the mean value of the test variable for one group differs significantly from the mean value of the variable for the other group. Besides, the collected data through pre and post-test were summarized in the following table.

Table 1: Statistical Analysis of the Pre-test

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean	Sig.(2-tailed)
Control Group pre-test	52	15.52	5.31	.74	.99
Experimental Group pre-test	52	15.50	5.22	.72	.99

As Table 1 indicates, 52 students of control and 52 students of comparison group took a pre-test of reading comprehension and vocabulary test. The mean scores were calculated as 15.52 and 15.50 with standard deviation of 5.31 and 5.22 respectively. The mean difference was considered as .02 for both comparison and control groups. Concerning the t-value and p-value they are calculated as .019 and .99 respectively. Therefore, as the result shows there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups before the treatment was given.



Table 2: Independent Samples Pre-test Result for Control and Comparison Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.026	.87	.019	102	.99	.02	1.03	-2.03	2.07
Equal variances not assumed			.019	101.97	.99	.02	1.03	-2.03	2.07

Table 2 also shows that the degrees of freedom for the two groups are 102 and 101.97 respectively at .026 frequencies. From the result given in the tables then, it can be concluded that students in both groups have the same background of reading comprehension. This happened for the fact that both groups were taught by teachers of English who had similar background and followed the same method of teaching reading lesson.

Table 3: Statistical Analysis of the Post-test

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control Group Post-test	52	16.27	5.41	.75	.000
Experimental Group Post-test	52	21.15	5.16	.72	.000

For table 3, a comparison was made between the mean score of 52 control and 52 comparison group students in post-test. The mean score is 16.27 for control and 21.15 for comparison group. The standard deviation is 5.41 and 5.16 respectively. The following table describes the t-value and p-value results of the group.

Table 4: Independent Sample Pre-test Result for Control and Comparison Groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means								
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.08	.77	-4.71	102	.000	-4.88	1.04	-6.94	-2.83	
Equal variances not assumed			-4.71	101.76	.000	-4.88	1.04	-6.94	-2.83	

Table 4 shows that the t-value and p-value are calculated as -4.71 and .000 respectively. Then, it can be conclude that there is significant difference between the mean score of control and comparison group in their post-test at 0.05 alpha levels. Here, treatment was given for comparison group while the control group was not. As a result, the comparison group showed improvement after treatment was given.

Table 5: Independent Sample Test Results of pre and post-test for the two (control and comparison groups)

Test	Control Group			Experimental Group			Df	T-value	p-value	Sig.
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD				
Pre-test	52	15.52	5.31	52	15.50	5.22	102	.019	.99	No Significant
Post-test	52	16.27	5.41	52	21.15	5.16	101.76	-4.71	.000	Significant

In table 5, a comparison was made between the average scores of control and comparison group in pre-test. The mean score of the control group and the comparison group are 15.52 and 15.50 respectively for the pre-test. The standard deviation of the control group and comparison group are calculated as 5.31 and 5.22 respectively for the pre-test. The Mean Difference of the control and comparison group was .02. Concerning the T-value and P-value, they are .019 and .99 respectively for pre-test. Thus, the result shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the control group and comparison group before the treatment was given.

Similarly, a comparison was made between the average score of the post-test of the control and comparison groups. The mean score of control group and comparison group are 16.27 and 21.15 respectively. The standard deviation is 5.41 for control group and 5.16 for the comparison group in the post test. Regarding the t-value and p-value, they are calculated as -4.71 and .000 correspondingly at -4.88 mean differences.

Therefore, Table 5 indicates that there is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of control and comparison group in the post-test. It can be concluded that the comparison group performed better than the control group after getting the treatment. In other word, the result indicates that the comparison group which had similar understanding with the control group before the treatment was given, benefited from these pre-reading activities. In contrast, the lack of treatment made the control group perform less in their post-test. Therefore, depending on the above result that in reading

lesson, a teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge to comprehend and create their own meaning from the text, rather than to impose teacher's interpretation of the meaning. Pardede (2006) suggested that the teacher should activate students' background knowledge in order to provide meaningful texts for them to understand the message, which entails activating existing schemata and helping build new schemata. The teacher can help as a resource to bridge the linguistic and cultural gap that students experience in reading a text.

#### **4.1.2 Results of the Questionnaire**

The second research question was designed to investigate whether the classroom teacher use pre-reading instructions to activate students' background knowledge to comprehend the text they are going to read.

The section examines whether English language teachers use pre-reading instruction/activities to activate English language text readers and the students bring their prior knowledge in comprehending the new text in reading class. Similar items of questionnaire were administered to both control and comparison group before the treatment was given. The total number of respondents of the questionnaire were 104 (control group 52 and comparison group 52). The responses of each group were categorized and tabulated in to four parts namely: the importance of pre-reading activities in comprehending text, the role of schema activation in comprehending text, the use of vocabulary definition in comprehending text and the use of brainstorming in comprehending text.

The responses of the questionnaire given by the two groups were calculated to produce descriptive percentage. To analyze the obtained data from the questionnaire, rating scales 'Strongly agree' and 'Agree' were combined together showing positive responses where as 'Strongly disagree' and 'Disagree' were added together representing negative responses of the students.

The results presented in the following tables (6, 7, 8 and 9) are related to the control and comparison groups.

Table 6: The Students' Response on the Importance of Pre-reading Activities in Comprehending Text

No	Items	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Pre-reading instruction helps the reader to comprehend the given text better.	88	84.60	8	7.68	8	7.68	104	100
2	Pre-reading activities create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text.	78	74.99	19	18.26	7	6.72	104	100
3	Students who are involved in pre-reading instruction better comprehend the given text than those who are not involved in pre-reading instruction.	79	75.95	7	6.73	18	17.29	104	100

N = Number of respondents

In this section, question 1, 2 and 3 were asked whether teaching pre-reading activities are important in comprehending a text. As the results indicates, 88(84.60%), 78(74.99%) and 79(75.95%) respectively 'agree' that teaching pre-reading instruction helps the reader to comprehend text and create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text. In contrast, 8(7.68%), 7(6.72%) and 18(17.29%) of the respondents respectively responded negatively. The result shows that pre-reading activities is a significant in comprehending a text better. In other words, pre-reading activities refer to tasks to be carried out before reading a text to create a favorable situation for the successful comprehension of the text.

Table 7: The Students' Responses on the Role of Schema Activation in Comprehending Text

No	Items	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	Pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata.	76	73.07	13	12.50	15	14.42	104	100
5	The classroom teacher helps the students to use their background knowledge to comprehend the text better.	15	14.42	12	11.53	77	74.03	104	100
6	To comprehend the text better, readers have to bring their background knowledge in pre-reading phase.	68	65.38	15	14.42	21	20.18	104	100
7	Teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge about the topic of the text by teaching them pre-reading activities.	87	83.64	8	7.69	8.64	5.76	104	100
10	I try to understand the written material in the class making connections between the given reading text and my prior knowledge.	51	49.03	19	18.26	34	32.68	104	100

Table 7 is asked to what extent background knowledge activation connect students' prior knowledge to the new text. As the result shows, 76(73.07%) of the respondents 'agree' that pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata (item 4). Similarly for item 5, 77(74.03%) of the sample 'disagree' that the classroom teacher did not helps the students' to use their background knowledge in comprehending the text better. Besides, for item 7 majority of the respondents 87(83.64%) of them 'agree' that the classroom teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge by teaching them pre-reading activities.

As it is revealed in Table 7, items 6 and 10 are administered to determine whether students bring their prior knowledge to comprehend the new text they read. As the result

indicates, 68(65.38%) and 51(49.03%) of the sample respectively ‘agree’ that to understand the text better, readers needs to connect their former knowledge to the current material. Therefore, to comprehend English language text better, the students should bring the experience they have to the new text. In addition, the classroom teacher also needs to help students’ to bring their prior knowledge to the material they are going to read.

Table 8: The Students’ Response on the Use of Vocabulary Definition in Comprehending Text

No	Items	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8	The teacher makes the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge.	15	14.42	–	–	89	85.57	104	100
9	Before reading, the teacher teaches some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties.	15	14.42	6	5.76	83	79.80	104	100

In Table 8, one of the pre-reading activities asked was vocabulary definition to determine whether the classroom teacher helps the reader to comprehend the given text and students use their prior knowledge in comprehending text. Accordingly, 89(85.57%) students were confirmed ‘disagree’ that the classroom teacher did not make them guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge before reading the given passage.

As indicated in Table 8, most of the students 83(79.80%) of the total, answered negatively that the classroom teacher did not teaches some vocabulary items which may cause comprehension difficulties while 15(14.42%) students responded positively that the classroom teacher teach vocabulary items that cause comprehension difficult. The

remaining respondents were undecided on the given idea. This shows that students face a problem when they read the passage unless the classroom teacher teaches some vocabulary words before reading lesson. Therefore, the teacher needs to consider the issue of teaching vocabulary definition before reading lesson.

Table 9: The Students' Response on the Use of Brainstorming in Comprehending Text

No	Items	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	Before reading, the teacher teaches pre-reading activities relating students' prior knowledge to improve their reading comprehension.	17	16.33	8	7.69	79	75.95	104	100
12	The teacher engages the students in reading the passage silently and independently.	15	14.42	13	12.50	76	73.06	104	100
13	Before reading, the classroom teacher helps students do pre-reading tasks/questions.	17	16.34	12	11.53	75	72.10	104	100
14	The classroom teacher encourages the students to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles, and headings.	19	18.26	11	10.57	74	71.15	104	100
15	Before reading, the classroom teacher gives information about the subject of the passage using the title of the given text.	23	22.10	12	11.53	69	66.34	104	100
16	Students predict what the passage is about from the given text.	29	27.87	12	11.53	62	59.60	104	100
17	Before reading, as students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the classroom teacher writes ideas on the board all important information.	29	27.88	13	12.50	62	59.60	104	100



Items in Table 9 were administered to investigate whether the classroom teacher brainstorms the readers before reading and students benefited from it. As the result indicates, for item 11, most of the respondents 79(75.95%) of the sample replied ‘disagree’ that the classroom teacher did not brainstorm them before reading relating students’ prior knowledge to improve their reading comprehension.

As the responses of the sample shows, 76(73.06%) of the respondents asserted negatively that the classroom teacher did not engage the students’ in reading the passage silently and independently (item 12). Similarly, 75(72.10%), of the sample ‘disagree’ that the classroom teacher did not helps them to do pre-reading tasks/questions before reading for item 13. The result of item 14 shows so as to most of the respondents 74(71.15%) of them ‘disagree’ that the classroom teacher did not encourage them to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues.

Likewise, for item 15 and 16, 69(66.34%) and 62(59.60%) respondents ‘disagree’ respectively that the classroom teacher did not give them information about the subject of the title to improve their reading comprehension and did not brainstorm the readers to predict what the passage is about from the given text. The last question 17 of the questionnaire was administered to identify whether the classroom teacher help the students to suggest their personal ideas about a topic and write their ideas on the board.

As a result indicates, 62(59.60%) of the sample were ‘disagree’ that the classroom teacher did not brainstorm the readers and the students did not predict what the passage is about from the given text where as 29(27.88%) respondents were ‘agree’ that the classroom teacher brainstorm them and this helps students’ predict what the passage is about from the given text.

From the results of Table 9, the study found that the classroom teacher teach reading lesson without brainstorming. For this reason, the students unable to think what will be the passage talks about and English language text readers were not benefited from this pre-reading activity.

### 4.1.3 Results of Classroom Observation

To investigate whether pre-reading activities were being taught and students use their background knowledge to comprehend the given text, Grade 9 section ‘E’ (control group) English language teacher and students were observed from March 2015 to May 2015. Three classroom observations were carried out within these months when the teacher was teaching reading lesson. The researcher used Yes/No rating scale.

To analyze the collected data through observation, the checklist rating scale has been estimated with a rating range from 0 to 3 where 3 stands for ‘always’, 2 for ‘usually’, 1 for ‘sometimes’ and 0 for ‘never’. Here the observer filled the check list which activities were taking place in pre-reading session while the classroom teacher teaches reading and results were described by the researcher. Below are statements of reading lesson practices that refer to the pre-reading activities with “Yes” and “No” columns indicating data relating to the three observation days in the control group class.

Table 10: Classroom Observation Results on the Teacher’s Use of Vocabulary definition

No.	Pre-reading activities	Yes	No
1	Does the classroom teacher use vocabulary definition to facilitate reading comprehension?	1	2
2	Does the English language teacher teach some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties?	1	2
3	Does the classroom teacher help the students to use context clue to comprehend the text they read?	–	3
4	Do the students guess the meaning of words/phrases using clues from the text if they don’t understand the text?	–	3
5	Does the classroom teacher translate words, phrases and explain difficult concepts which hinder students’ comprehension before reading?	–	3

What is obviously seen in Table 8 is that the classroom teacher ‘sometimes’ teaches vocabulary items before reading lesson (item 1). Item 2 asked whether English language teacher teach some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties. The responses to this item revealed that the classroom teacher ‘sometimes’ teach key words which was already picked out from the reading passage before reading classes.

On the other hand, for item 3, the classroom teacher ‘never’ helps the students to use context clue in comprehending the text they read better. As a result, the teachers’ incapable to advice the students to use contextual hint leads them failure to comprehend the given text. Similarly, the results of item 4 indicates that students ‘never’ guess the meaning of words/phrases using clues from the text if they do not understand it because their teacher did not activate them to use their prior knowledge. In addition, the teacher ‘never’ translates words, phrases and explains difficult concepts which hinder students’ comprehension before reading (item 5).

As the result of Table 10 shows, the classroom teacher ‘never’ helps students use contextual clue and ‘never’ explains difficult concepts which hinder text comprehension. These leads English language text students’ reading comprehension difficult if they do not being taught some vocabulary words before reading the passage and unable to use contextual clues.

Table 11: Classroom Observation Results on Teacher’s Use of Pre-questioning

No.	Pre-reading activities	Yes	No
6	Does the classroom teacher help the students to do pre-reading tasks before reading?	1	2
7	Does the teacher make a list of all information that comes to his/her mind as students read the title on the board?	–	3
8	Do students suggest their personal ideas about a topic before reading?	–	3
9	Does the teacher write the students idea on the board before reading?	–	3
10	Does the classroom teacher skip on the basic pre-reading activities which create comprehension failure to a reading?	3	–

As can be seen from the Table 11, for items 7, 8 and 9, the classroom teacher ‘never’ used pre-questioning activity. Moreover, as the result indicates, the teacher did not list information that comes to her mind as students read the title on the board. In addition, the result of item 10 shows that the classroom teacher skips on the basic pre-reading activities which can possibly create comprehension failure to a reading material. Furthermore, the teacher failed to do so in teaching pre-questioning except item 6 which asked whether the classroom teacher help the students do pre-reading tasks before reading. As the result of item 6 shows, the classroom teacher ‘sometimes’ helps the students do pre-reading tasks.

Table 12: Classroom Observation Results on Teacher’s Use of Brainstorming

No.	Pre-reading activities	Yes	No
11	Does the classroom teacher teach pre-reading activities before reading text to create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text?	–	3
12	Does the classroom teacher help the students think what the given text is about by reading its topic before reading?	–	3
13	Does the classroom teacher help the students to think about what they already know to help them understand what they are going to read?	–	3
14	Could the teacher record the students’ response on chart paper or a board in order to determine the accurate and inaccurate answer of the learners’ idea?	–	3

Item 11 of Table 12 asked whether the classroom teacher teaches pre-reading activities before reading text for the successful comprehension. As the result shows, the teacher ‘never’ taught pre-reading activities which create a conducive situation for the students’ to comprehend the given text better. Similarly, for items 12 and 13 the classroom teacher ‘never’ helped the students’ to think and predict the passage they are going to read by brainstorming them. In addition, the results of item 14 in Table 12 reveals that the classroom teacher ‘never’ record students’ response on the board or chart paper in order to determine whether students’ idea was accurate or inaccurate after brainstorming them.

In sum, in the above Table 12, it was observed that the classroom teacher ‘never’ used brainstorming techniques to help the readers’ to predict what they are going to read and comprehend the text better. Similar to observation results of Table 12, the results of questionnaire in Table 9 indicates that the classroom teacher teach reading lesson without brainstorming. For this reason, the students unable to think and predict what will be the passage talks about.

Moreover, English language text readers were not benefited from this pre-reading activity. This leads students' failure to comprehend the given text. In order to comprehend the text better then, teacher needs to ask questions relating the given text before reading and students need to bring their prior knowledge to the new text. Hence, Gambrell and Jawitz (1993, as cited in Bilokcuoglu, 2011) states that reading comprehension occurs when readers build relationships between the text, their knowledge, and their experience.

Table 13: Observation Results on Teacher Provision of Background Knowledge in Reading Classroom

No.	Pre-reading activities	Yes	No
15	Does the classroom teacher help the students to use their background knowledge to comprehend the text better?	–	3
16	Does the teacher activate students' background knowledge about the topic of the text by teaching them pre-reading activities?	–	3
17	Does the classroom teacher encourage the readers to relate the material to their background knowledge?	–	3
18	Does the teacher make the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge?	1	2

In Table 13, item 15 was asked whether the classroom teacher help the students' to use their prior knowledge in comprehending the text better. As the result reveals, the classroom teacher 'never' helps the students to use their background knowledge in comprehending the given text. Similarly, concerning item 16, the classroom teacher 'never' teach pre-reading activities and the students' 'never' activated to use their background knowledge in comprehending the text better. In the same manner, item 17 in Table 13, was asked as the classroom teacher encourages the readers to relate the material they are going to read with their prior experience. But, the classroom teacher 'never' advised the readers' to relate their background knowledge to the new text in order to comprehend.

In other words, for items 15-17, students were not made to activate their prior knowledge in understanding the text. Many writers tell us that the pre-reading activities are significant for the actual reading practices. Harmer (2001, as cited in Wijayanti, 2014) advised that teachers should give students hints so that they can predict what is coming too. However, the result from Table 13 indicates that the classroom teacher failed to do so except item 18 which asked whether the classroom teacher helps the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge. For this item, the teacher ‘sometimes’ give the students chance to guess the meaning of difficult words using their prior experience.

Below, the three continuous observation days with what the classroom teacher actually did will be presented.

#### **4.1.3.1 First Observation Day**

The classroom teacher observed in the selected school of grade 9E (control group) on the first day started by writing the topic on the black board. However, she read the passage herself before she let students to do so. After she had finished reading she gave a students’ turn to read loudly one paragraph. Following many of them got the turn, the teacher ordered the students to pick out some vocabulary words that may inhibit their comprehension and she explained them orally.

As already observed from what the teacher performed, no schema activation, vocabulary definition, brainstorming and pre-questioning were carried out at all before reading by the classroom teacher. The exercises were discussed orally and the class was over finally.

#### **4.1.3.2 Second Observation Day**

On the second observation day, the classroom teacher started by greeting the students. Then, she wrote the topic on the board as usual. However, she did a little bit different from the first day in such a way that she taught some vocabulary words that may cause

comprehension difficult. But still no schema activation, pre-questioning and brainstorming were carried out by the classroom teacher. Students never attempted to relate their former knowledge to the given text. They simply read the passage loudly and did what the classroom teacher told them.

#### **4.1.3.3 Third Observation Day**

On the third day observation, the teacher started the lesson as usual. She wrote the topic on the black board and then she read the passage herself aloud after instructing the students to follow her. Reading aloud followed and many of the students were given the opportunity of reading one by one. After about three to fourth of the class students had read paragraph by paragraph, the teacher drew their attention to six vocabularies taken from the passage and wrote them on the blackboard. Having discussed the meaning of words orally with students, the teacher told her students to work on the written exercises as home work and at last she announced that the class for English was over as soon as the bell rang.

## **4.2 Discussion**

In this section, the results obtained from the three data collection instrument tools (pre-test and post test, questionnaire and observation) will be discussed according to research questions.

**Research Question 1:** To what extent do pre-reading instructions improve English language text learners' reading comprehension?

### **4.2.1 Discussion on the Result of Tests (pre- and post-tests)**

Research question one was administered to investigate to what extent pre-reading instructions improve English language text learners reading comprehension. As the result indicates, at 0.05 alpha levels, there was no statically significant difference between the



mean score of control and comparison group for the pre-test at the initial stage of the study (see Table 1). For example, the mean scores of the two groups (control and comparison) are calculated as 15.52 and 15.50 with standard deviation of 5.31 and 5.22 respectively. The t-value and p-value of the pre-test for both (control and comparison) groups are calculated as .019 and .99 respectively.

From the results of the tests the study shows that the control group students did not improve their reading comprehension after they learned reading lessons to the accomplishment of the study by their teacher. But the finding revealed that the comparison group students who were taught reading by the researcher had significant gains in comprehension and vocabulary test after the treatment. The mean score was 16.29 for control and 21.15 for comparison group with 5.41 and 5.16 Standard Deviation respectively (see Table 3). Regarding the t-value and p-value, they are calculated as -4.71 and .000 correspondingly at -4.88 mean differences. This was because the comparison group was taught pre-reading activities before students do any reading activities. Moreover, the given treatment for comparison group focused on four pre-reading activities which were taught by the researcher. These are:

1. Vocabulary Definition
2. Pre-questioning
3. Brainstorming and
4. Providing Background Knowledge

1. Vocabulary Definition: concerning vocabulary definition, the classroom teacher selected salient words which are intended difficult for the students' to comprehend the given text before reading lessons. The teacher wrote key words on the blackboard by associating words from the students. This is because, if students did not understand the definitions of difficult words, they would be unable understand the message of the whole text. Literature tells us the use of vocabulary definition in comprehending text before any reading. For instance, Folse (2003, as cited in Abebe, 2012) stressing the importance of vocabulary, states that without syntax meaning is hampered; but without vocabulary

meaning is unthinkable or extremely difficult. Therefore, pre-teaching vocabulary helps address this vocabulary problem.

2. Pre-questioning: as far as pre-questioning is concerned, the classroom teacher (researcher) who taught comparison group used pre-questioning technique. Questions that activate students' background knowledge to predict about the text were asked from the selected text for each reading lessons during treatment sessions. It consisted of a set of written question. As a result, students those engaged in these activities were benefited. Scholars pointed out the use of pre-questioning in activating students prior experience. Accordingly, Bilokcuoglu (2011) expresses that pre-questions can stimulate student curiosity about the passage to be read, activate prior content knowledge, lead students to anticipate and elaborate what they read.

3. Brainstorming: the third pre-reading activities used for comparison group was brainstorming. It is another technique that teachers can introduce prior knowledge to reading the text. For this reason, the classroom teacher wrote the title of the passage the students were going to read and provide them opportunity to say whatever comes to their mind. As they expressed their idea, the teacher wrote all their responses on the board. After the students read the passage, they evaluated themselves by looking their answer from the board.

Literature tells us the contribution of brainstorming in reading lesson. For instance, Usen (1993) suggested that teachers give the students a topic and allow the students to call out whatever comes to their mind by calling upon their prior knowledge. He added that the teacher could record the student responses on an overhead projector, chart paper, or a black board in order to determine the accurate and inaccurate ideas brainstormed during the process. As a result, in this study English language texts learners' reading comprehension ability were improved through applying brainstorming in reading lesson during treatment session. Thus, it is advisable that teachers encourage learners to set the habit of bringing their unforced ideas and views before reading texts which make them excited to know the text they are going to read.

4. Providing Background Knowledge: concerning providing background knowledge the researcher helped the comparison group to relate their prior experience to the given text by writing the topic on the blackboard. Here, the students delivered their ideas on the given text by relating their prior knowledge to the new topic. As they expressed their idea, the classroom teacher appears their idea on the blackboard then students check whether they are accurate or inaccurate during reading the given text. As a result, the comparison group benefited from this pre-reading activity. Moreover, background knowledge is better for maximizing students' reading comprehension.

Therefore, English language texts teachers need to help students to build their background knowledge by providing pre-reading activities in consideration of the texts they are going to read. Different scholars provided their idea on the importance of creating a conducive situation for the students to relate their prior idea to the new text in order to comprehend the text better. Rokni and Hajilari (2013) states that teachers should try to facilitate the process of reading in which readers use their prior knowledge and their knowledge of new text in their mind.

Generally, pre-reading activities like defining a target words, pre-questioning, brainstorming through creating conducive situations for the students and building up students' background knowledge were taught by the researcher. The result indicates that the comparison group performed better than the control group in post-test. As mentioned above, in this study the comparison group was treated by the researcher.

The result of the study as already reported shows that teaching pre-reading activities before reading is helpful to comprehend a given text better. Moreover, pre-reading activities play an important role in helping the readers comprehend the text better so that readers are more effective users of a text and more participatory of making meaning (Wilson & Lianrui, 2007, as cited in Abebe, 2012). Thus, pre-reading activities, especially those used in this study (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and provide background knowledge assist students in increasing their ability of text

comprehension. However, these activities are under the teacher's control rather than the students'.

**Research Question 2:** Do English language teachers use pre-reading instructions to activate students' background knowledge in comprehending the text?

#### **4.2.2 Discussion on the Result of Questionnaire**

The second question which the study tried to answer was the extent to which the classroom teacher teaches pre-reading instructions to improve learners' reading comprehension. This research question was answered using the data collected through questionnaire and observation.

To begin with, the findings regarding the students response on the importance of pre-reading activities in comprehending text (see Table 6) indicate that most of the respondents 88(84.60%), 'agree' that teaching pre-reading instruction helps the reader to comprehend text and create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text for item 1. This idea is apparently consistent with the views of a scholar like Abebe (2012) who notes that pre-reading assistance is particularly useful in reading classroom because it helps to establish a proper mental set for the reading and discussion of the passage. Though pre-reading instruction was helpful, English language teachers did not considered the issues. It can be conclude from these results that teaching pre-reading instruction needs quite a lot of attention as it contributes a lot in activating English language text readers background knowledge in comprehending the text.

Besides, most of the students confirmed that pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata in comprehending text. As the result in Table 7 indicates, 76(73.07%) of the respondents 'agree' that pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata for item 4. However, their teacher did not give due attention to activate their prior knowledge by teaching them pre-reading activities to comprehend the text better. This may make readers unable to comprehend the

reading passage in reading lesson. Therefore, this finding is consistent with the findings of Bilokcuoglu (2011) which indicates that English language text teacher must arouse and/or provide the students' background knowledge by teaching them how to make a link between existing knowledge and new knowledge, which is required for text comprehension.

Generally, as the result of Table 7 indicates, teaching pre-reading activities assist English language text readers to bring their prior knowledge in reading comprehension and applying what they had learned in practice. Concerning the use of bringing background knowledge to the new text the students learning, Petros (2011) pointed out in his study that schemata can be applied pre-reading because students bring their knowledge of world to the learning environment where new concepts will be disclosed.

On the other hand, as indicated in Table 8, the students' response on the use of vocabulary definition in comprehending text was negative. The result shows that the teacher did not activate students' prior knowledge by teaching them the words or phrases that hinder their reading comprehension before reading lesson. As item 8 of Table 8 indicates, 89(85.57%) students were admitted that the classroom teacher did not make them guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge before reading the given passage. Consequently, lack of vocabulary knowledge may make the readers' unable to comprehend the given text. To make the readers comprehend the text better then, the classroom teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge to guess the meaning of new words in the given passage before reading lesson.

Similarly, the result of Table 9 on the use of brainstorming in comprehending text for item 15 and 16 were negative. As a result indicates, 69(66.34%) and 62(59.60%) of the respondents respectively 'disagree' that the classroom teacher did not give them information about the subject of the title to improve their reading comprehension. In contrast, unless the teacher brainstorms the readers to predict what the passage is about, students' fail to comprehend the given text. This is because the main benefit of

brainstorming is the activation of readers' prior knowledge. As it is expressed by Feather (2004) brainstorming provides plenty of materials for making prediction. In addition, it is likely that through brainstorming, the reader becomes conscious concerning what he knows about a given text's topic before he/she goes on reading it. For this reason, teachers need to teach pre-reading activities to activate English language text readers prior knowledge in order to comprehend the text better.

#### **4.2.3 Discussion on the Result of Three Days Observation**

As far as the three continuous observations were concerned, the result of the study reveals that the classroom teacher did not teach pre-reading activities. She did not give opportunity for the students to read the text silently and independently. She rather taught them by reading loudly and giving chance for the students to read the text aloud. As already observed, the students never learned pre-reading activities which facilitate reading comprehension though pre-reading activities are very useful for both teacher and students in comprehending reading materials. Bilokcuoglu (2011) in his study states that the learners' schema should be activated to prevent any failure in comprehending a piece of written text. He added that through the use of pre-reading activities, students get familiar with the topic, vocabulary, or complex structures in the passage.

As already mentioned, in chapter three the researcher targeted on four pre-reading activities. These are vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge. The classroom observations also revealed that the classroom teacher never used these pre-reading activities before reading the given text. One of pre-reading activities which helps English language text readers is vocabulary definition. This activity was not always used by the classroom teacher during the classroom observation. But, Sedita (2005) suggested that students' word knowledge is linked strongly to academic success because students who have large vocabularies can understand new ideas and concepts more quickly than students with limited vocabularies. So, we can conclude from this scholar's idea that the practice of vocabulary definition by the teacher

reduces the number of unfamiliar words students encountered and has negatively affected their comprehension.

Though pre-questioning can build the students interest and motivation before students read the whole text., as it can be seen in Table 11, the teacher never used pre-questioning except item 1 which asked whether classroom teacher help the students to do pre-reading tasks before reading while continuous classroom observations. She rarely helped the students do pre-reading questions.

Concerning brainstorming, the classroom teacher who teaches the control group never used brainstorming activity in reading lessons. She rather simply started reading by announcing the lessons of the day and writing the title of the passage on the blackboard. However, one of the main benefits of brainstorming is the activation of readers' prior knowledge. It is useful for both teacher and students. According to Ajideh (2006) brainstorming has many advantages as a classroom procedure. First, it requires little teacher preparation; second, it allows learners considerable freedom to bring their own prior knowledge and opinions to bear on a particular issue; and third, it can involve the whole class. Accordingly, students who trained in brainstorming techniques were more successful at generating and organizing ideas.

Table 13 asked teacher's provision of background knowledge in reading classroom. As Mesfin (2008) states that the main purpose of pre-reading is to activate the readers' prior knowledge so that readers can comprehend the text better. In contrary, the observed teacher did not implement this activity in classroom while teaching reading lesson.

On the other hand, as Rokni and Hajilari (2013) states that teachers should try to facilitate the process of reading in which readers use their prior knowledge and their knowledge of new text in their mind. The teacher observed but unable to understand this fact and never used pre-reading activities. Generally, the importance of pre-reading seems to have been neglected according to what has been observed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1.1 Summary**

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending texts at Gembe secondary school focusing on grade nine. The study intended to examine to what extent pre-reading instructions improve English language text learners reading comprehension and to what extent English language teachers use pre-reading instructions to activate students' background knowledge in comprehending the text.

In order to get a representative sample, the researcher used random sampling method that is lottery method for selecting the participants as a sample. Thus, 104 students (both control and comparison group) participated in the study filling out the questionnaire and taking tests (pre and post tests). One teacher who taught control group was participated in this study.

In this study an experiment was designed and conducted to investigate the significant difference between teaching reading lessons with or without pre-reading instruction. There were three instrument tools employed in the study. These are:

1. The pre and post-test reading comprehension and vocabulary tests
2. Questionnaire and
3. Classroom observation

The pre-test and post-tests were aimed at measuring reading comprehension and vocabulary skills of the two groups (control and comparison groups). The researcher used questionnaire and classroom observation to triangulate the tests. Accordingly, the responses obtained from the sample students through the tests (pre- and post-tests) was analyzed using SPSS.



The comparison group of students was taught reading lessons through the selected pre-reading activities (vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge) while the control group was not. Before the treatment was conducted, both groups of students took a pre-test. The main objectives of the pre-test in the study as mentioned above, was to find out if there was any significant difference in comprehending English text between the students of comparison and control groups. The result shows that there was no significant difference in comprehending texts between comparison and control group before the treatment. As the result of post-test indicates, it is hypothesized that there is significant difference in teaching reading lessons with/without pre-reading activities. The students of comparison group benefited from the treatment.

The purpose of the questionnaire analysis is to see whether the classroom teachers teach pre-reading activities to activate students background knowledge and students bring their prior experience to the new text in order to comprehend it better. As mentioned in Chapter 4 under the discussion of results of the questionnaire, most of the respondents confirmed that the classroom teacher did not activate their prior knowledge by teaching them pre-reading activities. This ways of teaching hinders their reading comprehension.

The classroom teacher who teach control group was observed to see how she teaches reading lesson and how she spent her time during the lesson in reading skills. In observation sessions, all the activities took place in the reading class were filled in the checklist and analyzed accordingly. Therefore, similar to the results of tests and questionnaire, the classroom teacher did not activate students' background knowledge by teaching them pre-reading activities. The teacher did not engage students to read silently and independently during teaching reading lesson.

Without doubt, pre-reading activities can activate English language text learners' prior experience to comprehend the text better. Moreover, teaching pre-reading activities has made a significant support to teaching of reading lesson after the treatment was given for the comparison group in this study. This suggests that the students those read the given

text after learning pre-reading activities had advantage than those not. However, in spite of its effectiveness and popularity, secondary school English language teachers have not employed pre-reading instruction. As a result, English language texts readers unable to comprehend the text they read. Hence, English language teachers need to teach pre-reading activities before any reading activities in teaching reading lessons.

### **5.1.2 Conclusion**

Based on the data analysis above, the researcher concluded that the alternative hypothesis was accepted because the mean value of the comparison group (21.15) is greater than the mean value of control group (16.27) and mean difference was calculated 4.89 for post-test. The result shows that teaching reading comprehension using pre-reading activities are influencing students those learned reading without pre-reading activities.

In teaching reading comprehension using vocabulary definition, pre-questioning technique, brainstorming and providing background knowledge, the researcher get some conclusions that the students who are taught these pre-reading activities comprehend the text better

Therefore, this chapter has discussed two main aspects of the findings indicated by the study with specific reference to the two research questions. The study revealed that teaching pre-reading activities is an effective in comprehending English language text. Teaching pre-reading activities gives students a chance to read independently, in their own time, at their own pace, and without the help of the teachers using their background knowledge.

From the results of the study, the treatment was effective for the comparison group. Moreover, as the result from the three data collection tools shows, majority of the comparison group students expressed that they felt more confident to read independently after they got treatment. This feeling enhanced their comprehension more. As a result, the researcher believed that teaching pre-reading activities has a significant than teaching

reading without pre-reading activities as it activates readers' prior knowledge. To adopt teaching pre-reading activities in teaching English text, it is suggested that teaching reading skills should be adjusted in order to activate students background knowledge, make the students bring their prior knowledge to the new text, encourage learners to read silently and independently, most importantly and read happily.

Moreover, the classroom teachers should get a short-term training about teaching pre-reading activities before teaching reading lesson. As described in review literature, pre-reading activities refer to tasks to be carried out before reading a text to create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text. That is why, different researchers can be considered as vital activities that should be done as the learners schema should be activated to prevent any failure in comprehending texts.

It is hoped that the current research has produce some light on the effects of teaching pre-reading activities and encouraged teachers as well as researchers to further pursue their contribution to the teaching and learning of English language text within real-life classroom environments.

### **5.1.3 Recommendation**

On the basis the findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations can be forwarded. Moreover, the suggestions presented here are generally based on tests, questionnaire, classroom observations and reviews of literature.

- Considering the positive remarks made by the participants in the treatment group, teaching reading lesson using pre-reading activities helps the learners comprehend the given text better. It is evident that the learners' reading skills improved after a short period of treatment. Therefore, to help teachers to teach pre-reading activities rather than skipping on essential activities before reading lesson, a short-term training has to be given. The English language department

and the school director have to organize training in collaboration so as to create teachers' awareness of activating students' prior knowledge by teaching pre-reading activities to facilitate reading comprehension.

- From the results of the investigation, it was realized that Grade 9 English language texts teacher did not teach pre-reading activities to prevent any failure in comprehending a piece of written text due to teachers run to cover the content of the book. Based on this fact, students are unable to comprehend the given text because they are not activated by their classroom teacher. Hence, the classroom teachers have to consider the effects of activating students' prior knowledge in comprehending English language texts.
- In addition, the classroom teachers should provide the students background knowledge by teaching them how to make a link between existing knowledge and new knowledge which is required for text comprehension. Teachers, especially, should responsible to use teaching pre-reading activities such as vocabulary definition, pre-questioning, brainstorming and providing background knowledge which activates readers to comprehend the texts they read.
- In general, it is needed to conduct further research on the effect of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English language texts in other grade levels and other pre-reading activities that the present study did not addressed to see whether pre-reading activities are effective in teaching reading lesson.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Pre-test for Control and Comparison groups**



Time allowed: 45 minutes  
Total mark: 30%

**Read the following passage carefully and then answer questions in each section based on the information in the passage.**

**1** HIV is viruses in the body are difficult to kill. When it enters the body it destroys the immune system, which protects our bodies against disease. The virus works slowly and it may be many years before a person carrying it becomes ill. When person becomes very ill with many diseases, and vaginal fluid. It is then they have AIDS and will probably die.

**2** The virus is transmitted or passed from person to person through body fluids like blood, semen not transmitted through vomit, urine, faeces or pus.

**3** HIV is usually transmitted when two people have sex. That is why it is very important not to have sex with anyone unless both you and that person has had an HIV test. You must be in a strong long-term relationship and you must be certain the other person (and you) is not having sex with anyone else. However, sex is not the only in which HIV is transmitted from person to person. Using a syringe or a razor that has been recently used by someone with HIV, or being in a road accident with someone with HIV, can put you at risk. Also, some babies born to mothers with HIV may be born with the virus. It is one of the many myths about HIV to think that having sex with a virgin is safe. HIV is not spread by other normal everyday contact with a person such as touching or kissing or sharing cups and plates.

**4** When a person is HIV positive they should not give up hope. To some extent how long they can stay healthy is up to them. By eating well, taking exercise and getting plenty rest, by getting quick treatment for any illnesses and thinking positively, they may not get AIDS for many years. Making plans and living life to the full are an important part of this. Anti-retroviral drugs can delay AIDS even further. All this means that someone with HIV may have many healthy years.

**5** A person with HIV will sometimes feel depressed. You can help them by being a good friend, by listening and offering support and cheering them up when they need it. You can also help them stick to their healthy lifestyle by eating healthy food with them and doing sports with them. A person with HIV who feels well may want to have sex if they meet someone they like. There are two things to remember: firstly, they may re-infect themselves with the virus and this may mean they get AIDS quickly. Also, they must tell their boy or girlfriend about their HIV. Using condoms can help to prevent the spread of the virus but it is not 100 per cent safe. It is better to abstain from sex if you are HIV positive.

*(Source: Grade 9 English students textbook, Unit 5 HIV and AIDS, p. 238)*

**Section I. Match the words in Column ‘B’ with those in Column ‘A’ and write your answers in the space provided (each has 1.5 marks).**

Column ‘A’

Column ‘B’

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. razor                 | A. protect our bodies against disease                 |
| _____ 2. give up               | B. delay AIDS even further/ for many years            |
| _____ 3. Anti-retroviral drugs | C. a sharpen instrument that used to cut things/blade |
| _____ 4. Immune system         | D. stop feeling about future life                     |
|                                | E. feels depressed                                    |

**Section II. Write ‘True’ if the statement agrees with the writer ‘False’ if the statement contradicts with the writer (Each has 1.5 marks).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. HIV is cause by bacteria.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. HIV is curable disease.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Sex is the only way in which HIV is transmitted from person to person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. HIV positive person can life for many years if he/she eat well, take regular exercise, think positively & take a rest.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Condom can prevent the spread of the virus 100 per cent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. AIDS is a virus which causes HIV.

**Section III. Select the correct answer based on the passage and write the letter of your choice in the space provided (each has 1.5 marks).**

- \_\_\_\_ 11. HIV is \_\_\_\_\_  
A. a virus    B. bacteria    C. an infection    D. both virus and bacteria
- \_\_\_\_ 12. Making plans and living life to the full are important parts of **this**. **This** (paragraph 4, line 4) refers to \_\_\_\_\_  
A. what HIV positive person have to do    C. AIDS  
B. what HIV positive person have not do    D. by sharing sharpen things
- \_\_\_\_ 13. What can we do to prevent HIV infection?  
A. do not have sex with people who are HIV positive  
B. use a plate with people who is HIV positive  
C. do not play with a person who is HIV positive  
D. do not eat with a person who is infected with HIV
- \_\_\_\_ 14. How can you help a person you know HIV positive?  
A. I give him a condom  
B. I encourage him to lead a healthy lifestyle by eating good food.  
C. I encourage him to be isolated  
D. I do not approach to him
- \_\_\_\_ 15. It is not transmitted through vomit, urine, **faeces** or pus. (paragraph 2, line 2).  
The word **faeces** refers to \_\_\_\_  
A. solid waste matter passed out from the body    C. a virus  
B. parts of human body    D. liquid waste matter passed out from the body
- \_\_\_\_ 16. Using syringe or razor that has been recently used by someone with HIV... can put you at **risk**. (paragraph 3, line 5). What does the word **risk** mean?

- A. at pleasure
- B. cause to be infected
- C. cure from HIV
- D. shows honesty

\_\_\_ 17. HIV is NOT transmitted through the following ways EXCEPT?

- A. vomit
- B. urine
- C. faeces
- D. when two people have sex

\_\_\_ 18. “To some extent how long **they** can stay healthy is up to them.” (paragraph 4, line 1). In this sentence **they** refer to?

- A. a people with HIV
- B. a person who is HIV negative
- C. the writer of this text
- D. HIV virus

\_\_\_ 19. According to this text what is the very important way to prevent HIV?

- A. using condom
- B. not to have sex with anyone unless both of you are tested
- C. sharing blood
- D. having relation with many opposite sex

**Section IV. Give short answer for the following questions as they appear in the passage and write your answers in the space provided (each has 1 mark).**

20. Write the two things to be remembered about HIV.

1<sup>st</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup>. \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix B: Post-test for Control and Comparison groups**

Time allowed: 45 minutes

**Read the following passage carefully and then answer questions in each section based on the information in the passage.**

### **When I won the lottery**

**1** Does money make you happy? Many people dream of sudden **windfall**, but does it bring satisfaction? Some say that money does not bring you happiness, and this is especially true for those who have won the lottery.

**2** At first, when I heard of my win on the Ethiopian National lottery, I was **speechless**- I could not believe my good fortune. Then as the news **sank** in, I couldn't wait to tell my family and all my friends. Soon the newspapers heard of my win, and our house was **besieged** by reporters and photographers, all wanting photographs and interviews, and wanting to know what I would do with the money. I tried to explain that I really wanted time to think of the way to spend my winnings, but time was against me. Very soon, people were coming round to beg for some money for this project or the other. On the internet, I received **pleading** letters from all over the world and all sorts of strangers, suggesting all sorts of ways that they could make use of my money.

**3** The phone never stopped ringing, and there was no peace in the house. Arguments broke out among the members of the family as to how I should spend my winnings-"Buy a big new house and a shiny new car (or two)", they said. "Spend it on foreign holidays." "Give me some money to start a business" or "Give it all to **charity**" was more of their advice. I said I wanted to go to study in America, and hoped to become a doctor, but people thought this was a **waste of time**- what did I need to work for now, with such a lot of money in the bank?

**4** In the end, I decided to give some money to my family, some to charity, and the rest I invested in the bank. But until things **calmed down**, I almost had to go into hiding to **escape** the demands of so many strangers who wanted to spend the money for me. It was not the happiest time of my life! I realized that even if you do win the lottery, good

health, friends and family, and living in a law **abiding** society are essential to your happiness.

*(Source: students textbook grade 9, p. 148)*

**Section I. Based on the given passage, match the definition of words in column ‘B’ with those in column ‘A’ and write your answers in the space provided (each has 1.5 marks)**

<u>Column ‘A’</u>	<u>Column ‘B’</u>
_____ 1. windfall	A. to surround
_____ 2. fortune	B. kindness in giving money and different things to poor people
_____ 3. besieged	C. any unexpected gain or success
_____ 4. Charity	D. to go down the surface of water
	E. whatever happens by chance or (good or bad)

**Section II. Write ‘True’ if the statement agrees with the writer ‘False’ if the statement contradicts with the writer (each has 1.5 marks).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The writer told his family as he heard he won the lottery.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. The writer has no good fortune.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. There was a peace in the writer’s house because the phone rings continuously.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The writer studied a doctor in America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The writer realized that only winning lottery make people happy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Money does not bring happiness for those who have won the lottery.

**Section III. Select the correct answer based on the passage and write the letter of**

**your choice in the space provided (each has 1.5 marks).**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. What was the writer's reaction on hearing he had won the lottery?
- A. he felt happy because of his good fortune
  - B. he felt sad because he has no good fortune
  - C. he was unhappy to tell to his family
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. What did the reporters want to know?
- A. they want to have the writer's money
  - B. they want to know what the writer's do with that money
  - C. they want to give him additional money
  - D. they didn't want nothing
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. In the end, I decided to give some money to my family, some to charity...
- (par.3, line 1) 'I' refers to
- A. reporter
  - B. the lottery winner person
  - C. photographer
  - D. the writers family
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. ... but people thought this was a waste of time ...(par. 3, line 5). What is the meaning of the underlined phrase?
- A. precious time
  - B. using time properly
  - C. killing time
  - D. unnecessary time/extra time
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. What did the writer finally decide to do with the money?
- A. he decided to give some money to his family
  - B. he decided to give some money to charity
  - C. he decided to keep/ invest some money in the bank
  - D. all are correct answer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. What did his family advice him to do with the money?

- A. to buy a new house and shiny car                      C. to it all to charity  
B. to spend it on foreign holidays                      D. all of the above are correct answer

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. But until things calmed down, I almost had to go into... (par. 4, line 2). What is the meaning of the underlined phrase?

- A. a quiet and peaceful time or situation                      C. noisy  
B. large in size                      D. funny

**Section IV. Give short answer for the following questions as they appear in the passage and write your answers in the space provided (each has 1.5 mark).**

18. According to this passage, what things are really necessary to make a person happy?

List at least 3 of them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## **C1: Treatment One for Comparison Group**

### **Meanings of key words/phrases in the passage (vocabulary definition)**

1. private = belonging to or for the use of a particular person or group not for public use
2. sovereign = free to govern itself or completely independent
3. licensed = having official permission to do something
4. stations = a radio or television company and the programmes it broadcasts
5. poverty = the state of being poor
6. literacy = the ability to write and read
7. ups and downs = the mixture of good and bad things in life or in a particular situation

### **Brainstorming**

1. Have you ever listened radio and watched a television?
2. How often do listen to radio and watch a television?
3. Can you list the name of radio broadcast stations and television broadcast station in Ethiopia?
4. In your opinion, what are advantages and disadvantages of radio and television?

## **C1.1: The Media in Ethiopia**

The media in Ethiopia consists of radio and television, which are controlled by the Ethiopian government, together with **private** newspapers and magazine. In comparison to Ethiopia's over 2,000-year history as a **sovereign** nation, the media is a very recent development.

Ten radio broadcast stations, eight AM and two shortwave, are **licensed** to operate in Ethiopia. The major radio broadcasting **stations** include Radio Ethiopia, Radio Fana (or Torch) a private station, Radio Voice of One Free Ethiopia, and the Voice of the Revolution of Tigray. The only television broadcast network is Ethiopian Television, with 24 hours of broadcast and three regional stations, namely Addis TV, TV Oromiya (with two live studios), and Dire TV. Following government policy, radio broadcasts occur in a variety of languages.

Print media, because of high **poverty** levels, low **literacy** rates, and poor distribution outside of the capital, serve only a small number of the population. The lack of distribution is shown by the official press. Since the end of the civil war, private newspapers and magazines have started to appear, and this part of the media market continues to grow, in spite of the **ups and downs** of Ethiopia's economy. The much richer and more worldly Ethiopians who live abroad have helped the development of a free press in Ethiopia, and have provided their communities with news services (both online and off) in both Amharic and English.

*(Extract from grade 9 students textbook, p.102)*

## **C2: Treatment Two for Comparison Group**

### **Meanings of key words/phrases in the passage (vocabulary definition)**

1. windfall = any unexpected gain or success
2. speechless = unable to speak, often because of surprise, shock and etc.
3. fortune = whatever happens by chance or (good or bad)
4. sank = to go down the surface of water
5. besieged = to surround
6. pleading = to make an urgent request/ an act of asking for something that you want  
very much, in an emotional way
7. charity = kindness in giving money and different things to poor people
8. waste of time = not using the time properly
9. calmed down = a quiet and peaceful time or situation
10. escape = to gain freedom/to get away from an unpleasant dangerous situation
11. abiding = a feeling or belief in the society lasting for a long time and not changing

**Before you read the passage, exchange your ideas on the following questions.**

### **Experience sharing**

1. What things are really make you happy in your life?
2. What do you do with the money if you win a million birr?
3. Do you know what lottery is?
4. Have you or your friend ever won lottery?

## C2.1: When I won the lottery

Does money make you happy? Many people dream of sudden **windfall**, but does it bring satisfaction? Some say that money does not bring you happiness, and this is especially true for those who have won the lottery.

At first, when I heard of my win on the Ethiopian National lottery, I was **speechless**- I could not believe my good fortune. Then as the news **sank** in, I couldn't wait to tell my family and all my friends. Soon the newspapers heard of my win, and our house was **besieged** by reporters and photographers, all wanting photographs and interviews, and wanting to know what I would do with the money. I tried to explain that I really wanted time to think of the way to spend my winnings, but time was against me. Very soon, people were coming round to beg for some money for this project or the other. On the internet, I received **pleading** letters from all over the world and all sorts of strangers, suggesting all sorts of ways that they could make use of my money.

The phone never stopped ringing, and there was no peace in the house. Arguments broke out among the members of the family as to how I should spend my winnings-“Buy a big new house and a shiny new car (or two)”, they said. “Spend it on foreign holidays.” “Give me some money to start a business” or “Give it all to **charity**” was more of their advice. I said I wanted to go to study in America, and hoped to become a doctor, but people thought this was a **waste of time**- what did I need to work for now, with such a lot of money in the bank?

In the end, I decided to give some money to my family, some to charity, and the rest I invested in the bank. But until things **calmed down**, I almost had to go into hiding to **escape** the demands of so many strangers who wanted to spend the money for me. It was not the happiest time of my life! I realized that even if you do win the lottery, good health, friends and family, and living in a law **abiding** society are essential to your happiness.

*(Source: students textbook grade 9, p. 148)*

### **C3: Treatment Three for Comparison Group**

#### **Meanings of key words/phrases in the passage (vocabulary definition)**

1. beak = the hard pointed or curved outer part of a birds mouth
2. dodo = a large bird that could not fly and that is now extinct
3. sailors = a person who works on a ship as a member of the crew/ a person who sails a  
boat
4. destroyed = to damage something bodily that it no longer exists
5. extinct= no longer in existence
6. skeletons = the structure of bones that supports the body of a person or an animal
7. tusks = either of the long curved teeth that stick out of the mouth of elephants and  
some other animals
8. dozens = a group of twelve of the same thing
9. horns = a hard pointed part that grows, usually in pairs, on the heads of some animals,  
such as sheep and cows
10. hunt = an act of searching animals to kill for different purpose
11. survive = to continue to live or exist
12. huge = extremely large in size or amount

**Before you read the passage, exchange your ideas on the following questions.**

Experience sharing

1. What kinds of birds found around your environment?
2. Have you ever heard about birds that can not fly? If your answer is 'Yes' can you name them.
3. Can you name kinds of birds and animals which were extinct?
4. Have you ever seen huge animals in the forest or in the television? Can you name them?
5. Why people hunt an elephant for?

### **C3.1: The world in danger**

A bird called the dodo lived on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean 300 years ago. It had a round body, short legs, a large head and a very large **beak** with a hook at the end. At that time there were lots of **dodos** on the island. Ships went to Mauritius and when the **sailors** went ashore, they hunted the dodos for fresh meat to eat. The dodos could not fly, so they were easy prey for the hunters. Latter on, settlers arrived on the island with their domestic animals. Their pigs **destroyed** many of the eggs and ate the young dodos. After many years there were no dodos left on the island, and the bird became **extinct**. All that remains of the dodo today are some **skeletons** in museums, plus one head and two feet.

Today, elephants are in the same position than dodos were 300 years ago. People are killing so many elephants that soon there will be none left. Men kill elephants because they want the ivory from their **tusks** to make ornaments and jewellery. People who buy ivory pay the hunters to kill the elephants. When a mother elephant is killed, her newly born babies die too, because there is no one to look head and feet.

Rhinos are also in danger of extinction because some people in Asia believe their horns have magical powers. In the past there were **dozens** of different kinds of rhinos in the world. Today, although only five kinds **survive**, they are still hunted and killed for their **horns**. If we do not stop people killing elephants and rhinos, they may both die out, just like the dodo.

Some animals become extinct because men **hunt** them. Others die out because people destroy their food. A lot of animals live in forests, but all over the world people are cutting down and burning the forests. Every minute of the day 40 hectares of trees are destroyed in the world.

We must stop killing **huge** numbers of animals. The pictures show some of the animals which may die out if we do not stop killing so many of them. We must look after our forests. If we do not, more animals in the world will die out, including humans. Just like the dodo.

(Source: students textbook Grade 9, p.198)

#### **C4: Treatment Four for Comparison Group**

##### **Meanings of key words/phrases in the passage (vocabulary definition)**

1. astronomer = a person who study of stars and their movements
2. cautions = careful
3. lowly = simple
4. considerable = well based/great
5. lichen = any of a large group of tiny plants which grow over stones, trees
6. moderate = medium or average(not very hot and cold)

**Before you read the passage, exchange your ideas on the following questions.**

##### **Brainstorming**

1. What is Mars?
2. How many Planets do you know? Can you list them?
3. For the future, on which planet people intended live on?



#### C4.1: Is there Life on Mars?

It is now generally agreed that life of a kind exists on Mars. Through a telescope one can see the dark areas which have interested astronomers for hundreds of years. They look rather like vegetation and they behave as vegetation would be expected to do. There is no valid reason why there should not be vegetation. But we must be rather cautious. It is often said that we may find vegetation on Mars which is similar to our lichens and mosses. That may be though there is no evidence for it. All we can say is that Mars contains lowly vegetation we can almost certainly be right, but there is probably no animal life there.

There is a considerable atmosphere on Mars. It is thinner than the earth's atmosphere. It is even thinner than the air on top of Mount Everest. We certainly could not breathe it, nor could any earth type animal, on the other hand, there is enough pressure to support plant life. The Martian atmosphere is made up mainly of nitrogen, so far as we can tell. Though there is a certain amount of carbon dioxide gas, there is very little oxygen and not much water vapor when we finally succeed in getting to Mars. Therefore, we are going to find that the atmosphere there will be of little help to us.

The day temperatures on Mars are moderate. On a rarely hot summer's day on the Martian equator the temperature can go up to about 5<sup>0</sup> Fahrenheit (about 25<sup>0</sup> centigrade). The nights, however, are extremely cold because the atmosphere is too thin to keep in the sun's heat even on the Martian equator. We would find that a summer night is good deal colder than a winter night in Greenland or Antarctica.

*Taken from: College English (vol. 1, 2009)*

Appendix D: Results of Pre-test and Post-test of Control and Comparison Groups

Subject code	Control Group		Experiment Group	
	Pre-test	30%	Post-test	30%
1	13	18	11	24
2	16	17	8	9
3	16	15	10	19
4	14	21	7	24
5	19	20	19	24
6	14	16	11	26
7	25	27	16	23
8	17	15	22	26
9	11	14	11	10
10	18	20	10	22
11	18	16	21	26
12	16	19	17	22
13	12	12	13	26
14	13	16	15	22
15	24	16	9	10
16	18	18	7	12
17	5	8	20	22
18	14	11	18	22
19	14	16	19	19
20	13	9	14	12
21	27	28	20	26
22	13	10	6	15
23	15	16	15	22
24	14	15	13	19
25	10	10	13	21
26	16	14	14	18
27	23	27	17	25
28	10	9	10	21
29	16	18	16	22

30	15	9	14	18
31	21	26	17	20
32	5	9	10	12
33	18	20	15	24
34	18	16	20	26
35	8	10	6	17
36	10	12	16	19
37	14	15	17	25
38	5	8	24	26
39	10	9	22	26
40	22	23	21	25
41	20	15	14	18
42	13	20	13	16
43	13	19	10	12
44	9	10	22	26
45	19	17	14	21
46	24	25	18	22
47	13	12	13	21
48	25	17	27	28
49	23	21	23	27
50	20	24	24	27
51	9	14	22	27
52	19	24	22	28

Appendix E: Students Questionnaire

Jimma University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Language and Literature

MA in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language)

A Questionnaire to be filled by secondary school students

Name of the School \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Student,

The aim of this questionnaire is to gather data for a study that has been designed to investigate the effects of pre-reading instruction in comprehending English Language Text. Thus, your genuine responses completing this questionnaire for each question have value for the success of this study. The information you provide will be used for this research only.

You do not need to write your name in this questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Instruction:

This questionnaire has 17 items. Respond to these items by putting a tick (√) against your choice in only one of the five spaces in the response column.

**Key:** 5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly Disagree

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	Pre-reading instruction helps the reader to comprehend the given text better.					
2	Pre-reading activities create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text.					
3	Students who are involved in pre-reading instruction better comprehend the given text than those who are not involved in pre-reading instruction.					
4	Pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata.					
5	The classroom teacher helps the students to use their background knowledge to comprehend the text better.					
6	To comprehend the text better, readers have to bring their background knowledge in pre-reading phase.					
7	Teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge about the topic of the text by teaching them pre-reading activities.					
8	The teacher makes the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge.					
9	Before reading, the teacher teaches some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties.					
10	I try to understand the written material in the class making connections between the given reading text and my prior knowledge.					
11	Before reading, the teacher teaches pre-reading activities relating students' prior knowledge to improve their reading comprehension.					
12	The teacher engages the students in reading the passage					

	silently and independently.					
13	Before reading, the classroom teacher helps students do pre-reading tasks/questions.					
14	The classroom teacher encourages the students to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles, and headings.					
15	Before reading, the classroom teacher gives information about the subject of the passage using the title of the given text.					
16	Students predict what the passage is about from the given text.					
17	Before reading, as students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the classroom teacher writes ideas on the board all important information.					

Appendix F: Afan Oromo Version Students' Questionnaire

Yuunivarsiitii Jimmaa

Koollejii Saayinsii Hawaasaa fi Humaanitii

Mummee Afaan Ingilizzii fi Og-barruu

Sagantaa: Digirii Lammaffa Afaan Ingilizii Akka Afaan Biyya Alaatti Barsiisuu

Maqaa Mana Barumsaa \_\_\_\_\_

Kabajamaa barataa/ttuu,

Kaayyoon bar-gaaffii kanaa Gahee Dubbisa dura Barsiisuun Barreffema/dubbisa Afaan Ingilizii Duubbisanii Hubachuuf qabu (The Effect of Pre-reading Instruction in Comprehending English Language Texts) kan jedhu irratti qorannoo gaggeessuufi. Waan kana ta'eef, gaaffiilee kennaman hunda guutuun deebiin ati kennitu qorannoo kanaaf baay'ee barbachisa. Bar-gaaffii kanaan odeeffannoon ati laattu icciitiin kan qabamuufii qorannoo kana qofaaf kan ooludha.

Waraqaa gaafaannoo kana irratti maqaa kee barreessuun hin barbaachisu!

Gumaacha keef galatoomi!

Qajeelfama:

Gaafannoon kun gaaffilee 17 of keessaa qaba. Gaaffilee kana mallattoo (√) iddoo shan siif kennaman keessa tokko filachuun deebisi.

**Hiiktuu:** 5 = Cimseen itti walii gala      4 = Ittan walii gala

3 = Murteessuu hin danda’u      2 = Itti walii hin galu      1= Cimseen ittiin morma

T/L	Gochawwan	5	4	3	2	1
1	Dubbisa dura, waa’ee dubbisichaa barsiisuun dubbistootni dubbisa kennameef sana akka sirriitti hubataniif gargaara.					
2	Shaakala dubbisa duraa barsiisuun akka dubbisni sun fiixa bahiinsa godhatuuf haala mijeessa.					
3	Barattoonni dubbisa dura baratan, barattoota dubbisa dura hin baratiin irra caalaa dubbisanii hubachuu danda’u.					
4	Dubbisa dura barsiisuun qabiyyee barreeffamichaa fi beekumsa duraan dubbistoonni/barattoonni qaban waliin walatti hidha/fida.					
5	Barsiisaan daree, barattoonni dubbisa kenname sirriitti akka hubataniif, beekumsa/odeeffannoo duraan qaban akka gargaaraman ni godha.					
6	Barreeffama tokko sirriitti hubachuuf, dubbisa dura barattoonni beekumsa/odeeffannoo duraan qaban gara dubbisa haaraa kennameetti fiduu qabu.					
7	Barsiisaan shaakala dubbisa dura barsiisuun beekumsa barattoonni duraan qaban dadammaqsuu qabu.					
8	Barsiisaan barattoonni hiika jechootaa dubbisicha keessaa sirriitti hin beekamne akka isaan beekumsa duraan qabanitti fayyadamuun tilmaaman ni godha.					
9	Dubbisa dura, barsiisaan daree hiika sirrii jechootaa dubbisicha akka hin hubatamne gochuu danda’an ni barsiisa.					
10	Daree keessatti, dubbisa tokko hubachuuf hubannaan/beekumsan duraan qabu dubbisa kenname waliin wal simsiisuuni.					
11	Dubbisa dura, barsiisaan gochawwan dubbisa duraa beekumsa duraanii barattoonni qaban waliin wal-simsiisaa barsiisuun, dubbisanii hubachuun barattootaa ni					



	fooyyessa.					
12	Barsiisaan dubbisa dura, barattoonni callisaa fi dhuunfaan akka dubbisan ni godha.					
13	Barsiisaan daree, shaakala dubbisa duraa akka barattoonni hojjetaniif ni gargaara.					
14	Barsiisan daree, dubbisa dura akka barattoonni waa'ee dubbisichaa raagu/tilmaamuu danda'aniif, fakiilee fi mata-dureewwan dubbisicha hubachuuf gargaaran kennuun ni dadammaksa.					
15	Dubbisa dura barsiisaan daree, waa'ee dubbisichaa mata-duree isaa gargaaramuun odeeffannoo barattootaaf ni kenna.					
16	Dubbisa dura, barattoonni barreeffamicha irratti hundaa'uun waa'ee dubbisichaa ni raagu/tilmaamu.					
17	Dubbisa dura, barattoonni waa'ee mata-duree dubbisichaa irratti ilaalcha mataa isaanii ni kennu.					

Appendix G: Results of Questionnaire for both Control and Comparison Groups

G1 Table 6: The Students Response on the Importance of Pre-reading Activities in Comprehending Text

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Pre-reading instruction helps the reader to comprehend the given text better.	70	67.30	18	17.30	8	7.68	6	5.76	2	1.92	104	100
2	Pre-reading activities create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text.	43	41.34	35	33.65	19	18.26	2	1.92	5	4.80	104	100
3	Students who are involved in pre-reading instruction better comprehend the given text than those who are not involved in pre-reading instruction.	58	55.76	21	20.19	7	6.73	10	9.61	8	7.68	104	100

G2 Table 7: The Students Responses on the Role of Schema Activation in Comprehending Text

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
4	Pre-reading instruction can connect the text's content and the readers' schemata.	47	45.19	29	27.88	13	12.50	8	7.68	7	6.73	104	100
5	The classroom teacher helps the students to use their background knowledge to comprehend the text better.	7	6.73	8	7.68	12	11.53	25	24.03	52	50	104	100
6	To comprehend the text better, readers have to bring their background knowledge in pre-reading phase.	40	38.46	28	26.92	15	14.42	12	11.53	9	8.65	104	100
7	Teacher needs to activate students' background knowledge about the topic of the text by teaching them pre-reading activities.	63	60.57	24	23.07	8	7.69	6	5.76	3	2.88	104	100
10	I try to understand the written material in the class making connections between the given reading text and my prior knowledge.	16	15.38	35	33.65	19	18.26	26	25	8	7.68	104	100

G3: Table 8: The Students Response on the Use of Vocabulary Definition in Comprehending Text

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8	The teacher makes the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge.	8	7.69	7	6.73	-	-	46	44.23	43	41.34	104	100
9	Before reading, the teacher teaches some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties.	9	8.65	6	5.76	6	5.76	35	33.65	48	46.15	104	100

G4 Table 9: The Students Response on the Use of Brainstorming in Comprehending Text

No.	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
11	Before reading, the teacher teaches pre-reading activities relating students' prior knowledge to improve their reading comprehension.	6	5.76	11	10.57	8	7.69	19	18.26	60	57.69	104	100
12	The teacher engages the students in reading the passage silently and independently.	8	7.69	7	6.73	13	12.50	38	36.53	38	36.53	104	100
13	Before reading, the classroom teacher helps students do pre-reading tasks/questions.	2	1.92	15	14.42	12	11.53	37	35.57	38	36.53	104	100
14	The classroom teacher encourages the students to draw inferences before reading by decoding contextual clues like pictures, titles, and headings.	9	8.65	10	9.61	11	10.57	27	25.96	47	45.19	104	100
15	Before reading, the classroom teacher gives information about the subject of the passage using the title of the given text.	18	17.30	5	4.80	12	11.53	33	31.73	36	34.61	104	100
16	Students predict what the passage is about from the given text.	10	9.61	19	18.26	12	11.53	19	18.26	43	41.34	104	100
17	Before reading, as students suggest their personal ideas about a topic, the classroom teacher writes ideas on the board all important information.	9	8.65	20	19.23	13	12.50	31	29.80	31	29.80	104	100

Appendix H: Observation Checklist

Jimma University

College of Social Sciences and Humanities

Department of English Languages and Literature

Classroom observation checklist

Name of the school \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom teacher code \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time begins \_\_\_\_\_ Time ended \_\_\_\_\_

This observation checklist is designed to evaluate pre-reading instruction teacher use in comprehending text by EFL readers in reading lesson. Put a mark (√) observing while teachers are using the information listed in the following table.

<b>Pre-reading Activities</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Vocabulary definition</b>	1. Does the classroom teacher use vocabulary definition to facilitate reading comprehension?		
	2. Does English language teacher teach some vocabulary items that may cause comprehension difficulties?		
	3. Does the classroom teacher help the students to use context clue to comprehend the text they read?		
	4. Do the students guess the meaning of words/phrases using clues from the text if they don't understand the text?		
	5. Does the classroom teacher translate words, phrases and explain difficult concepts which hinder students comprehension before reading?		
	6. Does the classroom teacher help the students to do		

<b>Pre-questioning</b>	pre-reading tasks before reading?		
	7. Does the teacher make a list of all information that comes to his/her mind as students read the title on the board?		
	8. Do students suggest their personal ideas about a topic before reading?		
	9. Does the teacher write the students idea on the board before reading?		
	10. Does the classroom teacher skip on the basic pre-reading activities which create comprehension failure to a reading?		
<b>Brainstorming</b>	11. Does the classroom teacher teach pre-reading activities before reading text to create a conducive situation for the successful comprehension of the text?		
	12. Does the classroom teacher help the students think what the given text is about by reading its topic before reading?		
	13. Does the classroom teacher help the students to think about what they already know to help them understand what they are going to read?		
	14. Could the teacher record the students' response on chart paper, or a board in order to determine the accurate and inaccurate of the learners idea?		
<b>Providing background knowledge</b>	15. Does the classroom teacher help the students to use their background knowledge to comprehend the text better?		
	16. Does the teacher activate students' background knowledge about the topic of the text by teaching them pre-reading activities?		
	17. Does the classroom teacher encourage the readers to relate the material to their background knowledge?		
	18. Does the teacher make the students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words in the passage using their prior knowledge?		