JIMMA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

'MA' IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE
(TEFL)

INVESTIGATING PROBLEMS FACING COLLEGE STUDENTS'
READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS: the case of Gambella Teachers'
Education College

BY

OWAR OMAN

Principal advisor:-AdegeAlemu (PhD)

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language
(TEFL)

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, not presented for any degree in any university, 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 thesis advisor.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

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Abstract

The main purposeofthisstudy wasto investigate factors affecting students' reading comprehension in Gambella Teachers' Education College. The participants of the study were a sample of 60 students and five English language teachers who have been purposively selected. Questionnaire, interview and observation were employed to collect the required data for the study. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.. To this end, a Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16 was used. The result of the data showed that students' competency of reading comprehension was low. The study indicated that this has happened due to teachers and students related problems.The study indicatedthatstudentsdidnotusedifferent typesofreadingstrategies becausethey havenomuchawarenessaboutthereading strategies.The study showed that thisresultedfrom students'low levelofproficiencyinEnglishingeneralandreadingskillinparticular.The study showed that students in the college come from poor educational background without clear awareness of reading comprehension. The study further showed that students did not have a good knowledge about reading strategies. As a result, they did not use reading strategies frequently. The study also showed that lacktrainingaboutreadingactivities, and this was another factor for the failureof improving students' reading comprehension ability.Moreover, lackofguidance,practice,motivationandexposuretodifferenttypesofreadingstrategyweresomeoth erfactorsaffectingstudents'readingcomprehensionabilities. Finally, recommendations were given for students and teachers based on the major findings.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Wallace(1992)saysthatreadingisafundamental skillinanyeducationalsetting andmodernliteratesociety.Withregardtothis,Anderson andUrquhart, (1984),statethatin manypartsoftheworld, thereadingknowledge ofaforeignlanguageisoftenimportantto academicstudies,professionalsuccessandpersonaldevelopment. Soreadingabilityin Englishisimportantandhasadecisiveroleforstudentsbecauselearningofalmostall subjectsrequirereadingofacademicmaterials.TheabilitytoreadinEnglish effectively is significantnotonly forlearners'academicsuccessinlearningbutalsoformaking them lifelongautonomous learners,whichistheultimategoalofeducation.Becauseofitspresent worldwidestatusas a foreignlanguage,proficiency inreadinginEnglishhasbecome a compulsoryskill.

According to Anderson, et al, (1985), reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost. Despite its importance, reading is one of the most challenging areas in the education system. The ever-increasing demand for high levels of literacy in our technological society makes this problem even more pressing (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998).

From my experience of teaching reading in Gambella Teachers' Education College, students in the department of EFL, do not read effectively to comprehend the meaning of a text..

InEthiopianeducationalinstitutions,Englishistaughtasaforeignlanguageatalllevelsand itisused asamediumofinstructioninsecondaryand tertiarylevels.So,learnersareexpected toread atreasonablelevelof proficiencytoperform inthe othersubject areasaswell.Toread andcomprehendatextinaforeignlanguageeffectively andefficiently,areadermustbe awareofandbeabletousereadingcomprehension skill.

Therefore, thisparticularstudy focuseson investigating problems facing college students' reading comprehension skills at Gambella Teachers' Education College.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Readingis oneofthecomplexskillsin language learning, especially in EFL classroom.Improving the ability to read and the comprehension levels of students reading in EFL classrooms is an essential life-skill. For instance, Cunningham and Alington (2007) acknowledge the importance of improving students' reading comprehension at schools, Colleges and Universities to deal successfully and effectively with different academic and life issues.

However, theEthiopiansecondary schoolsandtertiarylevelstudentsdonotseemtobeproficientin readingin Englishandusingreadingcomprehension.This isevidentfrom complaintof Englishlanguageteachers as well as theothersubjectareateachers.Inaddition, some local studiesindicate thatEnglish readingability ofstudentsandtheiruseof reading comprehensionseemdiscouragingand it appearstobebelowthelevelrequiredofthem. Among such studies, for instance, Taye(1999),Girma(1994)andGessese(1999) assessed the factors affecting students'readingcomprehension skills andthetypesofreadingstrategies. All theselocal studies were conducted attertiaryandsecondary level and they concluded that readingabilityofEthiopiansecondary andtertiarystudents havebeendeclining. But, this study tried to investigate the extent to which these factors still exist and suggest possible ways.

Therefore,itisimportantto examineandidentifyto what extend do these factors affecting students' reading comprehension skill still exist andsuggest ways of teaching reading strategies in EFL classroom in Gambella Teachers Education College, which is in different setting from the setting of the above studies.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General objective of the study

The overall objectiveofthis study is to investigate factorsaffecting students' readingcomprehension skillsin EFL classroom at Gambella Teachers' Education College.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

Thespecificobjectivesofthestudywereto:

1. investigate factors that affect students reading comprehension skills in EFL classroom
2. identify the extent to which these factors affect students' reading comprehension skills in EFL classroom

3. assess the reading strategy instruction employed by teachers in EFL classroom

1.3.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following questions were designed to answer:

1. Whatarethemajorfactors affecting students'reading comprehension skills in EFL classroom?
2. To what extent do these factors affect students' reading comprehension skills in EFL classroom?
3. What reading strategy instruction is employed by EFL teachers in the classroom? How often?

1.4 The scope of Study

Thisstudy is limitedtoGambella Teachers' Education College. This college waschosenbecauseit isconvenientfortheresearcherto accessmoreinformationashehasbeenworking in it. All students and teachers in the department of English language (EFL) were the main participants inthisstudy. Students and teachers in the other departments were excluded in this study. This was because the study focuses on investigating factors affecting reading comprehension in EFL classrooms.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Thefindingsof this studywill basically have the significances that will help both students and teachers in EFL classroom. It will helpstudentson howtoemployreadingactivities and different reading strategies,whichservetheiracademiccareerandtheirwholelife. Thestudymay be significantinimprovingthe college students'abilityofcomprehending readingpassagesinEFL classroomsat Collegelevel. It will alsohelpEnglish teachers to use appropriate reading procedures during teaching reading skills, specially readingcomprehension. Finally,the studymaybe useful for otherresearcherswho are interestedto conductfurtherresearchintheareaof investigating problems facing college students'readingcomprehensionabilities.

1.6 Limitation of the study

Though, there was a smallnumberoftheEnglishteachersthatwereinthe department, two of them were found missing during data collection and was a limitation encountered by the researcher. Another limitation was that all first year students of the college were not yet deployed in their respective departments. They were just grouped section by section taking general courses and it was difficult for the researcher to identify first year students of the English department. Had there been some more English teachers and students, the researcher could have got ample information.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Thischapterreviewedliteraturerelatedtothisstudy.Thechaptertriedtoillustratebriefly differenttheoriesand researcherfindingsthathaverelationshiptoreading comprehension skill.

2.1 Reading Comprehension

Readingcomprehensionistheprocessofmakingmeaningfromthetext.Thegoal,therefore, istogainanoverallunderstanding ofwhatisdescribedinthetextratherthantoobtain meaningfromisolatedwordsorsentences.Readinghas beendefinedordescribed i n different ways.ForexampleAebersoldandField(1997), state that reading iswhathappenswhenpeoplelookatatext andassignmeaningtothewrittensymbolsinthattext.Itistheinteractionbetweenthetext andthereaderthatconstituteactualreading. AstoDavies(1995),readingisamentalor cognitiveprocesswhichinvolvesareaderintryingtofollowand respondtoamessagefrom a writerwhoisdistantinspaceandtime.Becauseofthisprivacy,theprocessofreading and responding toawriterisnotdirectlyobserved.Onthecontrary,Ruddell(1999)ascitedin Nugusse(2006)states that readingistheactofconstructingmeaningwhiletransactingwith text.Thereadermakesmeaningthroughthecombination ofpriorknowledge andprevious experience".In this case,he tends toviewthe act of readingfromawiderperspective.Theact of reading goes beyond understanding of information intended by the writer. Theexchange ofideasbetweenthewriterandthereaderistheultimategoalofreading.A writerputshisideasintowriting sothatareadershareshisview.ForNuttall(1996), andUr (1996),readingmeansgettingout ofthetextasnearly aspossiblethemessagethewriterputs intoitor simplycomprehendingthe meaningor thegeneralpictureofwhatthe writerintends toconvey.Grellet(1981)definesreadingasaprocessofextractingandunderstanding the requiredinformationfromatext.

Readingis relatedtomentalactivitiesas itisdefinedby Rivers (1987:70),i.e. 'From linguisticpointofview,readingisaproblemsolvingbehaviort h a t activelyinvolvesthe readerintheprocessofderivingandunderstanding meaning.'Here,readingisaprocessin meaningismadefromagiventext.Wallace(2003)explicitly dealswiththedefinitionof readingasreactingtoa writtentextbywhichthereadercommunicateswithunderstandingof thespecificand

generalmessages.   Ingeneral,asitisseenfromdifferentangles,readingissofaracomplex,cognitive,active, processandinvolvesalotofknowledgeto   carryitoutasrequired.Andagain,asit   ismade clearfromthepreviousdefinitionsandmeaningsgiveninthisworkabove,itisfoundtobe quitedifficulttoembellishitwithanyformofmeaningordefinitionandcomprehensionof readingisnotapassiveactivityevenattheprimarylevelsincethereaderinterprets,analyses andinteractswiththemessageinthetexteventhoughthelevelofinterpretationvariesfrom gradetogradelevel.Studentsareconsideredtobereadingwhentheylookatawrittenword, sentenceorphraseandknowswhatitmeans.Intheprocessofreading,thereareusually interactionsbetweenthereaders'backgroundknowledgeandtextualinformation.Thetext andthereaderarethetwophysicalcharactersnecessaryforthereading   processtobegin.The interactionbetweenthe   textandthe   readerconstitutesactualreading.This   meansthat,reading isanactiveprocesswherethestudentsdealswiththewrittenmaterialinguessingand predictinginrelationtohisorherpreviousknowledge. Toconcludethedefinitionofreading here, it has to be   clear   that,   reading   is   not   as   simple   as   saying   words   in   pattern,   but understandstheconceptsofthereadingmaterialsitself.

2.1.1 Definition of reading

Scholarshavedefinedreadinginvariouswaysandallthedefinitionsseemtohave similarconcepts.Forinstance,Grellet(1981)definesreadingasaprocessofextracting andunderstandingtherequiredinformationfromatext.Hefurthernotesthatitisan activeskillwheretheguessing,predictingandcheckingaswellasquestioningoneself areentailed.Pressley(2000)statesreadingasahierarchy   ofskills,fromprocessingof individuallettersandtheirassociated   soundstowordrecognitiontotextprocessing   competencies. Accordingtothisdefinitionreadingbeginsasearlyasthefirstdayof   identifying asingleletter.Similarly,Williams(1984)statesreadingasaprocessof   decoding symbols:lookingatwordsandunderstanding   whathasbeenwritten.Boththe definitionsstatedaboveindicatethatreadingbeginsattheprimary   levelwherechildren aremadetoacquaintthemselveswithlettersandcombination   ofletterstoformwords.   Reading couldalsobeseenbeyondthislevel.Withregardtothislevelofreading,   Davis   (1955) statesreadingasamental   processinwhichareader   endeavorstointeractwiththe messageinatext.Wallace(2003)explicitlydealswiththedefinitionofreadingas   reactingtoawritten textbywhichthereadercommunicateswithunderstanding ofthespecificandgeneral messages.

For Harmer (1983) reading involves both the eyes and the brain where the eyes receive message and the brain performs the interpretation of messages received.

According to what have been discussed by all the scholars mentioned above, the practice of reading is not a passive activity even at the primary level since the reader interprets analyses and interacts with the message in the text even though the level of interpretation varies from grade to grade level. Thus, a child is considered to be reading when she or he looks at a written word sentence or phrase and knows what it means Afloya et al. (1986). These scholars further elaborate that if someone reads the written text aloud without understanding what it means he or she is not reading. Widdowson(1979) in Hedge(2000) explains reading as a dialogue going on between the reader and the text or between the reader and the author.

According to all the definitions stated above reading is an active process where the child deals with the written material in guessing and predicting in relation to his/her prior knowledge. Reading calls for analyzing and interpreting the message which is beyond mere deciphering.

2.1.2 The Importance of Reading comprehension

Out of the four major language skills, reading is one of the instruments for communication of thoughts from one person to another. For instance, by reading newspaper, magazines and other sources, one can learn about the current social, economic and political situation of the world. With regard to this, Cross(1950) to say the following: ---much of the success of the students in school and in later life depends upon how well he can read, and how well he can use the meanings---which he has gained from his reading situation. During reading, the main aim of the reader is to get the information. Nuttall(1982) says that reading is not just a linguistic exercise, but is involved with the getting of meaning out of a text for some purpose. A person may read in order to gain information to verify existing knowledge, in order to critique a writer's idea or writing styles. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. Reading purpose can also be either for information or entertainment. Regarding this, Wallace(1992:6) mentions some of the reading purposes as follows:

1. Reading for survival such as 'stop!' sign for a motorist

2. Reading for learning that serves the wider role of text extending our general knowledgeoftheworld

3. Readingforpleasure

Thepurposeofacademicreadingiscomprehension ofatext.Ruddell(1999)statesthatthe mostcommonacademic goal of readingis comprehensiontheconstructionofmeaningthat insomewaycorrespondstotheauthor'sintended meaning.Inschool,reading hasthree additionalgoals:learning,i.e.ateachgradelevel,students areexpectedtobecome better readersandtoreadincreasingly difficulttexts;application,i.e.throughoutthemiddleand secondarygrades,studentsareexpectedtoapplyknowledge constructedfromreadingtext. Generally,peoplereadtextsinEnglisheitherfortheircareers,forstudypurposesorsimply forinformationorpleasure.

Readingenhanceslanguageproficiency ofstudentsatalllevels.Onthispoint,McDonough andShaw(2003)notethefollowing"asaskillreadingisclearlyoneofthemostimportantin factinmany instancesaroundtheworldwemayarguethatreadingisthemostimportant foreignlanguage".Anotherscholar Carrell (1988:1)showsthe importanceof readingineither EFL/ESLlearning.Heemphasizes:"IfweconsiderthestudyofEnglishasaforeignlanguage aroundtheworld–thesituationinwhichmostEnglishlearnersfindthemselves-readingis themainreasonwhystudentslearnthelanguage."

Thescholarshavesuggested thatreadinghastwopurposes.First,ifapersonhasaneffective readingability,hewillsucceedinhisacademicperformance; secondly,readingabilityalso helpsoneforgoodsociallifewiththesociety.Reading skillforstudentscontributealotnot onlyintheirhighschoollevelbutalsoithelpsintheiruniversity levelwithregardtothis. Bright(1970)says:furthereducationdependsonquantity andqualityofreading.Allthe importantstudyskillsrequirequick,efficientandimaginativereading.Therefore,thedegree ofeffectivenessandlargeamount ofreading determinelearnerachievement intheirwork. Manyresearchfindingssuggeststhatoneofthebestwaystohelpstudentsincreasetheir ability inotherlanguageskillsisthroughgiving themappropriatepracticeinreading.In generalscholarsagreethatreadingisnotonly themostimportantlanguageskillthatenables learnertograspideas,factsconceptsandthoughts butalsoitisaskillthatplaysarolein developingother language skills.

Thus,ifreading isasimportantasthis,itneedstobepracticedasearlyaspossible inthe primaryandsecondarylevelinordertodevelopsuccessful reading abilitygraduallyathigher levels.However,ashasbeenexplained inthestatementoftheproblemabove,manyresearch workershaveconcludedthatthereadingabilityofbothsecondaryandtertiarylevelof studentstohavebeenbelowwhatisexpectedofthem.Tothisend,Ibelievethatifthe readingcomprehensionpracticeofstudentsatprimaryandsecondary levelcouldbehandled appropriate according to the best current practices and language teaching and learning methodsandapproaches,theproblemofthehigherstudentsreadingabilitymightberelieve.

Inthediscussion,Ihavetriedtoassessbriefly theconceptofreadingandtheimportanceof readinginthelanguage.Tobringalltheissuesraisedtopracticalitywhichencompass either kindsortypes,strategiesortechniques-intensiveandextensivereading,whichbythemselves requiredifferentpreparations, situationsandmaterials,needtobeemphasizedsoastoequip andto b e equippedbothasteachersandstudentstomakeEFL/ESLteachingandlearning processeffectiveaswellasfruitfulinEthiopiancontextwherethereislimitedorabsolute lackofaccesstoreading materials,andwellequipped andqualifiedteachersatsecondary levels.Therefore,Collegestudentsareexpectedtoreadeffectively toachievegood academicperformance. Thisisbecausethey stayforatleastthreeacademicyears in the college..

2.2 Types of Reading

Differentscholarsdividedandperceivekindsofreadingdifferently,thoughmostofthem sharesomeideas incommon.Maybe almost allof themdividedthemintofourtypesnaming astechniques ofreading.Butsomeothersmaybe,afew ofthemdivide intotwoandnameas reading types.InthisregardGrellet(1981)identifiestwokindsofreading techniques and verifies:"amongotherreadingtechniques,forexample,sensitizing,improvingreadingspeed, andskimmingtoscanning, skimmingandscanning arethetwotechniques ofreading."Again headdsthatbothskimming andscanningarespecificreadingtechniquesnecessary forquick and efficientreading. (p.19). As Gellet(1981)states the main ways of reading in that "skimming": quickly runningone'seyesoveratexttogetthegistofit."Scanning":quickly going throughatexttofindaparticularpieceofinformation.Inrelationtothedefinition it owns,Grellet,1981;Nuttal,1982andDavies,1995:statesskimming referstotheprocessof

quicklyrunningone'seyesoveratexttogainanoverallunderstanding ofthecontextofthe text.Itismainlyconcernedwithkeytopics,mainideasandoverallthem.(p. 10).

So,astotheagreementofmany scholarsinconnectiontoeithertechniquesorstrategiesto teachingreading,skimmingandscanningcanbetypeofreading,butwhatshouldmatteris theapplication ofthem inanEFL,ESLclassroom onthebasis oftheirimportanceanditis alsoverycrucialtomakeefforttofillgabsthatmayprevailinEFLclassroomsituations wheretheremaybeoflackofefficientteachingmethods.Inadditiontopreviousmentionedtechniques orstrategies, Alyousef (2005) identifies two kinds of reading: "intensive and extensivereading."Thesetwotypesofreadingarecomplementary andstudentsshouldbe exposedtobothtypes(Nuttall,1996).

2.2.1 Intensive Reading

Intensive reading referstothereading ofshorttext.Itentailsthereading madeatclassroom levelundertheguidanceof the teacher(Nuttall,1982).Sheadds:"themainaimof intensive readingistoarriveataprofound anddetailedunderstandingofthetext,notonlyofwhatit meansbutalsoofthemeaningisproduced. Thisis thetypesof readingweusuallyseeina languageclassroomatsecondary, primary andtertiarylevels.Themainpurposeofthese types of reading is understandingthe meaning of the text in general or the specific information. Hedge(2000) explains intensivereadingasatypeof reading thatisconcerned withlookingatatextcarefullyforchoosingprecisewordsorphrases.Thompson(2001) andGrellet(1981) alsoindealingwiththisspecifictypeofreadingsay;thatintensive readingisakindof readingofshorttextsforcomprehension.Accordingtothesedefinitions, thereadingtypeofatsecondary levelshouldbemoreoftheintensiveoneasitrefersto

shortertextsismeantforcompression.Inthismannerstudentslearnbyintegrating skillsin suchawaythattheywillhavetheopportunity toassociatewrittenwordswithspeechand theyalsolearntopronouncethewordscorrectly.Inadditiontothis,Wilgam(1981)in,early stageofreadingforcomprehension, readingaloudisrecommended.Ontheotherhand,in thesecondary schoolsstudentsreadpracticeactivitiesshouldaimatdeveloping student's abilityforunderstanding andidentifying meanings.Itshouldaswellfocusondeveloping reading skillsandstrategies.Atthislevel,howeverreadingaloudmay nothelpsinceinthe realsituationofreadingpeople tendtoreadsilently.Thus,learnersshould beinstructed to notonly

avoidreadingaloudbutalsogetridofthefollowinghabits(ibid):Mouthing the wordswhile reading,pointingtothewordsbeing readandmovingthe headeverytimethey readaword.

Thesearethingsstudentsneedstobeinstructuredtoavoidathigherlevelssothatthey couldmaintainsilent readingatthis leveland infuture.The importanceofintensivereading Wilgam(1981:278)notesasfollowing.Intensivereadingwillprovideabasisforexplaining difficultiesofstructureandforextending knowledgeofvocabularyandidioms.Itwillalso providematerialfordeveloping gratercontrolofthelanguageinspeechandwriting.From whatisstatedabove,itispossible tounderstand thecrucialroleofintensivereadingin enhancing notonlythereadingabilityofstudentsbutalsostudent'slanguageskillsin general.Tosumup,thepracticeofintensivereadingat secondarylevelisvital. Itisthebase forotherreadingstrategiesandplaysaroleinhelping studentstodevelopotherlanguage skills.

2.2.2 Extensive reading

Differentwriters explainedextensivereadingin adifferentway. For example, Hedge (2003:218)statesthatsince extensivereadinghelpsindevelopingreadingabilities,itshould bebuiltintoanEFL/ESLprogram providedthatselectedtextsare"authentic,"i.e."not writtenforlanguagelearnersandpublishedintheoriginallanguage" and"graded." Thompson(2001)explains bysayingthatareadingofbooksandmagazines etc---meantfor pleasure,toobtaininformationortosatisfy interest.Asheexplains,extensivereadingisa usualkindofreading thattakesplaceoutofclassroominmostinstances.Nuttall(1996) statesthatextensivereadingand intensivereading are notcontrastingtypesofreadingrather theyarecomplementary andbothareimportantandnecessaryintheteachingandlearning readingcomprehension. Extensivereadingtextsshouldbeselectedinaccordancewiththe reading paceandabilityofthestudents sothatextensivereading couldbepracticedinthe secondarylevelitself.

The purposeofextensivereadingistoletstudents readingwithoutthe helpoftheteacherat homeorelsewhereso,itisequallyimportanttothesecondary levelstudentswhohave already hadsomesortofreadingskill.Atthislevel,theparentsandtheenvironment playa significantroleinhelpingstudentstoread.AccordingtoMorrow(1995)inN'Namdi(2005) parentsarethefirstandthemajorteacherswhoshould spendthelongest timewiththemin providingand creatingaconduciveenvironmentfortheirchildrenisreadinghabits.

Obviously,   themostsignificantfactorforthepreparationofthestudentstoreadby   themselvesis
theattitudetheyhave   towards   reading.   This   issomethingthat   students   developatanearly
age.Toletstudentsdevelopthisuseful   habitofreading,schools   andthe
patients'contributiontowardsitisveryimportant.Krashen(1993)inexpressing   the
importanceofextensivereadingforstudentssaysthatextensivereadinghelpstoimprove   secondlanguage
withoutthesupportofteachersandotherpeople.   Bradfielddealswiththe
objectiveofextensivereadingasfollows:Toincreasestudents'confidence   intheirreading
ability,toincreasereadinginfluency   specifically,todecreasedependencewordbyword
comprehensionand   toincreasereadingspeed.   Withregardtowhatkindofmaterial   couldbe
usedforextensivereadinginsecondarylevel,differentscholarsrecommendvariouskinds
ofmaterialsthatcouldservethepurpose.

2.3 Reading Strategies

Students need to use many complex reading strategies to develop into proficient readers in the junior grades. Farstrup (2006) indicated that many students who were good readers in the primary grades will nonetheless struggle to read in the junior grades if they don't learn the comprehension skills to deal with the more complex text formats, text features and genres they experience. The skill of reading becomes a more sophisticated process as students move through the junior grades. To improve reading comprehension, students must learn to apply a variety of reading strategies. Cunningham and Allington (2007) summarized six strategies, based on Duke and Pearson's (2002) research. The following subsections describe each of Duke and Pearson's six strategies—prediction, think-aloud, using text structure, using visual cues, summarization, and answering and questioning. There is evidence to suggest that these skills are important and necessary reading comprehension skills (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

2.3.1 Prediction

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

2.3.2 Think-aloud

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

2.3.3 Using text structure

Most readers understand the components of fiction better than the elements of a non-fictional text only because they have more experience reading fictional texts (Cunningham &Allington, 2007, p.126). Readers must be familiar with a variety of text forms and features to aid their comprehension of that genre of text. Understanding the components of a narrative form provides the framework for global understanding. For example, a student knows what to expect when reading a fairytale. There will be a clash between good and evil, and the plot will have a happy conclusion. Providing students with opportunities to work with adventures, mysteries, science fiction and other genres helps readers recognize the components of various genres, which aids in comprehension. Students must also know how the features of a variety of text forms can be utilized to improve their understanding of the material. For example, students who can effectively use the index and glossary of a non-fiction text will complete a more thorough research project; students who know how to notice headings and skim read for pertinent information, are better able to focus on specific questions. Being familiar with the structure of a text helps the readers to organize the information and improves their level of comprehension.

2.3.4 Using visual cues

Using a visual to facilitate understanding is another reading strategy that improves the reader's understanding of a text. Graphic organizers such as a Venn diagram (used for comparing and contrasting) or story webs (where ideas are placed in boxes or bubbles), all help a reader to "see" what he/she has learned. It helps a reader to relate to the text and improves comprehension levels. Visualization cues may also be used to self-monitor for understanding. For example, a fluent reader

should see a "movie" running through his or her mind when reading. If the movie or mind pictures stop, then the text is too difficult or the reader is not engaged. Seeing an image when reading is a useful self-check for readers to gauge the speed with which they read. Fluent readers are able to visualize as they read. Fluency and comprehension are positively correlated (Fountas&Pinnell, 2006, p 62).

2.3.5 Summarization

The ability to retell the key points of a text in a logical sequence and hold these details in memory is an important comprehension strategy called summarization. Often these key points are needed later in the text to make sense of what is read. For example, a small but important detail may help a reader to solve the mystery in the novel (Fountas&Pinnell, 2006, p. 48). Being able to summarize information effectively is an invaluable skill for readers of all ages.

2.3.6 Questioning

Good readers ask questions about what they read, as they self monitor for understanding. They ask questions of themselves, of their peers and of their teachers. Pausing to ask questions is part of the reading process. The ability to make inferences about what one reads requires higher order thinking skills. Asking questions that start with *how* or *why* engage the reader. By asking questions of the text, a reader is actively responding with the material to incorporate the new material into his or her schema. Students in the junior grades must be able to use and apply these reading strategies across a variety of texts to be proficient. Successful readers employ all six of these reading strategies to comprehend fully the world around them.

2.4 Factors affecting reading comprehension

Understandingis themostimportantaspect ofreadingprocess.But manylearners find readingcomprehension tobecomplexbecauseofanumberoffactors.Inthisregard, Cushennbery(1985)notesthefollowingfactorswhichaffectthecomprehensionprocess. These are comprehension problem, vocabulary difficulty and lack of reading practice,

2.4.1 Comprehension problems

Inrelationto thisGray,(1960)says"…duringprocessingleadsto thecontractionof understandingorcomprehension.Aswereadconstantly,comprehending strategiesmaking connectionsandinferences,summarizingandsynthesizing information,andperhapseven critiquingoranalyzingthetextinsomeways." Astudent is givenatexttoknowsomething

13

accordingtohis/herpurpose.   Thisneedsasortofstruggletogetthecentralidea.So,a   student   whenever he/she   reads   a   text   should   give   priority   to   understand   the   content. However,withoutgettingtheconceptofthetext,vocalizingloudlyisnotreading.In concerntothisWilliams(1984)hasthefollowingtosay:Readingistheprocesswhereby onelooksatandunderstands   whathasbeenwrittenmerelyreadingaloudwithout understandingdoesnotcountasreading.Accordingtotheauthorthemaintargetofreading istounderstandwhatthetextsays.Butwithoutunderstanding thecentralidea,vocalizing fromthebeginning uptotheendiskillingtimeratherthanreading.Otherwise,   hisreading maynotbeconsideredasreading.Moststudents'probleminforeignlanguagesisnothow toread,buthowtounderstandthecontentofthetext.Thisdeficiency   isduetodifferent factors.Dellann(1960)havefoundoutsevendifferent   typesofproblems   incompression. Theseare:Limitedintelligence,environmental   influence,physicalfactorsinherentinthe reading,overemphasisonoralreading,oralemphasisisonwordrecognition,   insufficient backgroundforreadingasectionandlackofappropriateteacherguidance.

Oneofthefactorsthataffectsstudents'comprehension   islimitedtointelligence.Thisis becausethereisconsiderableamountofinterrelationship   betweenintelligenceand   comprehension skill.Ifstudents'mentalabilityislimited,atthesametimehis/her understandingisalsolimited.However,ifastudent   isintelligent,   he/she   wouldbeintelligent tolearntoreadandtounderstand.Therefore,theauthorssuggestthattosolvethisproblem theteachershouldadjusttasksonthebasisofthestudents'ability.

Thesecondfactorthataffectsstudents'effectivecomprehension   skillisenvironmental influence.Likenoisysound,highor   lowtemperatureandetc.Therefore,theauthorssuggest   thattosolve theseproblems   areadershouldchoosepreferableplacewhilehereads.The otherproblemthataffectseffectivecomprehension   skillisphysicalfactorsinherentinthe reader.Suchphysicalmattersincludefatigue,malnutrition.These   mattershappen   onthe   students fordifferentreasons,suchassomestudents   cometoschoolafterlongjourney,and   becauseofthisthey becomehungry   andsleepy.Ontheotherhandinsufficientnutrition   affects theirreadingcomprehension.Therefore,the   writerssuggestthat   to   solvethese   problems, theschoolshouldtakeintoconsiderationthesestudentsproblem.Thereisstill anotherproblemthataffectsstudents'comprehensionskill.Thisisoveremphasisword

recognition.Inreadingfocusesonindividual wordsisoneofthefactorsleadingto misunderstanding thetext.AccordingtoDellann(1960)oneoftheimportantmeansto comprehend thegiventextisthereadershouldderivethemeaningofthewordfromthe groupofwordsinthetext.Thefifthproblemthatinfluencescomprehension skillsisover emphasisanoralreading.Thisisbecauseastudentwhoreadorallymaynothavethe concept ofthetext.Inconnectiontothis John Deboer(1960:178)havethefollowingtosay: oftenoralreading ofaselectionthatisparticularly difficultforthereaderincreaseshis understanding ofit,sincehe/shenotonlyseesbutalsohearswhathe/shereads.Therefore, thistwoworkat thesametime influencesthestudentsunderstandingofthetext.

Theremainingfactorsthatinfluencescomprehension skillisinsufficientbackgroundfor readingsection.According tomanyexpertsinteachingEnglishforeignlanguage,previous experienceisverysignificantforcomprehension skill.Astudenthasreadvariousmaterials canunderstandwhatevertexthe/shefaces.Butifhe/she hasnotsuchexperiences he/she cannotunderstand.Thelastproblemsthataffectcomprehensions skillsarelackof appropriateteacherguidance.Teachersplay majorroleinteachingandlearning process. Students needhelpfromtheirteacherwhiletheyaredoing.Moreover, teachersexpectedto knowwhathis/herproblems. Butifhe/sheisnotfamiliarwithstudents'problem,theymay failtounderstandthetext.Therefore,Deboer(1960)suggests thattosolvethisproblem, the teachershoulddotwothings:first,heshouldobservestudentsproblemswhilethey are reading.Secondly,ateachershouldaskdifferentkindsofquestions fromthetext.The questioncanbepresentedbeforetheystartorat theendofreadingtext.

2.4.2 Vocabulary Difficulty

Readingskillsisacombinationofminorskills,suchasvocabulary building.Vocabulary difficulty meanonlystoringanumberofwordsinthemindwithoutunderstanding their meaning.InconnectiontothisCallister(1942)hasthefollowing tosay increasingof vocabulary isnotaquestionofincreasingourstockofwords,itismorefundamentally a questionofincreasing ourstockofmeaningsothatwemay usewordsmoreeffectively interpretingthethoughtsofothersandin expressingtheirthoughts. Thismeansstoringanumberof wordswiththeirmeaningsisthekeytoreadand understand differentmaterials,and to expressourfeelingto others.Therefore,in orderto be aneffectivereader, collegestudentsshoulddeveloptheirpowerofvocabulary. With regard to this,

Longman(1984)hasthefollowing to say:A goodvocabularyisthevitalpartof theeffectivecommunication. Acommandofmanywordswillmakeyoubetterwriter, speaker,listenerandreader.Incontrast,apoorvocabulary canseriouslyslowyourreading speedandlimityourcomprehension. Inordertohaveeffectivecommunicationinourdaily life, weneedenoughamountofvocabulary knowledge. This isbecause; ithelpstoexchangeideasclearly. Therefore,accordingto aboveauthorspowerofvocabularyis importantforallcommunicationskills.However,alackofvocabularymakesbothstudents readingspeedandunderstandingpoor.Ifstudentispoorinvocabularyhe/shewillbepoor inreading.InconnectiontothisCross(1950)hasthefollowingcomment

Wehavebecomeawareoftheinability ofyoungpeopleandadultstoreadwell,either silentlyorloudly.Atthebottomofthatinabilitylietwobasiccauses.Thefirstislimitation ofvocabulary,andthesecond, inabilitytoattachanexactmeaningtothefewwordsinones vocabulary.Therefore,majorproblems ofsecondlanguagelearnersarethepoorpowerof vocabularyandnotbeingabletousewordswhen theyarenecessaryforaparticular purpose. So,theauthorssuggestthatinordertosolvetheseproblemsstudents should developtheirpowerofvocabulary andusewordsintheircommunicationwithgroupof students.Therefore, college students andothers candeveloptheirvocabularyknowledge throughcommunication.Awordmayhavedifferentmeanings.Itsmeaningdependson otherwordswhichcomeeitherbeforeorafterit.Therefore,areadercanunderstand the meaningofthe givenwordin context.

2.4.3 Lack of reading practice

Readingpracticemustbeaday-to-day processbecausethatishowwedevelopourreading skill.Thisdependsontheavailability ofreadingmaterials.Moreover, thelackofplacesfor broadening onesreadingexperiencessuchasvisitinglibraryoranyothercentersofinterest mightalso contributeto thereadingproblem.Tounderstandthe importanceof reading practice,Moyle(1988)statesthefollowing:

Thereadermustachievevirtually simultaneousprocessingofthreebroadareas,namelyan appreciationoftheideasorinformationexpressing suchideasorinformationandthe recognitionwordswithinthesentencewhenanyofthesethreeareasofactivityareabsent onlypartofthereadingprocessistakingplace.Fromthebeginning ofreading,thestudents

shouldbeprovided withmaterials,whicharemeaningfulsothathemayacquirethehabitof usingall theclues availableto extractandconsiderthecontentexpressed.

Someresearchersdevelopoverarching categoriestodescribefactorsthataffectreadingin foreignlanguage.Aebersoldand Field(1997:23),discussfourareas:grammaticalcompetence (knowledgeofgrammar),sociolinguisticcompetence (abilitytouselanguage appropriatelyin varioussocialcontexts),discoursecompetence(knowledge ofacceptablepatternsinwritten andspokenlanguage),andstrategic competence(abilitytouseavarietyoflanguagestrategies tocommunicate successfully).AccordingtoWalls(2007onlinesource),internalandexternal factorswhichaffectone'sreadingarephysical:vision,hearing,health,etc;emotional: self concept,subjectmatterandteachereffect;socioeconomic:lowsocioeconomic status,family mobilityand family stability; educational: inadequate teaching ofreading, poorteacher strategy,indiscriminateuseofreadingmaterials;lackofmotivation:onthepartofstudentand theteacher.

Ontheotherhand,AebsersoldandField(1997:34) compiledfromcurrentauthorities (Alderson1984) alistoffactorsthatinfluencereadinginasecondlanguage(L2)orforeign language(FL):

1. Cognitivedevelopmentandstyleorientation:theageandlevelofcognitivedevelopmentof FLlearnersatthetimetheybeginlanguagestudy shapestheirabilitytograspconcepts, theirwillingnesstouseavarietyofstrategy,andtheirbasicwaysofapproachingthetext.

2. ReadingperformanceandcompetenceintheL1:thosewithhigherlevelsofproficiencyin theFLaremoreabletotransferreadingskillsfromtheirL1toFL;thusenhancing theirL2 readingproficiency.

3. Metacognitiveknowledge: learnersareabletodescribeanddiscussthefeaturesand rulesoftheirownlanguageappeartobemoreproficientatimproving theirFLreading processes

4. FLproficiency: thestudents'proficiencyintheFLisperhapsthegreatestfactorsin L2reading.Withoutcertainthresholdlevelsof L2proficiency,readingdoesnotimprove.

5. Degreeofdifference betweentheL1andtheL2/FL:itisgenerally truethatthegreaterthe differencebetweenthenativelanguageandthetargetlanguage (inwritingsystem,rhetorical conventions,andpurposesforreading),themoredifficultisto acquirethetargetlanguageand tobecomeaproficientreaderinit.

6. Culturalorientation:isthemostfar-reading andinfluentialfactor.Thestudents'attitude towardsthetextandpurposeforreading,the typeofreading skillsandstrategiesthey usein

theL2,theirbeliefsaboutreadingprocess,theirknowledge oftexttypesintheirL1(formal schema),andtheiraccumulatedbackground knowledge (contentschema)intheL2areall majorinfluencesintheirL2/FLreading.

2.5 Reading Activities (Phases)

Tofacilitatethereadingactivities,classorganizationisessential.So,Nuttall(1996:162) showsthefollowingmodesofclassorganization.

1. Theindividual mode:inthis,eachstudentworksonhis/herownformuchofthetime. Sincethereading processisinessenceprivate,thismodeisparticularlysuitableforreading lessons.Every readermustunderstandthetextfor himself;hence,itisoftenrecommended thatreadinginstructionshouldbemadeasindividualaspossible.

2. Theteacher-centeredclass:Attheoppositeextremeisthe familiarteacher centeredclass. Inthismode,theclassworkwithonetext;thewayitistacklediscontrolledlargelyby the teacher,whodecidesthesequenceofwork,setstasks,checkslearningandtriestoensure that everystudentsparticipates.

3. Groupwork:Inthismodeoforganization, muchoftheguidance comesfromfellow students.Theefforttounderstandthetextismadejointlythatis,individualeffortsare pooledanddiscussedinthehopeofarrivingtogetherat thebestinterpretation.

Here, we cangeneralize that modesof classorganizationare prerequisitefor reading activitiesthatisorganizedby thereadingteacherintheclassroom.Oncethemodeofclass organizationisdetermined,the studentsaresupposedtoperformdifferentreadingactivities. Inconnectiontothis, Williams (1984),citedinHedge (2000:209),statesthatitisnow standardpracticeinthedesignofreadingtaskstouseathree-phaseprocedureinvolving pre-,whileandpost-readingstages.The intentionistoensurethatreadingis'taught'inthe senseof helpingreadersdevelopincreasingabilitytotackletexts.Tocheckwhetheror nota learnerunderstandswhathe/shereadsisbypreparingreadingactivitiesindifferentphases (pre-,whileandpostreading)andby discussingeachphase.Therefore, thesethreereading stages willbetreatednext.

2.5.1 The pre-reading activities

Inpre-readingstage,students willbemotivated andtheybringtheirbackgroundknowledge inthereadingofgiventopic.Regarding thisstage,BakerandWestrup(2000)statesthat

18

beforereadingactivitiesshouldbeshortandfocused,i.e.fiveminutesisusually long enough.Asthesescholars,prereadingactivitiesinclude:-

1. **Brainstorming:**theteacheraskshis/herstudents whatwordsorideastheycansuggestthatrelatetothetextthattheywillreadortoapicturefromthetextor tothetopic.

2. **Discussion:**theteachersuggeststhatstudentsdiscussapicturefromthetextorthetopicinpairsorsmal lgroups.

3. **Questioning:** students lookatapicturefromthestoryoratthetitleorfirstsentencefromthetext,andthinkofquestionstheywo uldliketo answeraboutthestory

4. **Pre-readingdifficultkeywords:**sometimesateachermayfeelitisagoodideatoteachstudentssomeofth edifficultandimportantkey-wordsfromthestory.

Inthisstage,students willbemadetothinkanddiscussthetopictobereadsothattheir backgroundknowledge ofthemessageinthetextcanberemembered. Accordingto Thompson(2001),thepossibleactivitiesofthisstagecouldbepredictingofthestory by simplylookingatthetitleorpictures ifapicture isoffered within thetext. The major stages ofthisactivity according toWilliams(1984)arethefollowing:tointroduce andfeeling interestinthetopic,tomotivatelearners by givingareasonforreadingandtoprovidesome languagepreparation forthetext.Thisstageasdiscussedaboveisastagewhereprevious knowledgeof thestudent comparetothe texttheyarereadingismadetobeactivated.Itisa stagewherewhatiscalledschemataknowledge couldbemadeuseofoneofthemajor responsestoincreasinginsightsabouttheroleofschematicknowledge inreading hasbeen focusincurrentreadingmethodology onaprereadingstage-----(Hedge2000:192). Generally,thepre-readingphaseisthestageinwhichthestudentspredictwhatwouldbe thetextaboutbasedontopic,thepicture,etc;establish areasonforreading andcreate motivationforreadingthetext.

2.5.2 The while reading activity
The while readingstageisastageinwhich thestudentsaremadetoreadsilentlyinorderto answerthequestions already set.Inrelationtothis,BakerandWestrup(2000)statethat students

needpracticeinthereallifeactivityofsilentreading.Ifthey don'tusesilent reading,theteachercanhelpthembecome betterreadersbygiving atimelimit.This encouragesstudentstoreadmore quicklyandnottostopatunknownwords.Readingspeed facilitatescomprehension andbothhavedirectrelationship.Inconnectiontothis,Nuttall (1982)statesthatthereisno doubtthatreadingspeed and comprehensionarecloselylinked. Whenastudentreads,itisbettertoreadquicklyandrepeatedly thanreadingslowly and once.Inconnectiontothisidea,AebersoldandField(1997)saythattwoorthreequick, purposefulreadingswillbemoreefficientandproductivethanoneslow,detailedreading.

During reading,areaderhastopredictwhatcomesnexttoincreasehis/hercomprehension ability.Regardingtoprediction,Harmer(1998),Nuttall(1996)explainthattypingtopredict whatcomesnextisagoodwayofseeingwhetheryouhaveacleartop-downviewofthe text.Thewritersalsostatethatpredictionispossible becausewritersorganize theirideas, readerstendtothinkinsimilarway,andcertainkindsoftext(e.g.fairly tales,recipes)have predictablestructureswithwhichexperienced readersbecomefamiliar. Thewhilereading stageactivitythatcouldbecarriedoutforthesecondary levelstudentsasmentionedbyin Hedge(2002)canbethe following:

1. **ReadingandMatch**:thisisanactivity inwhichinformationgiveninawrittenlanguageis matchedwithpicturerepresentations.Thesekindsofactivitiescanbedoneatallgrade levelswithreasonablecomplexity.
2. **Readingandlabel**: Inthisactivity,studentsfirstreadthetext andlabeladiagramor achart accordingly.Thereadingtextshouldcontaindetailedinformation sothatstudentswillbe clearinthelabelingprocedure.
3. **ReadandComplete**:Inthistypeactivity,apartofadiagramormapisprovidedsothat learnerswouldcompletetheotherpartbasedontheinformationgiveninthereadingtext.
4. **ReadingandDraw:**Itcanbeguessedfromthenameoftheactivity,thisisanactivityin whichthe informationinareadingtextcanbetransferredintopictureform.These arewhat arecalledinformationtransferactivitiesinreadinglessons.

2.5.3 The post reading activity

AccordingtoBakerandWestru's(2000:67)explanation,someoftheactivitiesforstudents todoafterreadingatext arethe following:

1. Retell thestoryinsmallgroupsorasaclass.Studentsactoutthestory,usingtheirownwords.
2. Rewrite thestoryintheirownwords,preferablyinpairsoringroupstoencouragediscussion.
3. Discusthestoryinpairsorsmallgroups,givingtheiropinionsofwhattheyhaveread,orsuggestingdifferentendings.

Hedge(2000:211)alsostatesthatawiderrangeofactivitiesfocusingeitheronthecontent ofthetextcanbeundertaken,forexample,debate,role-play,readingofcontrastingtexts, orfocusingonitslanguage(i.e.,bottom-up processing).Inthepost-readingstage,students willbe askedwhethertheyhaveunderstoodthegeneral informationofthetextinrelationto theirprevious knowledge.Inthepostreading phasetherearethreelevelsofcomprehension questions:Theseare:questionforexactmeaning,questionforinferredmeaning and questionsrelatedtothestudents ownexperience.Thisstagecanbecarriedoutby arranging small groupsdiscussionthatcouldbe followedbywholeclassdiscussion(Williams1984)it canalsoserveasastageinwhichtheteachercheckswhetherstudentshaveunderstood the textornotThompson (2001).Therearelevelsofquestionsforthisstageofreadingfor comprehensionactivities.

1. **Questions forexactmeaning**:Thesearetheeasiest;answerscouldbeguessedfromthe passage.
2. **Questions forinferredmeaning**:Thisactivityentailsthinkingaboutthetextand understandingtherelationshipbetweenideas.
3. **Questionsrelatedtothestudentsownexperience**:post-reading activitiesshouldalways involve thiskindofquestions wherestudentsrelatewhatthey readwiththeir own experience.

Ingeneral,throughoutthethreephasesduringreadingcomprehension twomajorareasof knowledgeplaya decisiverole. These arewhatarecalledschematicknowledge and languageknowledge. Schematicknowledgereferstothepriorknowledgethestudents.It couldbewhatthey havealreadyknownabouttheirenvironmentlocallyortheknowledge they haveabouttheworldasawhole.Priorknowledge canbegainedfrombothinformal sourcessuchasfamilyandtheenvironmental aswellasfrompreviousreadingand education.Comprehensionistheuseofpriorknowledgetocreatenewknowledge"Adams andBruce(1982:25)Thus,readingshouldbringtheirpreviousknowledge tothetextthey readandwritesofthetextsshouldconsiderstudentspreviousknowledge inpreparing readingtexts.

2.6 Models of Reading

Readers must develop certain skill that would help them comprehend what they read and use this as based on knowledge that reading makes sense, readers prior knowledge, information presented in the text, and the use of context to assist recognition of words and meanings. Reading comprehension not only includes Linguistic recognition and cognitive understanding (semantic comprehension at both surface and deep structure levels), but also tends to be affected by the reader's reaction to the content, which affect the reader's evaluation and appreciation, which become a part of the reader's reading comprehension. If there is no such evaluation and appreciation, comprehension will be incomplete (Sheng 2000: 13). The reading process is complex and may not fully understand. However, Barnett (1989), cited in Aebersold and Field (1997), provides three models of reading: bottom-up, top-down and interactive models that include both L1 and FL issues

2.6.1 Bottom-up theory

Argues that the reader constructs the text from the smallest unit (letters to words to phrases to sentences, etc.) and that the process of constructing the text from those small units becomes so automatic that readers are not aware of how it operates. Decoding is an earlier term for this process (Aebersold and Field, 1997:18; Ur 1996).

Moreover, in bottom-up processing, the reader builds up a meaning from the black marks on the page: recognizing letters and words, working out sentence structure. This can happen if our world knowledge is inadequate or if the writer's point of view is very difficult (Nuttall 1996 and Hedge 2000)

2.6.2 Top-down theory

Argues that readers bring a great deal of knowledge, expectations, assumption, and questions to the text and given a basic understanding of the vocabulary, they continue to read as long as the text confirms their expectations. The top-down school of reading theory argues that readers fit the text into knowledge (cultural, syntactic, linguistic and historical) they already possess, then, check back when new or unexpected information appears (Aebersold and Field, 1997). Moreover, Hedge (2000:189; Taye (1999) assure that top-down processing is the application of prior knowledge to working on the meaning of a text. On the other hand, Nuttall (1996) compares the top-down approach to an eagle's eye view of the landscape. From a great height,

theeaglecanseeawideareaspreadoutbelow;itunderstandsthenature   ofthe
wholeterrain…betterthananobserverontheground.

2.6.3 The interaction theory

Mostresearcherscurrentlyendorse,arguesthatbothbottom-up   andtop-downprocessesare
occurring,eitheralternatively oratthesametime.Thesetheoristsdescribeaprocessthat movesbothbottom-
upandtopdown,dependingonthetypeoftextaswellasonthereader's

backgroundknowledge,languageproficiency   level,motivation,strategyuse,andculturally

shapedbeliefsaboutthereading(Wallace1992;AebersoldandField1997;Carrell;Devine

and1998;Gessesse   1999).   Hedge(2000)alsostatesthatinrecentyearstheterm'interactive'

(CarrellandDevine   1988)hasbeenusedtodescribetheforeignlanguagereadingprocess.

Interactivedescribesadynamicrelationshipwithatextasthereader'struggles'tomakesense

ofit.Intryingtocreatemeaningfromthetext,youwereundoubtedly involvedinanactive process.

Generally,thebottom-up modelofreadingemphasizesthewrittenorprintedtextandthis modelsaysreading
isdrivenbyaprocessandproceeds   fromparttowholewhereasthetop-
downmodelofreadingemphasizeswhatthereadersbringstothetextanditsaysreadingis

drivenbymeaningandproceedsfrom   wholetopart.Interactivereadingmodel   combinesboth   top-
downandbottom-upreadingmodelsalternatively   oratthesametime.Fromtheabove
threetheoriesofreading   models,Iamsupporter   oftheinteractivemodelofreading.The
reasonisthatwhenanyreaderreadshe/sheemploysbothmodels,i.e.firstthetop-down   modelofreadingthen
automaticallythebottom-upmodelofreadingifcomprehensionfails.

2.7 The Role of the Teacher

Theteachersability   toteachreading   playsadecisiveroleinstudentslearningofthelanguage
skillsandultimately   forthesuccessesofthelearners.Theroleoftheteacheristobe
responsivetothevariedneedsofeachlearner(N'Namida,2005).Tothiseffect,theteacher
hastopresentappropriatetopicsandactivitiesaccordingtothelevelofthestudentsinvolved.
Onthispoint,scholarssaythefollowing.Whendeveloping activitiesforareading programmed,   the
teachers   tacks   should   activate   and   extend   the   students   background
knowledgeshouldinvolvereallifeissueandinterestsdirectlyrelatedtothelearnerandto
whatthatlearnersbelievestobeimportant.Ruddell(1997)citedinN'Namida(2005):

23

McDonough andShaw(1993)alsoinsistontheuseofauthenticmaterialsasopposedto traditionaltypesoftextusedinmostcases.Theteachershouldbearinmindwhetherornot thereadingtextintereststhestudentsthey teach.Nuttall(1996)insistthefollowing rolesand responsibilitiesoftheteacherinteachingareadinglessonarestated: Languageteachershave toenjoyandvaluereadingthemselvesbyshowing thatthey readalot,they needtohelp studentsenjoyand valuereadingbyofferingthemattractivetexts,teachersshouldletstudents understand whatreadinginvolvesandhowlanguageconveysmeaningandhowtextsareput together,they shouldidentifywhatskillstudentslackandworkoutwaystodevelopthese skills,theyshouldchoosesuitabletextsonthebasesofstudent'slevelandage andthey shouldchoose anddeviseeffectivetasksandpractices.Nuttall(1996)dealswiththe roleandresponsibility oftheteacherduringbothintensiveandextensivereading..

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purposeofthisstudy wasto investigate factors affecting college students' reading comprehension skills:thecase ofGambella Teachers Education College. In ordertoachieve thisobjectivetheresearcherhasusedqualitativeand quantitativeresearch methods. Besides, subjects and selectionprocedure, andmethodofdatacollectionareincludedinthemethodologyof thestudy

3.1 Research Design

To answer the research question of this study, the research design that this study used was cross-sectional survey studies. According to Marczyk et al (2005) the survey study is preferable to conduct research employing large numbers of people or respondents questions about their experience and opinions towards the specific issue, events or phenomena. It involved both quantitative and qualitative research methods sinceitsmainobjectiveisconcernedwith investing and describing the characteristicsofapopulationorphenomenonbeingstudiedandwhatisactually affecting students' reading comprehension level.Furthermore,theresearcherfeltthatitwould enablehimto betterunderstand research question

3.2 Participants of the Study

During data collection all first year students were not deployed in their respective departments. They were all taking general courses and it was difficult for the researcher to identify first year students in

the department of English language. Only first and second year students were available attending EFL classes. There were only a total of sixty (60) first and second year English language students and five (5) teachers in the college. Therefore, all first and second year studentsandteachersof English language department at GambellaCollege ofTeachers' Education College were taken as a study population

3.3 Sampling techniques

Since there were only sixty (60) first and second year English language students and five (5) teachers, in order to collect ample information purposive sampling technique wasemployed for both students and teacherstoactupon the informationgathering process. All available five English language teachers and sixty students were taken as sample population.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments`

Forthepurposeofgatheringsatisfactory information,differenttoolswereemployed.The researcher mainly usedquestionnaireandinterview in order to collect large amount of information from the respondents. Interview was only for teachers since they were few in number. It was throughtheseinstrumentsthat thedescriptiveresearchmethodisbetteranalyzed.Inaddition,toincreasethereliabilityof thosedata gatheredthroughtheabovetools, theresearcheralsoused classroom observation. Further detailed description of each instrument is given below:

3.4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to collect large amount of information from the respondents.Eachquestionnaire contained twenty questions drawn from reviewed literature.Thismeans,largeamountof information wascollected fromthe participants.Questionnaire wasused whenfactualinformation was desired.It was alsoused whenthe researcher wasinterested tocollect large amount ofinformationatthesametimewithina shortperiodoftime(Fraenkeland Wallen,2009andBestandKahn,2006).Thefactualinformationthatthe researcherneededto collect wastheexisting problem of factorsaffecting theimprovement of students' reading comprehension in EFL classroominthe college

3.4.2. Interviews

Interviewing technique was used for this study as a major tool of collecting data needed for understanding the extent, feeling and knowledge of people in the program as suggested by Merriam

(1988) and Best & Khan (1999) for qualitative case studies.In the course of this study, the researcher used focus group discussion (FGD) in order to obtain valuable information from the aforementioned respondents. In thedepartmentofEnglish language, the available five English language teachers wereinterviewedby the researchertocheckthereliabilityoftheresponses. Theinterview w a s usedinorderto verifytheinformationgatheredthroughthequestionnaire.It involved a predetermined sequenceand wordingofthe sameset of questions administered to each respondent. This approach helps to minimize the possibility of biases (Gall and et al,1996).

3.4.3. Classroom Observation

Classroomobservation wasanotherimportant toolthat wasusedforgathering datainthe classroomcontext.Theresearcher observed each teacher conducting reading lesson twice. All ofthe partsthat weregivenfocusinthequestionnaire andinterview were also observed inthe classroombased on the checklistprepared. Thistool wasused asa supplementaryto other tools

3.5. Data collection procedures

To investigatefactorsthataffect the improvement of students'readingcomprehension ability in EFLreadingclassroominthe college,qualitativeandquantitativedatagatheringinstrumentswereusedtocollectdata.To meettherequirements ofsuchprocedures,theinstruments werequestionnaire, interview, andclassroom observation. Thequestionnaireswereusedtogatherdatafromtherespondentsofthe sample population..The classroomobservationwascarriedoutbytheresearcherinthe college.Toincreasethequality oftheresponsesandtherateofreturn,thetime convenientfortherespondentswas arranged.The researcher madethe studyclearand simple to all respondents.

3.6. Method of data analysis

Sincetheapproach involve questionnaire, interview and classroom observation,theanalysisof e a c h typesof datawas carried out independently.Todothequantitativeanalysis, questionnaire, statisticalpackageforsocialsciences(SPSS)version 16was runforstudents' questionnaires.Theanalysisof datawas donethroughdescriptivestatisticssuchasfrequency andpercentage. Thatis, the collected data was organized,coded,andtabulatedundersimilarcategory andwereanalyzedby usingSPSS andinterpreted.Onotherhand,thedatagatheredthrough interview questions and classroom observation was analyzed and interpreted one by one..

3.7. Procedure of data analysis

Data analysis is not a simple description of the collected data but a process by which the researcher can bring interpretation to the data in relation to the projected study (Cohen and Morrison, 2000).This procedure includes organizing the data, identifying emerging themes and categorizing the data. Data that was collected through questionnaire was cleaned, coded and entry was made on statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16. Different statistical tools of the SPSS feature like descriptive, percentage and tabulation were used in the analysis. On the other hand, data gathered through interview and classroom observation were analyzed and interpreted verbally one by one.

3.8. Ethical consideration

According to Singh (2006) any researcher who involves human sample subjects in his research has certain responsibilities towards them. Since the activities of the sample subjects were often closely associated with the data collection process, it is appropriate to take into account ethical consideration. Accordingly, the researcher had treated respondents with dignity and inform all about the purpose of the study and they were assured about the confidentiality of the information given by them.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section of theresearchstudy dealswithanalysisandinterpretationofthedatagatheredfrom respondents. Thedataobtainedthroughquestionnaires, interviewandobservationwereanalyzedand interpretedtoanswerthecentralresearchquestion ofthisstudy,thatis,toassessfactorsaffectingstudents' improvement ofreadingcomprehension.

4.1 Analysis and interpretation of datafromthe students 'questionnaire

Questionnairewasthemaintoolofthisstudy.Datawasgatheredfromstudentsandteachers inthestudy areamainlythrough questionnaire, interview and classroom observation.Inthissectionthedatacollectedthrough these tools arepresented.First,thedatafromstudents'questionnaire wasorganizedandpresentedin tablesbyapplyingpercentage.Next, data from teachers' interview and class observation wereorganized andpresentedwithitsdescriptionoftheresultbyusingparagraphs.

4.1.1 Information on students' experience of using reading strategies in EFL classroom

Table 4.1.1.1: How often do you try to guess what the material is about before you read?(Q 1)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	usually	15	25.0	25.0	40.0
	sometime	32	53.3	53.3	93.3
	rarely	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

As it is shown in table 4.1.1.1 above, the students were asked to answer on how often they try to guess what the material is about before they read it. Theresponses showed that15%ofthe respondentsclaimedthey alwaystryto guesswhatthematerialisaboutbeforethey read it, 25% of them responded that they usually try to guess what the material is about before they read,53.3% of them which are the majority of the respondents said that they sometimes use this strategy, 6.7% of the respondents said they rarely use this strategy and none of them said they use it. From this we can understand that most of the college students sometimes try to preview the material before they read it. But this is not enough since reading is done for purpose, a good reader should always preview the material before he/she read it. In this regard, one can conclude that most of the students have difficulty in trying to guess what the material is about before they read it.

Table 4.1.1.1: Difficulty of self questioning to check understanding of a text (Q 2)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	usually	6	10.0	10.0	25.0
	sometimes	33	55.0	55.0	80.0
	rarely	11	18.3	18.3	98.3
	13	1	1.7	1.7	100.0

Table 4.1.1.1: Difficulty of self questioning to check understanding of a text (Q 2)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	usually	6	10.0	10.0	25.0
	sometimes	33	55.0	55.0	80.0
	rarely	11	18.3	18.3	98.3
	13	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.2 above, the students were asked to answer on how often they ask themselves to check their understanding of a text they read. The responses indicated that 15% of the respondents said they always ask themselves to check their understanding of a text, 10% said they usually do it, 55% which is the majority of the respondents said they sometimes ask themselves to check their understanding of a text, 18.3 said rarely and only 1.7% of them said they never ask themselves to check their understanding of a text at college level. As we can learn from the responses, one can conclude that most of the college students do not always ask themselves to check their understanding of a text but they sometimes do it. This means that they do have difficulty of self questioning to check their understanding of a text

Table 4.1.1.3: Difficulty of underlining information in a text to help you remember it (Q 3)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	usually	6	10.0	10.0	16.7
	sometimes	29	48.3	48.3	65.0

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	rarely	16	26.7	26.7	91.7
	never	5	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.3 above, students were asked to answer on how often they underline information in a text to help them remember it when they read. From the responses, 6.3% said that they always underline information in a text to help them remember it when they read, 10%, said they usually do it, 48.3% of them which are the majority said that they sometime underline information in a text to help them remember it, 26.7% said they rarely do it and only 8.3% of the respondents answered that they don't have experience of underlining information in a text to help them remember it when they read at college level. In this regard, we can conclude that most of the college students do not use this strategy to help them remember the information

Table 4.1.1.4: Difficulty of reading the material quickly to understand main idea (Q 4)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	usually	3	5.0	5.0	10.0
	sometimes	28	46.7	46.7	56.7
	rarely	21	35.0	35.0	91.7
	never	5	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table .4.1.1.4, students were asked to give information on how often they read a text quickly to help them understand the main idea when they read. The responses indicated that 5% of the respondents said they always read a text quickly to help them understand the main idea and the same figure said they usually do it. The majority of the respondents which account for 46.7% of the total respondents said they sometimes read a text quickly to help them understand the main idea, 35% said they rarely read a text quickly and only 8.3% of them said they do not use this strategy. From this, one can conclude that most of the students do not always read a text quickly to understand the main idea but

sometimes. This indicates that most of the students have difficulty of reading a text quickly to understand the main idea.

Table 4.1.1.5: Frequency of finding supporting ideas from the main idea of a text (Q 5)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	usually	11	18.3	18.3	21.7
	sometimes	23	38.3	38.3	60.0
	rarely	18	30.0	30.0	90.0
	never	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

As displayed in table 4.1.1.5 above, the responses revealed that 3.3% of the respondents said they always find supporting ideas from the main idea, 18.3% said they usually find supporting ideas from the main idea, 38.3% of the respondents which is the largest portion said sometimes and 30% of them said they rarely find supporting ideas from the main idea and 10% of them said they never find supporting ideas from the main idea of a text. From the responses one can learn that most of the students do not always find supporting ideas from the main idea at college level but only sometimes. From this we can conclude that most of the students in the college do not have experience of finding supporting ideas from the main idea.

Table 4.1.1.6: Frequency of trying to guess the contextual meaning of new word and phrases (Q 6)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	usually	11	18.3	18.3	23.3
	sometimes	25	41.7	41.7	65.0
	rarely	15	25.0	25.0	90.0
	never	6	10.0	10.0	100.0

Table 4.1.1.6: Frequency of trying to guess the contextual meaning of new word and phrases (Q 6)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	usually	11	18.3	18.3	23.3
	sometimes	25	41.7	41.7	65.0
	rarely	15	25.0	25.0	90.0
	never	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.6 above, students were asked how often they try to guess the contextual meaning of a word and phrases they don't know when they read a text. The responses showed that only 5% of the respondents always try to guess the meaning of new words and phrases when they read a text, 18.3% said they usually use this strategy, 41.7% of the respondents which are the majority pointed out that they sometimes try to guess the meaning of new words and phrases when they read a text, 25% said 'rarely' and 10% of them said they never use this strategy at all. From the responses, one can conclude that most of the college students do not always try to guess the meaning of new word and phrases when they read a text but only sometimes. This shows that students have difficulty of guessing the meaning of new words and phrases when they read a text.

Table 4.1.1.7: Frequency of predicting what will happen throughout the reading (Q 7)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	usually	9	15.0	15.0	16.7
	sometimes	21	35.0	35.0	51.7
	rarely	22	36.7	36.7	88.3
	never	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.7 above, students were asked on how often they try to predict what will happen throughout the reading before they read a text. The responses indicated that only 1.7% of them claimed that they always predict what will happen throughout the reading, 15% said they usually predict what will happen throughout the reading, 35% of them pointed out that they sometimes predict what will happen throughout the reading, 36.7% said rarely and 11.7% of them said they never use this strategy at all. From the result, one can conclude that most of the students do not have experience of predicting what will happen throughout the reading.

Table 4.1.1.8: Difficulty of applying reading strategies when reading a text(Q 8)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	usually	8	13.3	13.3	20.0
	sometimes	21	35.0	35.0	55.0
	rarely	20	33.3	33.3	88.3
	never	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.8 above, students were generally asked to answer on how often they apply or use reading strategies when they read a text. The data indicated that 6.7% of the respondents always apply reading strategies when they read, 3.3% ticked 'usually', 35% of them pointed out that they sometimes apply reading strategies, 33.3% said 'rarely' and 11.7% of the respondents said they never apply reading strategies when they read a text. From this result, one can easily conclude that most of the college students do not always apply reading strategies when they read a text.

Table 4.1.1.9: Frequency of using contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	usually	3	5.0	5.0	6.7
	sometimes	30	50.0	50.0	56.7
	ra rely	20	33.3	33.3	90.0
	never	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.9 above, the respondents were asked to answer on how often they use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word. The data revealed that 1.7% of the students always use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word, 5% said 'usually', 50% which is half of the respondents answered that they sometimes use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word, 33.3% said 'rarely' and 10% of them said they never use this strategy at all. As we can understand from the result, we can conclude that most of the students in the college do not always use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word when they read but only sometimes

Table 4.1.1.10: Frequency of understanding the main idea of a text (Q 10)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	usually	6	10.0	10.0	13.3
	sometimes	20	33.3	33.3	46.7
	rarely	24	40.0	40.0	86.7
	never	8	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In the above table, students were asked to answer on how often they understand the main idea of a text when they read. The result showed that only 3.3% of them always understand the main idea of a text, 10% said they usually understand the main idea, 33.3% said they sometimes understand it, 40% which the largest portion of the respondents indicated that they rarely understand the main idea of a text when they read and 13.3% said they never understand the main idea of a text when they read. From the analysis, we can conclude that most of the college students do not always pick up the main idea of a text but only sometimes and rarely.

Table 4.1.1.11: Difficulty of summarizing ideas after reading a text(Q 11)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	usually	17	28.3	28.3	33.3
	sometimes	26	43.3	43.3	76.7
	rarely	9	15.0	15.0	91.7
	never	5	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

As it is indicated in table 4.1.1.11 above, students were asked to answer on how often they summarize ideas after they read a text. The responses indicated that only 3% of the respondents said they always summarize ideas after they read, 28.3% said 'usually', 43.3% pointed out that they sometimes summarize ideas after they read, 15% of the respondents said that they rarely do it and 8.3% indicated that they don't have experience of summarizing ideas after they read a text. As we can understand from the analysis, one can conclude that most of the college students do not have experience of summarizing ideas after they read a text.

Table 4.1.1.12: Difficulty of understanding what is expected when reading a text (Q12)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	usually	9	15.0	15.0	18.3
	sometimes	27	45.0	45.0	63.3
	rarely	16	26.7	26.7	90.0
	never	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.12 above, students were asked to respond on how often they understand what is expected when they read a text. The result showed that only 3.3% of the respondents said they always understand what is expected when they read a text, 15% said they usually understand it, 45% which is the largest portion of the respondents said they sometimes understand what is expected when they read a text, 26.7 said 'rarely' and 10% of them said they never understand what is expected when they read a text. From the responses, one can conclude that most of the students lack experience of understanding what is expected when they read a text=.

Table 4.1.1.13: Provision of students with technique and strategies for understanding a reading text(Q 13)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	usually	6	10.0	10.0	11.7
	sometimes	26	43.3	43.3	55.0
	rarely	20	33.3	33.3	88.3
	never	7	11.7	11.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

In table 4.1.1.13 above, students were asked to answer on how often their teachers provide them with techniques and strategies for understanding a text. The responses indicated that only 1.7% of the respondents said their teachers always provide them with techniques and strategies for understanding a text, 10% said 'usually, 43.3% pointed out that their teachers sometimes provide them with reading techniques and strategies, 33.3% said 'rarely' and 11.7% of them said their teachers never provide them with reading techniques and strategies at all. Here, technique and strategies refer to the ability of understanding the main idea, using contextual clues to guess the meaning summarizing ideas from the main idea, prediction, etc. Based on the responses one can conclude that most of the teachers do not always provide their students with reading techniques and strategies for understanding a text.

Table 4.1.1.14: Involvement of student in selecting a text for their lesson (Q14)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	usually	2	3.3	3.3	5.0
	sometimes	17	28.3	28.3	33.3
	rarely	20	33.3	33.3	66.7
	never	20	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Lastly, as displayed in table 4.1.1 14 above, students were asked whether their teachers involve them in selecting a text for their lesson or not. The responses revealed that only 1.7% of them said their teachers always involve them in selecting a text for their lesson, 3.3% said 'usually', 28.3% indicated 'sometimes', 33.3% said rarely and the same figure pointed out that their teachers never involve them in selecting a text for their lesson at all. As we can understand from the responses, one can conclude that most of the teachers do not always give opportunity for their students to select a text for their lessons.

In conclusion, basedonthe overallanalysis of the data made in each of the tables above,onecan conclude thattherearemajorfactorsthat impede the improvement ofstudents'readingcomprehension skillsinEFL classroom. These factors are; lack of experience to guess what the materials are about before they read, lack of self questioning to check the understanding of a text, lack of experience to

jot down note when they read, lack of experience to underline information to be remembered, lack of experience to use reference materials, lack of experience to read the material quickly to understand the main idea, inadequate experience to find supportive ideas, inadequate experience to guess the meaning of new word, inadequate experience to guess what will happen throughout the reading comprehension, lack of experience to apply reading strategies, insufficient knowledge to use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word and insufficient knowledge to understand the main idea of a text, lack of experience to summarize ideas after they read a text, lack of experience to understand what is expected when they read a text, lack of provision of reading techniques and strategies by their teachers to understand a text and absent of involving students in selecting a text for their lessons are the major factors that affect the improvement of students reading comprehension skills in EFL classrooms.

4.2 Discussion of interview items with English teachers

InthedepartmentofEnglish language, the proposed seven English teachers were not found during data collection. Two of them left the college for another career. The remaining five seven English language teachers wereinterviewedby the researchertochecktherereliabilityoftheirresponses. Theinterview was usedinorderto verifytheinformationgatheredthroughthequestionnaire.It involved a predetermined sequenceand wordingofthe sameset of questions administered to each respondent. This approach helps to minimize the possibility of biases (Gall and et al,1996). Thedatacollected through interview is qualitative.

The interviewwasbelieved togivedeeperinformationintheareaof investigatingfactorsthataffectreadingcomprehension.Inthisregard,allpossiblewayswere usedtocommunicatewiththeEFL teachers in the college.Theanalysiswasmade onthedatafromfiveEnglishteachersbringing them togetherbecausetheinterviewitemsused weresimilarforallparticipants. Andduetothisreason,beforetheanalysis,pointsraisedas responseson eachquestionwereorganizedtothe similarbasesonebyonesoastobringthem together.

Interviewer (Q 1): .Doyouthinkthatyour college issuitableplaceforthestudents toreadandbecomegood futuregeneration?

Interviewees (Answer): Our College is not suitable place for students to read, There are no enough reading materials.

The first question that was raised was to investigate whether the college is suitable place for their students to read and become good future generation. The interviewees said that the college is not suitable place for students to read by reasoning that the college has no adequate reading material and lack ventilators in the library. Indeed, it can be concluded that lack of reading materials and discomfort in the library are some of the factors affecting students' reading comprehension

Interviewer (Q 2): Areyourstudentsgoodat readingcomprehension?

Interviewees (Answer): Our students are not good at reading comprehension

The second question that was asked was to know whether their students are good at reading comprehension or not. The interviewees reacted to the question by saying that the majority of their students are insufficient at reading comprehension. That is, their students do not read and comprehend the meaning of a text effectively. They indicated that there are a lot of problems contributing for this case that forced their students not to improve their reading comprehension effectively. Some of the major problems they mentioned are lack of adequate reading materials and the influence of mother tongue which comes from the confusion of English alphabets and mother tongue. They also mentioned that their students lack interest in reading texts written in English language. 'Leave alone reading in English, writing is the worst!', exclaimed one of the respondents.

Based on the responses, the major problems that made students at Gambella Teachers' college not to be good at reading comprehension are shortage of reading materials, the influence of mother tongue and lack of their interest in reading texts written in English.

Interviewer (Q 3):.Outof modules and handouts whatother reading materialsdoyouuseto teachyourstudentsreading comprehension?

Interviewees (Answer): We mostly use grammar books for the sake of improving our students' ability to pass the exams.

The third question that was forwarded to the respondents was to investigate whether they provide additional reading materials apart from handout and modules prepared by the college to improve their students' reading comprehension. The respondents (teachers) answered that they mostly use grammar books for the sake of enhancing their students' ability to pass exams and tests. From this

we can conclude that teachers do not provide their students with additional reading materials apart from module and handout they prepare

Interviewer (Q 4):.Are there enough books in yours school library so as students to read and outside elsewhere?

Interviewees (Answer): It is possible to conclude that there are no books at all. The existing books are not important for our students

The fourth question was asked to investigate whether the college library is equipped with enough books or not for their students to read to improve their reading comprehension skills.

The interviewees said that based on the existing reality; it is possible to conclude that there are no books at all. The existing books are not as such important for students to read to improve their reading comprehension ability. This tells us that the library is not equipped with the necessary reading materials to help students improve their reading comprehension ability

Interviewer (Q 5): 6**.**WhatarethemajorproblemsthatweakenyourstudentsreadingcomprehensioninEnglish?

Interviewees (Answers): The major problems are lack of reading materials, insufficient use of reading strategies and poor background knowledge

The fifth question was asked to investigate the major problems that weaken their students' reading comprehension. The interviewees (teachers) said that the major problems that weaken their students' reading comprehension are; lack of reading materials, insufficient use of reading strategies and poor background knowledge. As mentioned by the interviewees, lack of reading materials, insufficient use of reading strategies and poor background knowledge affect students' reading comprehension. Insufficient use of reading strategies include inability to use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word, inability to find supportive details from the main idea, inability to preview a text, and the use of reading phases (pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities).

In general, responsesgivenbyalmostallteachersinterviewed weresimilar. Issuesdiscussedabovefromquestion1- 5mainly emphasizeonmajorfactorslikelack of readingmaterials, insufficient use of reading strategies, poor background knowledge, etc; were the major factors that hinder the improvement of students' reading comprehension skills.

4.3 Presentation of classroom observation result

Thefollowingobservationchecklistispresentedtoobservehowwellteacheruseandteach

readingskilltotheirstudents.

No	Observation of pre-reading, while reading and pos reading activities in the classroom	Alternatives			
		Day 1		Day 2	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Isthenumberofstudentsintheclassappropriatetopractice readingactivities?	x		x	
2	Istheseatingarrangementofthestudentsintheclass appropriateforreadingcomprehensionactivities?	x		x	
3	Doestheteachergiveclearinstructiontothestudents?	x		x	
4	Werethestudentsmadetodiscusstopicbeforetheyreadtext?		x		x
5	Werestudentsaskedtopredictwhatthereadingpassagewas about?		x		x
6	Doteachersstartsreadinglessonbypromoting readingstrategies		x		x
7	Doteachersgiveopportunitiesforstudentsto readsilently?	x		x	
8	Doteachersguidestudentstoskimthetextto getthemainideas?		x		x
9	Do teachersguidestudentstoscanto g e t specificinformation?		x		x
10	Doestheteacher encouragethestudentstorelatethetopic with theirexperience?		x		x
11	Doteachersguidestudentstosummarizethe textbytheirownwordsat theendofreading?		*x*		*x*

The table above is the observation checklist used by the researcher during the reading classroom observation. It contains eleven (11) items that summarized the overall activities during delivery of reading lessons in the classroom. Using this checklist, each teacher was observed twice while

conducting   reading   lessons.   Theintentionwasto investigatehowmuchattentionteachersgivetothetreatmentofreadingstrategy intheirreading classes.

Discussion of pre-reading activities

The first things observed by the researcher were the number of students and the seating arrangement in the classroom. The researcher observed that the number of students and the seating arrangement in the classroom was appropriate for reading comprehension activities. The number of students was an average of thirty (30) in each section. The researcher observed the teachers giving clear instruction about reading comprehension activities. But during lesson delivery, all of the teachers started their reading lesson without doing pre-reading activities. They did not either make their students discuss the topic or pre-teach vocabularies before reading.

Readingskillsisacombinationofminorskills,suchasvocabulary   building.Vocabulary   difficulty meanonlystoringanumberofwordsinthemindwithoutunderstanding   their meaning.InconnectiontothisCallister(1942)say   that   increasingof   vocabulary isnotaquestionofincreasingoutstockofwords;itismorefundamentally   a   questionofincreasing ourstockofmeaningsothatwemay   usewordsmoreeffectively   interpretingthethoughtsofothersandin expressingtheirthoughts.   Thismeansstoringanumberof   wordswiththeirmeaningsisthekeytoreadand understand differentmaterials,and to expressourfeelingto others. Having all these reality, teachers ignored pre-teaching vocabularies

What   can   be   concluded   isthattheteachersdidnotusepre-readingphase activitiesatalltodrawtheattentionofstudentstowardsthetexttheyweregoingtoread.   This   means   that teachers did not start their lessons by promoting the strategies.In other words students were not made to activate their knowledge so as to gain new information.Manywriterstellusthatthepre-reading activitiesaresignificantfortheactual   readingpractices.Harmer(2003:70)says"teachersshouldgive studentshints so thattheycan predictwhatiscomingtoo".

Discussion of while reading activities.

In item no 7 from the observation checklist the researcher observed all teachers ordering their students to read silently during their respective periods. ,BakerandWestrup(2000)statethat students needpracticeintherealllifeactivityofsilentreading.Ifthey   don'tusesilent

reading,theteachercanhelpthembecome betterreadersbygiving atimelimit. Regarding skimming and scanning, no one observed trying to teach the strategies. This means that the reading strategies ofgettingthemainideasofthetextandspecific information were not used in the reading lessons during class observation. Though,Grellet(1981) saysthatbothskimming andscanningarespecificreadingtechniquesnecessary forquick and efficientreading. But all the teachers observeddid not givechancefortheirstudents toskimandscanthetext.

Thedatagatheredthroughtheobservationquestionstellsusthatthestudentsdonothaveenoughawarenessab outthecognitive readingstrategies andtheyarenot usingthesestrategiestoenhancetheir readingskill.

Discussion of post-reading activities

AccordingtoBakerandWestru's(2000:67)explanation,someoftheactivitiesforstudents todoafterreadingatext are retellingthestory, rewritingthestoryintheirownwords and discussing thestoryinpairsorsmallgroups,givingtheiropinionsofwhattheyhaveread,orsuggestingdifferentendings. But during classroom observation, noonewasobservedasguiding hisstudentstosummarizethetextintheirownwords. Summarization is ability to retell the key points of a text in a logical sequence and hold these details in memory is an important comprehension strategy Often these key points are needed later in the text to make sense of what is read. For example, a small but important detail may help a reader to solve the mystery in the novel (Fountas&Pinnell, 2006, p. 48). Being able to summarize information effectively is an invaluable skill for readers of all ages. But none of the teachers applied this strategy to help their students improve their reading comprehension skills.

In summary ofthedatafromtheobservation,notmanystrategiesforreadingwereobserved.It canbenoticedfromtheresultthattheteacherparticipantsdidnotpayattentiontothe teachingofdifferenttypesof readingstrategies.As aresultreadingstrategiestrainingwasnot givenforstudents whichplaysagreatroleinenhancingtheirreadingskill.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Thischapterismeanttosummarizethestepsfollowedtoconductthestudy andtostatethe outcomefoundinbrief.It alsodealswithwhatshouldbedonetosolvetheproblemindicated.

Asithasbeenmentioned inthispaper,thisstudy focusedon investigating factorsthataffect the improvement of students' readingcomprehension in EFL classroom atGambella Teachers Education College.Themajorobjectiveofthestudywas to investigate problems that hinder the improvement of students 'reading comprehension skills.

Tothisend,differentinstrumentswereemployed,suchas questionnaire, interview andclassroomobservation.

Insummaryofdatacollected,analyzedanddiscussedontheresearchquestions,theresultof thedatashowedthatstudents'competencyofreadingactivitywaslow.Thishashappened duetoteachersandstudentsrelatedproblems.Thefollowing weresomeoftheproblems assessedin this studywhichaffectsstudents' improvementof reading comprehension ability.

Firststudents'response onquestionnaire indicatedthat,studentsdidnotusedifferent typesofreadingstrategies becausethey havenomuchawarenessaboutthereading strategies.Thisresultedfromlow levelofproficiencyinEnglishingeneralandreadingskillinparticular.Thiswassupported byteacher's observationinwhichteacherssuggestedthatstudents in the college come from poor educational background withoutclearawarenessofreadingactivities.Theirresponsestothequestionnaire indicated thatstudentswere notaware ofmostofthepointsaboutthereading strategyandtheydidnotusereading strategiesfrequently.

Second,lackoftrainingaboutreadingactivitieswasalsofoundas another factor forfailureofreadingactivities. The resultof classroom observationonthesepointsshowedthatteachersdidnot give readingactivitytraining.

Third,lackofguidance,practice,motivationandexposuretodifferenttypesofreadingstrategyweremention ed assomeotherfactorsaffectingstudents'readingcomprehensionabilities.

5.1 Conclusions

Basedonwhathasbeen investigated and foundoutasresultoftheresearchstudy,thefollowingconclusions were drawn by the researcher

- ✓ Most of the students have difficulties in trying to guess what the material is about before they read it.
- ✓ Most of the college students do not always ask themselves to check their understanding of a text but they sometimes do it.
- ✓ Most of the students don't have experience of underlining information in a text when they read to help them remember it
- ✓ Most of the students do not have experience of using additional materials to help them understand what they read.
- ✓ Most of the students have difficulty of reading a text quickly to understand the main idea.
- ✓ Most of the students in the college do not have experience of finding supporting ideas from the main idea.
- ✓ Most of the students have difficulty of guessing the meaning of new words and phrases when they read a text.
- ✓ Most of the students do not have experience of guessing what will happen throughout the reading. Most of the college students do not always apply reading strategies when they read a text.
- ✓ Most of the students in the college do not always use contextual clues to guess the meaning of a word when they read but only sometimes.
- ✓ Most of the college students do not always pick up the main idea of a text but only sometimes and rarely.
- ✓ Most of the college students do not have experience of summarizing ideas after they read a text.
- ✓ Most of the students lack experience of understanding what is expected when they read a text.
- ✓ Most of the teachers do not provide their students with reading techniques and strategies to help them understand a text.
- ✓ Most of the teachers do not always give opportunity for their students to select a text for their lessons.

46

- ✓ Poorbackground knowledge affectsthereadingcomprehensionofthestudentsin thestudyarea.
- ✓ Most of the students do not always comprehend a text written in English because they lack interest in reading it.
- ✓ The motivations they get from their family, teachers, classroom and library do not always help them in reading comprehension.
- ✓ The influence of mother tongue made it more difficult for most of the students to read and comprehend a text in EFL classroom.
- ✓ Theteachersubjectsdidnotgivethelearnerreadingstrategytraining.Theydidnot giveadequatesupportonhowtodevelopreading activities.
- ✓ Accordingtothe analysisofthedata,it isfoundthatteachers:
- ✓ Didnotusereadingstrategieswhiletheyareteachingreading
- ✓ Didnot guideandpracticestudentshowtousereadingactivity.
- ✓ Didnot giveattentiontoreadingactivities,onlyfocusesonthetextbookinstruction
- ✓ Studentparticipants didnotusedifferenttypesofreading strategiesbecauseofthe followingfactors.
- ✓ Lackoftrainingaboutreadingactivities
- ✓ Lackof awarenessaboutreadingactivities
- ✓ Dependingontheconclusionssummarizedsofar,thefollowingrecommendationsaregiven

.

5.2 Recommendations

Tosolvesome oftheproblemstouched uponandtohelpstudents bemorecompetentintheir readingactivities,thefollowingsuggestionscanbeconsideredbydifferentconcernedbodies.

- ✓ Teachersshould putmorefocusonreadingactivities(strategies)intheirteaching of reading.They shouldclearlyunderstandthepurposeofreadinglessonsandthevalueofthe texts

- ✓ They shoulddiscussthestrategiesineachreading activitiesratherthansimply lettingstudentsreadandtrytoanswerthe comprehension questions.

- ✓ Students'readingactivitiesshouldbeenhancedthroughdeveloping theirabilityofthe languageingeneralandreading skillinparticularfromthegrassrootlevel.

- ✓ Sincereading is oneofthebasiclanguageskills,attentionshouldbegiventodeveloptheircompetency of reading byusingdifferentreading strategies.

- ✓ Teachersshouldworktogethertoarouseinterest ofstudentsinreadingcomprehension.

- ✓ Supplementary readingtextsshouldbedevelopedandmadeavailablesothatstudentswill notrelyonlyontheirtextbooksfortheirreadingcomprehension

- ✓ Studentsshouldbe taughttoread and comprehendthe meaningand messageof the textand teachershavetotakecareofthisfactwhileteachingactivities.

- ✓ Teachersshouldguide, encourage andmakedifferentactivitiesandpracticesinthe classroomabouthowtoreadandhowtousereading activities.Finally,Iwouldliketo recommendthatfurtherstudieshavetobeconductedonthisareaespeciallyonhowto improvestudents'competenceinreadingcomprehensions

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Appendixes

Appendix - A: Students questionnaire

Dear student,

The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate factors that affect reading comprehension. The study can be reliable if and only if you give positive, honest, and genuine responses. Therefore, be free, be frank and objective in responding to the questions provided.

Part I: Information on the factors that affect reading comprehension in EFL classroom.

Put tick mark under the alternative of your choice

	Items (Questions)	Responses of students				
		always	usually	Sometimes	rarely	Never
1	How often do you try to guess what the materials are about before you read?					
2	How often do you ask yourself to check your understanding of a text?					
3	How often do you underline information in a text to help you remember it?					
4	How often do you read the material quickly to help you understand the main idea?					
5	How often do you find supporting ideas from the main idea?					
6	How often do you try to guess the meaning of words and phrases that you don't know when you read a text?					
7	How often do you guess what will happen when you read a text?					
8	How often do you apply reading strategies when you read a text?					
9	How often do you use contextual clue to guess the meaning of a difficult word?					
10	How often do you understand the main idea of a text when you read it?					
11	How often do you summarize ideas after you read a text?					
12	How often do you understand what is expected when you do reading?					
13	How often does yourteacherprovideyou withtechniquesandstrategiesfor					

	understandingareadingpassage?					
14	How often does yourteacherinvolveyouinselecting texts for yourlessons?					

Appendix- B: Interview for teachers

IwouldliketoinformyouthatIamconductingaresearchintofactorsthataffectthe improvement of college studentsreading comprehension ability. Your sincereresponsetomy interviewquestions areof greathelptothesuccessofthestudy.Iamconducting anM.Aresearchentitled "An Investigation of Factors Affecting the Improvement of Students' Reading Comprehension: the case of Gambella Teachers' College". Thepurposeofthisinterviewistogetherdatafortheabovetitleforthepartial fulfillmentofmy masterofartsinTEFL.Therefore,Ikindly requestyoutorespondtothe questionsreally.Yourresponsewillbekeptconfidential.

Thankyouin advanceforyourcooperation1`

Questionforinterview(onlyforteache rs)

1.Doyouthinkthatyourschoolissuitableplaceforthestudents   toreadandbecomegood futuregenerations?

2.Areyourstudentsgoodat readingcomprehension?

3.Outof   modules   and   handouts   whatother   reading   materialsdoyouuseto teachyourstudentsreading comprehension?

4. Are there enough books in yours school library   so as students to read and outside elsewhere?

5.WhatarethemajorproblemsthatweakenyourstudentsreadingcomprehensioninEnglish?

Appendix - C: Classroom observation checklist

Thefollowingobservationchecklistispresentedtoobservehowwellteacheruseandteach readingskilltotheirstudents.

No	Items to be observed	Alternatives			
		Day 1		Day 2	
		Yes			No
1	Isthenumberofstudentsintheclassappropriatetopractice readingactivities?				
2	Istheseatingarrangementofthestudentsintheclass appropriateforreadingcomprehensionactivities?				
3	Doestheteachergiveclearinstructiontothestudents?				
4	Werethestudentsmadetodiscusstopicbeforetheyreadtext?				
5	Werestudentsaskedtopredictwhatthereadingpassagewas about?				
6	Doteachersstartsreadinglessonbypromoting readingstrategies				
7	Doteachersgiveopportunitiesforstudentsto readsilently?				
8	Doteachersguidestudentstoskimthetextto getthemainideas?				
9	Do teachersguidestudentstoscanto get specificinformation?				
10	Doestheteacher encouragethestudentstorelatethetopic with theirexperience?				
11	Doteachersguidestudentstosummarizethe textbytheirownwordsat theendofreading?				