

## **An investigation into school setting related challenges of teaching and learning reading skill using communicative language teaching: Focus on Belle Secondary and preparatory School.**

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### **ABSTRACTS**

The main study of this research is to explore the school setting related challenges of teaching and learning reading skill using communicative language teaching: focus on Belle Secondary and preparatory School. Descriptive research design was employed. The data were collected through semi-structured interview and classroom observations and questionnaires. Four grade eleven EFL teachers of the Belle Secondary and Preparatory were selected as a participant of the study without any sampling due to their limited number. Students were selected the sample using Slovene's sample size determination formula :( I.e.  $n = N/1+N(e)^2$ ). The Interview data were tape recorded and transcribed into textual form and the classroom observation data were noted to analyze. The study divulged that there are school setting related challenges both EFL teachers and students face when they were learning and teaching reading using CLT. Some of the selected challenges are: lack of desks and chairs, lack of enough seating place, large class size, and adequate place between chairs and desks. Hence, based on the findings, recommendations were made. In concurrence to this, the researcher recommends that the concerned bodies should give due attention to overcome selected problems which hampers teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

**KEY WORDS: Reading Skills, CLT, School Setting and Reading Comprehension**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In Ethiopia, English is used in many areas such as politics, economics, tourism, electronic media, culture, science and technology. English is the language used to achieve better academic results as well as reading the latest achievements of science and technology if it is taught through communicative language learning approach effectively (MOE, 1997). Consequently, it is necessary for all literate Ethiopians to have a good command of English language to convince the growing needs of their developing country.

Reading is one of the four major skills. It provides the learners with a source of comprehensible input and serves to facilitate communicative competence in other language skills (Harmer, 2001). Furthermore, reading ability has always been viewed as critical to academic success. Reading is a receptive and decoding skill in which the reader receives the writer's message and tries to recreate the writer's message to the extent possible (Chastain, 1988: 216). The goal of reading is to make meaning or to recreate the writer's meaning.

Every nation today, including Ethiopia, pursues scientific progression. This means there is need for instructive learners to appropriate reading practices in order to facilitate their development of reading expertise expected of them as they build their professional career communicatively.

The nature of communicative language teaching and its concerns of creating an interaction while teaching reading, in the field of language learning and teaching which has been assigned by the Ethiopian ministry of education. However, students are seen not well in reading. This is the researcher has seen in his long years' experiences of teaching reading in the school selected for this study. Thus, the researcher was inspired to identify factors that hamper teaching and learning reading using CLT in Belle Secondary and Preparatory School.

### **II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Teachers and students face many problems while teaching and learning English as a second language, in particular reading. A recent survey conducted by Malik (2002) titled "Difficulties Faced by the Teachers in English Language at Elementary School Level in Haryana State" showed that the main area of difficulty faced by the teachers was teaching reading ability which was followed by poetry and prose comprehension and

composition. Carter and Nunan (2002:22) raised the question whether problems with reading is a reading problem or a language problem. Not surprisingly, they concluded that it involved both. But to other critics they differ from each other. Francis (2000:1) explained that “reading problem is the presence of more errors in a brain’s neurological network that clearly direct the interactive, predictive, integrative or mental processes known as “reading” which may be worsen by witness in the reader’s desire to read”.

Brist (2002) explains that reading problem can be identified by several symptoms like reversing letters or words on writing letters, loosing ones’ place, reading affluently or inaccurately, remembering little of one has read or reading with poor comprehension”. Reading difficulty refers to an unexpected failure in learning to read, write or spell in spite of normal senses, normal intelligence and adequate opportunity and motivation (Peyrard- Janvid, et al, 2004).

For purposes of this study, reading difficulty is the failure to read fluently and this includes mispronouncing, omitting, substituting as well as adding words. Lack of understanding at the level of words and sentences and lack of comprehension also contribute to reading difficulties. Students have problems reading because they lack specific skills necessary for proficient reading. When a student has reading problems, there is a need to identify where specific deficiencies exist. Some scholars relate reading difficulties to neurological factors while others relate them to environmental factors. Discussions have been held in the United States of America and Scandinavian countries to find out whether reading difficulties are caused by psychological or neurological factors (Maruyama, 2007).

Besides, as CLT was spread around the world to contexts different from that e it was developed (believed to be developed in Europe and America), it is essential to document the prevalent constraints in our context of language teaching and learning. However, current research was focus challenges of teaching and learning reading using CLT in Belle Secondary and Preparatory School rather than CLT itself. Therefore, specifically, this study was intended to achieve the following objective:

✓ To find out school setting related challenges in teaching and learning reading skills using CLT in Belle Secondary and Preparatory School.

### **III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

It is said that research design is selected based on the purpose and nature of a research. The purpose of this study is identifying the challenges of teaching and learning reading skill using CLT. To achieve the purpose of this study, descriptive survey design was employed that includes both quantitative and qualitative techniques of data analysis. The activities to be performed in this study were descriptive in their nature. For this reason, descriptive research design was used to conduct this study.

#### **3.2. Research Setting**

This study was conducted at Belle Secondary and Preparatory School. The major reason why the researcher selected this school to conduct his study is that the researcher observed challenges and problems that teachers face of teaching reading through the communicative approach.

#### **3.3. Participants of the Study**

In this study, EFL teachers and students of grade nine were selected. There are six English language teachers in the selected school. All six English language teachers were selected for this study. Thus, it is believed that they can provide the data needed for this study as they can provide efficient data about the practices in the classroom. These six participant teachers have experience in the teaching of English as a foreign language. Their experiences range from one up to thirty years. Four of them are first degree holders in English language and the remaining two are M.A in TEFL.

#### **3.4. Sampling Techniques**

The researcher was used all six EFL teachers without any sampling technique. This is because of their limited number which is manageable for this study. On the other hand, among 838 students, the researcher was selected the sample using Slovene’s sample size determination formula:

(I.e.  $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$ )

Where: n= is sample size

N= total population

(e) =0.05 or allowance of random error.

$838 \times 0.0025 = 2.095 + 1 = 3.095 = 838 / 3.095 = 270$

Therefore, 270 students were selected for filling the questionnaire. For interview the entire teachers who teach English were interviewed. Both total teachers and their students were observed during teaching and learning process of reading lessons.

### **3.5. Pilot Study**

Before gathering data for the main study, the instruments were piloted in order to ensure their validity and reliability. To apply this, the researcher was carrying out a pilot study on a non-selected secondary school in Kindo Koysha Woreda particularly in Hanaze Secondary School. In that non-sampled school, the researcher distributed questionnaires to hundred students. The data collected during the pilot study was analyzed to see the clarity of the questions and effectiveness of the instruments to collect the desired data. Based on the result of pilot data analysis, the instruments were improved, modified and finally used for the main study. Therefore, it avoids the problems in validity and reliability, the instruments was tested in advance to the actual study then the errors in items were corrected.

### **3.6. Methods of Data Collection**

To collect valuable and relevant data, three important instruments of data collection were employed. These are semi-structured interview, questionnaire and non-participant observation. These three tools will be developed primarily to meet the objectives of the study; and the items to be designed in connection with the literature review, which deals with challenges of teaching and learning reading through the communicative approach.

#### **3.6.1. Semi-structured interview**

Interview is relevant to get information concerning attitude, perception, or emotion and practice to certain questions which is not possible through questionnaire and classroom observation (Koul, 1984 and Selinger and Shohamy, 1988). Among the types of interview, the researcher will employ semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interview according to Merriam (1988), gives ample opportunity to probe for clarification and ask questions appropriate to the respondents' knowledge status. She added that the advantage of semi-structured interview is that it enables researchers to confine the practical and perceptual challenges of the teachers.

The interview was developed primarily to meet the objectives of the study and to answer research questions. Besides, the items designed in connection with the literature review, statements of the problem and background of the study which deals with challenges of teaching and learning reading using CLT. Related to this, the purpose of the interview was to substantiate the results of the study and to obtain a greater depth of information from the EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory School. Thus, the researcher was set semi-structured interview in English that was contained both open-ended and closed-ended items to gather relevant data from teachers about the challenges, perceptions and practices of teaching reading through the communicative approach.

#### **3.6.2. Questionnaire**

The main purpose of the questionnaire is to explore the challenges of teaching reading using CLT. The questionnaire was containing four main sections. The first part was intended to collect the background information of the respondents relevant to the study. Teachers' and students perception related problems in teaching and learning reading using CLT. School setting related challenges that can affect when teaching and learning reading using CLT.

#### **3.6.3. Classroom Observation**

The classroom observation is important to get direct and practical information rather than self-report accounts (Dornyei, 2007). Sarantakos (2005) points out that in non-participant observation, the researcher or observer do not take part in the classroom teaching learning process and the observer simply observes the existing situation. Besides, he expresses that in non-participant observation the role of the observer is not part of the activity. Hence, among types of observation, non-participant observation will be employed to collect data for this study. That is the researcher was took a seat in the classroom and observed what teachers would be actually doing while teaching reading. To gather information in an effective and efficient way, the researcher designed and administered classroom observation in line with research questions.

### **3.7. Methods of Data Analysis**

The data which was gathered from teachers and students through interview, classroom observation and questionnaires would be analyzed, interpreted and discussed. The interview data was transcribed and changed into textual data form. Quantitative data which was collected from the respondents and would be analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0). Finally, the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Based on the results, conclusions and recommendations were made.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS**

##### **4.1 Teachers Response on School setting related challenges in teaching reading skills using CLT**

EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and preparatory school interviewed to rejoiner does the classroom has enough seating place. In reply to this almost all EFL teachers of the forwarded that the classroom has not enough seating place which means classroom is overcrowded by students and there is no available class seating place or space when teaching reading make use of communicative language teaching approach through continuous and constructive feedback.

With regard to this, EFL teachers fail to teach reading using communicative language learning approach. This implies that seating place or lack of seating place can affect the proper implementation of teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Henceforth, from the responses of the interview one can clinch that seating places can affect teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. This was again verified by classroom observation and when the researcher observed that whether the classroom seating place is suits for teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. The classroom seats has shortage of seating places and this influenced to teach reading using communicative language teaching approach.

Teachers were asked to reply whether or not does movable chairs affects teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching method. In rejoinder to this, all teachers of Belle secondary and preparatory school replied that movable desks can affects teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. There is no sufficient movable desks in aforementioned school and it could affected them to practice effectively when they were teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach.

This implies that movable desks can affects positively or negatively while EFL teachers were teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Henceforth, it is possible to say that movable desks can affects the proper implementation of teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. This infers that EFL teachers of Belle secondary and preparatory school teachers facing the movable desk related challenges to put effective practice in EFL reading skill classroom using communicative language teaching approach.

EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory school were interviewed to retort whether or not adequate place between chairs & desks related challenges can affects teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching method. In rejoinder to this, six of all interviewed teachers were reported that they were facing challenges in teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach that is because of inadequate place between chairs and desks. Therefore, it is possible to deduce that inadequate place between chairs and desks can affects the proper implementation of teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Henceforth, adequate place between chairs and desks can affect the proper putting into practice when teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach.

EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory school interviewed that whether or not sufficient number of students or large class size related challenges can affect teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching method. In retort to this, EFL teachers were replied that they were facing challenges when teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach because of large class size or sufficient number of students. This implies that large class size is one of the factors that affect the proper implementation of teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach.

##### **4.2 The Result of Classroom Observation on What kind of challenges both EFL Teachers and Students face when teaching and learning Reading using CLT**

As depicted in the appendix, four teachers observed for three times and totally the twelve reading lessons were observed what kind of challenges both teachers and students face when teaching and learning reading using CLT. In rejoinder to this each items were analyzed below:

See appendix (item 1), the twelve reading teaching lessons were observed to see whether or not the English teachers afford bottom up approach when teaching reading skills. With regard to this, T1 and T3 afforded bottom up approach when teaching reading using different strategies such as reminding them meaning of each words, phrases and sentences. Further, T2 afforded when teaching reading using simply calling letters and symbols. Besides, T4 afforded bottom up approach using key words then defining them and giving activities how his students refer and infer activities which is taken from reading passage. This data obtained from classroom observation reveals that majority of teachers afford bottom up approach when teaching reading. Therefore, EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory afforded bottom up approach to teach reading skills.

As can be seen from appendix item 2, T3 provided top down approach when teaching reading skills using varieties of tasks. On the other hand, T1, T2 and T4 were not observed when teaching reading skills providing top down approach. This implies that majority of teachers have gap in providing top down approach

when teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Hence, the classroom data revealed that most EFL teachers of the school gave less attention for top down approach when teaching reading skills.

See appendix (item 3), EFL teachers were observed to see whether or not they use inference when teaching reading skills. In retort to this, among the twelve reading lessons none of reading lessons were observed when they used inferences in teaching reading skills. The classroom data disclosed that most of EFL teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory did not used inferences when they were teaching reading skills.

As depicted in the appendix (see item), reading skills lessons were observed whether or not EFL teachers activate prior knowledge when teaching reading skills. With regard to this, almost all teachers of the school activated prior knowledge of their students when teaching reading skills. The result of the classroom data revealed that almost all teachers activate their students' prior knowledge when teaching reading skills.

In item 5 (see appendix), twelve reading skill lessons were observed whether or not EFL teachers use reference questions when teaching reading. With regard to this, almost all EFL teachers of the school used reference questions when they were teaching reading. This implies that almost EFL teachers were using reference questions while teaching reading.

Again then in item 6, EFL reading lessons were observed whether or not teachers provide varieties of interactive activities when teaching reading. In riposte to this, none of the EFL reading lessons were observed when the EFL teachers were providing varieties of interactive activities when teaching reading make use of communicative language teaching approach. Henceforth, the classroom observation data disclosed that most of the EFL teachers were not providing varieties of interactive activities while teaching reading skills this is because of the lesson plan is not suits for teaching reading using varieties of interactive activities.

See appendix (item 7), the EFL reading lessons were observed to see whether or not teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory School convey the interactive approach when teaching reading skills. With regard to this, none of the EFL reading skills lessons were observed when they were conveying interactive approach teaching reading skills. Therefore, almost all EFL teachers of the school did not conveyed interactive approach when teaching reading skills.

In item 8, T1 used task based instructions when teaching reading skills. He delivered different task based instructions such as varieties of tasks when he was teaching reading skills. In contrary to this, majority of EFL teachers of Belle Secondary School were didn't use task based instruction when they were teaching reading skills. The result of classroom observation disclosed that almost all EFL reading lessons were not observed when they were using task based instructions in teaching reading skills. This infers that most of the EFL teachers were not used task based instructions when they were teaching reading skills.

See appendix (item 9), reading lessons were observed whether or not EFL teachers use content based instructions when teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. In rejoinder to this, most of the EFL lessons were not observed when they were using content based instructions to teach reading skills. Henceforth, the classroom observation result unveiled that most of the EFL teachers did not use content based instruction when teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

In item 10, EFL reading lessons were observed to see whether or not teachers deliver cooperative language learning approach to teach reading using communicative language teaching approach. In retort to this, T1 and T2 assigned students in group and giving different activities which is taken from the reading text. While as, T3 and T4 were not observed when they were teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. Therefore, the result of the classroom observation revealed that half of EFL teachers of the school delivered cooperative language teaching approach when teaching reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

See appendix (item 11), EFL reading lessons were observed to see whether or not the class size suitable for teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. With regard to this, the researcher observed that class size is not suitable for teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Therefore, the class size of Belle Secondary and Preparatory school not suitable for teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. This implies that all of the observed classes are overcrowded and the class is said to be large. The result of the observation disclosed that the class size is not suitable to teach reading make use of communicative language teaching approach in Belle Secondary and Preparatory School context.

See appendix (item 12), EFL reading lessons were observed to see whether or not teachers use authentic materials when teaching reading. In riposte to this, none of the reading lessons observed when EFL teachers were using authentic materials when teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. This implies that all of the EFL teachers of the school used authentic materials when teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. Thus, the result divulged that all of the EFL teachers of the school didn't use authentic materials when they were teaching reading skills.

In item 13 (see appendix), the researcher was observed the existing challenges of teaching reading using communicative language teaching approach. The observed challenges are: lack of knowing strategies of

teaching reading using CLT, lack of prior knowledge, lack of experience in teaching reading using CLT, lack of enough space between chairs, tables and desks, lack of enough sitting materials, lack of textbook, large class size, lack of interest of students, loss of confidence, language anxiety and teaching method itself.

**Table1. Students’ response on items related to school setting related challenges in learning reading skills using CLT**

No	Items	Responses											
		SD		D		UD		A		SA		Total	Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The classroom has enough seating place	180	67	70	26	20	7	-	-	-	-	270	100
2	The classroom has movable chairs	188	70	72	26	10	4	-	-	-	-	270	100
3	The classroom has desks	190	70	65	24	15	6					270	100
4	The classroom has adequate place between chairs and desks	201	75	63	23	6	2	-	-	-	-	270	100
5	The classroom has sufficient number of students	205	76	65	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	270	100
6	The classroom has teaching aids	199	74	68	25	3	1	-	-	-	-	270	100

As depicted in the table 1 item1, 67% of the EFL students of Balle Secondary and Preparatory School reported that they were strongly disagreed upon the classroom has enough seating place. This infers that the classroom of school has not enough seating place and the classroom is overcrowded with large number of students. Henceforth, there is shortage of seating place when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

As shown in the table 2 item 2, 70% of the EFL students replied that they were strongly disagreed the classroom has enough movable chairs. This indicates that school setting specifically there is shortage of movable chairs. Henceforth, there is shortage of movable chairs when they were learning reading using communicative language teaching approach.

As depicted in the table 2 items 3, 70% of EFL students of Belle secondary and preparatory school strongly agreed that when they were learning reading skills there is shortage of desks to use communicative language teaching approach. Therefore, questionnaire result revealed that there is shortage of movable desks when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

As depicted table 2 item 4, 75% of EFL students of Belle Secondary and Preparatory School strongly agreed upon classroom has adequate place between chairs and desks when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. Accordingly, there is shortage of adequate place between chairs and desks when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

As shown in the table 2 item 5, 76% of EFL students were strongly disagreed upon the classroom has sufficient number of students when they were learning reading using communicative language teaching approach. This implies that the class room is overcrowded by student which means the class is large. Henceforth, class size is large when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

As depicted in the table 2 item 6, 74% of respondents responded that they were strongly disagreed by the classroom has teaching aids when they were learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. This indicates that the classroom has lack of teaching aids when they were learning reading using communicative language teaching approach. Thus, the classroom lacks teaching aids when learning reading skills when the EFL students of Belle Secondary and Preparatory School using communicative language teaching approach.

In general the classroom observation, teacher interview and students questionnaires result showed that the school setting related challenges which affect teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach be located: large class size, lack of enough seating place, lack of movable chairs, lack of desks, lack of adequate place between chairs and desks, inappropriate teacher student ratio, inappropriate student textbook ratio, and shortage of teaching aids. Henceforth, Belle Secondary and Preparatory School EFL teachers and students were facing different school setting related challenges when they were teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

## **V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study was conducted to divulge school setting related challenges in teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. To achieve the above stated objectives, semi structured interviews; questionnaires and classroom observation were used. The tools were used to collect data from English Language teachers of Belle Secondary and Preparatory School. The semi structured interview with the English language teachers was used to assess school setting related challenge in teaching reading via CLT. Besides, questionnaire was made to describe the school setting related challenges in learning reading using CLT. Finally, classroom observation was made to see what kind of challenges they faced during reading lessons using CLT. The data gathered through the above instruments were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The interview data was analyzed using qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data. The questionnaire and classroom observation data were analyzed using frequencies, percentage and qualitative description of the responses or events.

Based on the analyses of the collected data, the following summary, conclusions, and recommendations were made. Hence, this chapter intended to enlist the summary of the major findings, conclusion and recommendation.

### **5.1. Summary of the Major Findings**

Different findings were obtained from the analysis of data. The findings of the study were organized and grouped according to the objectives of the study. Thus, in this subsection, the summary of the major findings is presented according to the objectives of the study.

#### **➤ *School setting related challenges in teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach***

The study disclosed that the classroom observation, teacher interview and students questionnaires result showed that the school setting related challenges which affect teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach be located: large class size, lack of enough seating place, lack of movable chairs, lack of desks, lack of adequate place between chairs and desks, inappropriate teacher student ratio, inappropriate student textbook ratio, and shortage of teaching aids. Henceforth, Belle Secondary and Preparatory School EFL teachers and students were facing different school setting related challenges when they were teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

### **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the analysis of data in the previous sections, the researcher came up with the following conclusions.

In general the classroom observation, teacher interview and students questionnaires result showed that the school setting related challenges which affect teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach be located: large class size, lack of enough seating place, lack of movable chairs, lack of desks, lack of adequate place between chairs and desks, inappropriate teacher student ratio, inappropriate student textbook ratio, and shortage of teaching aids. Henceforth, Belle Secondary and Preparatory School EFL teachers and students were facing different school setting related challenges when they were teaching and learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings obtained and conclusion made, the following recommendations are forwarded:

❖ The result of this study shows that the majority of EFL students of the school negatively perceived on learning reading skills using communicative language learning approach. Hence, an attempt should be made to raise awareness and build capacity for secondary school students about the importance of learning reading skills using communicative language teaching approach. Awareness creation activities like funnel discussions, symposiums, workshops, seminars and other capacity building activities should be mandatory to recap.

❖ The study revealed that the majority of the teachers do not use the communicative language teaching approach to teach reading skills. With this regard, the majority of English language teachers and students have the wrong perception about CLT to teach reading skills. As a result, awareness creation and capacitating teachers in the areas of the communicative language teaching approach.

❖ As divulged in the findings, the respondents listed different factors that affect teaching and learning reading using communicative language teaching approach. Hence, the concerned bodies should fulfill the school setting related challenges that can affect the teaching of reading skills using the communicative language teaching approach, and the student and teacher related factors should mitigate through well-built mobilization.

❖ Finally, the researcher would like to suggest further research to be carried out in different aspects and levels of the same topic at various levels of education.

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