Attributes of First Year University Students to Success or Failure in their Reading Performance: Selected Campuses of Hawassa University Technology Village: Main campus, Awada and Wondo Genet in Focus

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to find out the attributes that first year university student's associate with their reading success or failure. Towards that end, a total population of three-hundred and fifteen (315) students was randomly selected from Hawassa University main campus, Awada and Wondogenet; purposive and random sampling techniques were employed to determine the setting and the subjects of the study. Then, data gathering tools like reading proficiency Test, reading attribute survey questionnaire and interview were employed. The study subjects were randomly selected from the three campuses of Hawassa University by drawing lots. After the data were gathered, the quantitative data were analyzed by comparing means, and correlating the relationships while the qualitative data were analyzed by thematically categorizing; the findings showed that the students' reading proficiency is far below the level expected of them and they attribute their reading success to their personal/internal effort, while their reading failure is attributed with external factors; the result obtained through all the instruments of data gathering confirmed that reality. Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that students' internal and external attributive behaviours of reading success/failure need to be given due attention in reading classes to improve the apparently low reading proficiency level of first year university students.

Keywords:, Attributes of Reading, Reading Failure, Reading proficiency, Reading Success

1. INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Events over the past many years have placed greater demands on the people of the world to become literate in English. English has become the language of wider communication and information ; the language is spoken by a large number of people and taught all over the world under many different circumstances. Much of the world's literature and science is originally written and readily available in English (Grabe, 2009; Harmer, 2004; Hinkel, 2011).Thus, acquiring a good command of the English language seems to have become a better access to a vast body of knowledge and thought. Proficient use of the language has become crucial for intellectual, social and emotional developments of the people throughout the world. Reading is one of the four crucial language skills that bring about these developments in the students.

Students at higher institutions of learning are expected to do many things based on the information they obtain through reading (Hailemichael, 1983 Gebremedhin, 1993). They are required to read and understand various materials in English, to widely read, analyze and synthesize certain sources of information. Thus, reading helps students of higher institution a lot to apply the knowledge they get from the real world in their learning or living situations. Most of the activities students perform at tertiary level are one way or another related to the reading skill. Such activities as reading and understanding instructions and concepts, reading for doing assignments and examinations, and reading text books of different disciplines, are common in higher institutions of learning (Abiy, 2005; Gessesse, 1999, Solomon, 1999).

Tertiary level students' knowledge of reading skill is very essential for their success in academic and professional life, and even for their personal development, as English is the source of all the professional, technical and scientific literature now days. Probably that is why the students' ability to read and understand materials written in English is often sought from students by their subject departments that want to assess the performance of the students from their reading comprehension. In a situation where English is used as a medium of instruction and written language for academic texts and materials at secondary and tertiary level, reading is by far the most important skill for students' success. Examinations designed to assess the students' performance in different subject area also require mainly the students' reading ability more than any other skill (Alderson and Urquhart (1984).

Besides the academic importance, reading proficiency is indispensible for the students' success in certain reading practical activities outside school real life situations. Thus, reading is a life skill which is related to the immediate as well as lifelong success of tertiary level students. It is very essential for students' proper functioning in different walks of life. It can serve as a source of information, enjoyment and recreation (Ghirett, 2007; Andargachew, 2004; Williams, 1984; Patel, 2005).

In spite of its tremendous importance for the academic and life success for students, reading has been a challenging skill for most of the students at tertiary level. Students at university level are often observed in failing to read and understand at ease the texts they read. So, trying to identify the mystery behind the attributes of students' reading success/ failure, appears to be timely issue.

The causes of the problem could be of different factors among which the students' attributive behaviours of their reading could be one of the most serious ones. By attributes of reading success or failure we mean, the internal and external features of reading that students associate in due process of their reading practice (Alderson & Arquhurt, 1984). Tertiary level students in our context are oftentimes observed in associating their reading success or failure with the materials of their reading, methods of teaching reading, qualities of reading teachers and the like external factors; usually, the students' internal attributes of reading like effective use of their own strategies, attitudes and self-efficacy belief to manage their own reading independently, are not seriously considered by the learners.(Susbielle,198). Hence, in this study, an attempt was made to find out the actual existing level of their reading proficiency and the external and internal attributive factors associated with first year university students' reading success or failure.

Research related with reading problems is needed at higher education first year level, because it is reading that is used as one of the most important means of getting information; thus, students' success and or failure in higher institutions usually depends on their reading proficiency; the more they progress in their higher education, the more reading ability they are expected to develop and possess.

This study attempted to point out the reading proficiency level and the attributes the learners associate with their reading success or failure. The study tried to explore the internal and external attributive factors of reading as an alternative solution for the prevalent problem the learners attribute to their low reading proficiency, lack of positive attitude and lack of high self-efficacy belief to assess their reading success or failure (Martinez, 2008; Rossiter, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

University students' success/failure in their academic life is highly dependent on their reading proficiency. This is so because reading is the main source of information that students need to work on exams, term paper and senior essay papers. Most of the information for every activity they carry out comes from reading; students in higher institutions are expected to read large and complex texts. To that effect, they are offered a reading course/some skills of reading course via the common courses like the communicative English skills, to enable them to be proficient, independent and strategic readers. The learners are expected to carry out the reading activities independently and with reasonable understanding of the texts they read; however, the students at first year university level appear to be unable to easily identify, locate, understand, and retrieve information from various genres of reading texts they read. They seem to have a

serious limitation of effectively understanding, storing and using the information they get by reading. They lack the desired proficiency, strategy, interest and self-confidence to assess their success and failure in reading (Strevens, 1982; Pajares, 1997; Macaro, 2001).Various local and international studies confirm the reality of little success of most students in EFL contexts (Graesser, 2004; Taye 1999; Hellekjar, 2009; Molla, 1987; Hilemichael, 1983; Lenski, 2008).

Observing the seriousness of the problem, this study was intended to find out the prevalent reading proficiency problem of tertiary level students in relation to the reading attributes first year university students of different fields in different campuses of Hawassa University. It was assumed that the problem might have different nature of attribution for different fields of students due to the associations they could make in the complex process of reading.

The learners appear to lack conscious plan of their own, interest and self-initiative to assess their reading success or failure probably due to lack of awareness about differentiating the role of internal and external attributes of reading; So, this research attempts to find out the internal and external attributes the learners associate to their reading success or failure. That is, the study tries to assess what the students say about themselves when they have read and understood something successfully or when they have read and could not understand something successfully. The study attempted to point out the reading proficiency level and the attributes the learners associate with their reading success or failure.

The students' background shows that majority of the students who usually join first year program of the University seem to be less-proficient, disinterested and with low self-efficacy belief of reading strategy use. Hence, the researcher feels that this problem could somehow be related with the reading attributive behaviour of the students. Unless we are aware of what the students want to read, how they want to read, and how they react to their reading success or failure, it is quite challenging to carry out a meaningful reading lesson with most of those less-proficient readers (defined as readers who could not easily identify, locate, understand, and retrieve the text information they read with self-initiated reading and reasonable understanding spontaneously).

The learners seem to have been the victims of circumstances of the reproductive and imitative views of reading in which they are expected to learn what they are told or what is explicitly stated in the text. As a result of these, most of the students seem to push aside their reading problems to outside factors. But when they could read and understand better, they link it with their own personal efforts, while the reading failure is often pushed aside to external factors like poor quality of teachers, materials and methods. However, how far that is true was investigated in the present study; as is known in our language teaching-learning system, the implicit focus of the reading lesson has been on analyzing and reproducing the language structures; this is also the approach which mainly promotes the students to associate their common reading problem with the external factors of the reading process, for very few of the things are relevant

with effective reading skills development (Gessese,1999, Kanore,1994, Stoughton, 2008; Geremew,1999).

The conventional reading practice promotes the students to attribute their reading successes or failures with the external factors. This has been predominant in our teaching reading practice for a long time; that may be true due to such factors as curriculum constraints, the established teaching-learning beliefs and styles of teachers and students, lack of knowledge and skill for using effective strategies. Hence, the existing practices of teaching-learning reading appear not to promote the students to associate their reading success and failure with their internal learner factors of developing positive attitude, self-confidence and conscious plan of action of themselves.

Local and international researches that have been done so far in the area have made invaluable contributions for approaching alternatively the reading behaviour of students at higher institutions. However, because of the complex nature of the reading process, it is still necessary and timely to deal with some gaps, controversies and disparities of what has been done so far and the existing felt need of students' reading proficiency and the attributes of the reading success and failure of students at higher institutions of learning.

Thus, this study was carried out with the intention of exploring the relationship between the students' reading proficiency and the attributes of their reading success and failure, for it appears that the wrong kind of external reading attribute they make is negatively influencing their reading success and acting as a means of their reading failure.

Objectives of the Study

This study had one main objective and three specific objectives.

Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to find out the reading proficiency level and the reading success/failure attributes of first year students.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were:

- ❖ assess the reading proficiency level of students under the study;

- ❖ find out the major attributes students make with their reading success/failure

- ❖ examine the relationship between their reading proficiency level and the attributes of their reading success/failure;

Research Questions

This research had the following three major research questions as a guide to the overall direction of the study:

❖ At which level of reading proficiency are the subjects of this found?
❖ What could be the major attributes of reading success/ failure of the subjects under this study?
❖ Could there be any relationship between the reading attributive behaviour and the reading success/failure of the subjects under this study?

Significance of the Study

This study was aimed at finding out the reading proficiency level and the attributive behaviours of first year students. Thus, it tries to point out the extent to which the attributes the students associate could be related with the reading success and failure of the students of Hawassa University different campus first year students; from the students' point of view, it is hoped that the study could give them some insight about their reading proficiency level and the attributes they make with their reading success or failure. The study is hoped to pave a theoretical and empirical ground for better reading class room instruction in the future. The findings of the study could also facilitate for the students' independent and integrated reading instruction through a conscious control of their own reading practices instead of pushing aside things to the external factors. The findings of this study could also help teachers to define clear guidelines of reading instruction and, gain better understanding of student's internal needs, attitudes and beliefs before they go about dealing with any reading lesson. Curriculum designers may also gain some insights as what underlying factors hinder or facilitate students' reading proficiency and effective teaching-learning of reading instruction in EFL class room in terms of designing materials. So, material designers could get useful information about the contents and procedures of designing reading materials considering the reading proficiency level and attributive behaviours of students for their reading success and failure; finally, the findings of this study might shed some light for further study in the area of strategic reading instructional approach.

Materials And Methods

Description of the Study Area/s

This study was conducted in three campuses of Hawassa University industrial Village in Southern Nations and Nationalities Regional State. From the Six Universities existing in the region, Hawassa University was selected purposively; then, first year students were also selected purposively in line with the research objectives and the felt need of the research problem under this study.

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of this study were first year students who joined Hawassa university in 2019/2020 academic year, having successfully passed the entrance examination of the year; out of the students who joined Hawassa University in 2019/2020 academic year, the students of the three colleges (N. Science, Accounting & Finance and Forestry, were randomly selected by drawing lots; thereafter, the departments of Biology, Accounting and Natural Resources management, were purposively selected to assess the reading proficiency level and its attributes to students of different selected fields for the study; to that end, three sections from each department were selected randomly by drawing lots; thus, a total of nine sections with nearly thirty-five students in each section from the three campuses (three-hundred and fifteen students), were used as the subjects of this study; besides five instructors, who were selected purposively , were used for interview.

Design of the Study

This co- relational study was designed to pursue the mixed approach as per the nature of the topic and the objectives set to be achieved at the end of the study. The study adhered to the co-relation type of research design and mixed approach to data collection in which the qualitative as well as the quantitative data were used to triangulate the validity of the data to find out what practically works in the real context of the students for the given research topic and for the expected objectives. Thus, the data for the study were gathered employing both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. To that effect, five percent of the target populations (nearly six thousand students) of the study, about three-hundred-fifteen (315) were selected employing random sampling technique

Methods of the Study

In this study, such methods of data gathering, as reading proficiency test, reading success/failure questionnaire and interview were employed. For the reading proficiency, a reading proficiency test adapted from the reading section of 'test of English for speakers of others languages (TOEFL) was employed; the difficulty, relevance and familiarity of the test items was carefully checked before administering the test; the texts had the readability level of grade eleven, as they were checked by using readability index; reading texts that had about twenty-five items were administered to determine the reading proficiency level of the students; the attribute exploratory questionnaire that was adapted from Macaro, (2001) was employed to find out the external and internal reading attributive behaviour of students towards their reading success and/or failure, besides; the interview that triangulates the data obtained through the two instruments of quantitative data gathering , was designed by the researcher in line with the frame work of setting interview questions; The interview was conducted with selected teachers and students; thus, these research tools enabled the researcher to gather the relevant data about the major variables and objectives of the study. In general,

all the pertinent tools were adapted/adopted from reliable sources and they were used accordingly with the subjects of this study.

Data Management and Analysis

Before collecting all the data, concerned bodies of the respective colleges and departments were communicated to get official permission to start the study; thereafter, the respective instructors of English in each department were contacted to plan for administering the reading test and filling the questionnaire at the same time, so that the data gathered through the two instruments could be triangulated; finally, from the three sections about six students who were able to express their views clearly about their overall reading proficiency and their reading attributive behaviours, were picked up for interview.

The researcher attempted to secure the reliability and validity of the data by designing and/adapting sufficient and relevant data and then by piloting the data before using them in the main study. Some items of the reading test and the questionnaire were pilot tested on students of some other fields to check the potential problems of the items; thus, some items that caused some confusion were discarded and modified based on the pilot information; after reliable and valid data were gathered, they were analyzed by employing pertinent techniques of data analysis for the reading proficiency test and questionnaire data like frequency count of attributive factors, comparison of means and some other measures of central tendency; then, the interview qualitative data were thematically analyzed and triangulated with the quantitative data result of the reading proficiency test and questionnaire by using the measures of central tendency and its correlation with the attributive factors .

2. RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Results

The Result of Reading Proficiency Test

Table 1: Reading Proficiency Test Result Mean comparison of the subjects from the Three Campuses

Department	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BSRPTS	99	12.00	76.00	42.7071	13.52039
ACSRPTS	99	24.00	72.00	46.0101	7.65519
FSRPTS	99	12.00	58.00	39.0808	10.95601

The table above presents the summary of the reading proficiency level of the students of the three departments of Biology, Accounting and Forestry; as could be observed from the table, the reading proficiency level of the students is by far below the expected level of reading ability at this level, and most of the students could predominantly be categorized under the unsuccessful readers

category ; as a standard, students at this level are expected to identify, locate, understand and retrieve the reading texts they read at least with a fifty percent comprehension as a minimum requirement; but most of the subjects under this study are below the minimum requirement (Biology, X=42, SD=13.5; Accounting, X=46, SD=7.65 and Forestry, X=39, SD=). The research tool of the reading proficiency test reveals that there are some important insights learners and teachers need to reconsider in the teaching-learning process of the reading skill/sub-skills.

As was stated in the problem statement and literature review of the study, the reading proficiency level of the students was found to be very low. More than 95% of the students in the three groups were found in non-proficient/un successful/ level of reading proficiency as could be seen in light of the criterion suggested for levels of reading proficiency by reading test of English for speakers of other languages; the test sets such standard as (>73% high proficiency/successful reading; 57%-72% medium proficiency/medium reading success; 46%-56% low proficiency/low reading success and below 46% non-proficiency/reading failure). That was what could be observed from the reading proficiency test result of most of the three groups of this study subjects.

As could be observed from their performance in the reading proficiency test through their average score, and the standard deviations, their performance is below what they were expected to score (see Tables 1 above, for further information). The variation in their score distribution is not normal which shows that there may be a wide gap of individual differences in their performance, in which most of their scores could not be engrossed between (+/-2 SD) which is normal S.D; but in this study, the standard Deviation that shows the variation of each score from the mean is extremely high (+/- 13, +/-7 and +/-10). For instance, if we take the first mean of Biology and see the standard variation by +/-13 from the mean (X= 42, the range becomes as wide as 29-55 , which is totally un acceptable gap of variation; that of Accounting and forestry also ranges from (39-53 for Accounting, and 29-49 for Forestry students). From the three groups of this study, that of the Accounting Result distribution seems to be somehow fairly distributed, though it is still far from the normal standard deviation of +/-2 from the total mean.

The overall reading proficiency range variation of this study is a very abnormal range of variation in light of the standard (+/-2 SD).The SD of the present study might indicate the presence of many low results and some very few outlier result cases as could be observed from the frequency distribution of the overall result for all the three groups of the study. The frequency distribution of the overall result shows that more than seventy-five percent of the results in all the three campuses of the study cite tend to concentrate from thirty-two to fifty-six; various factors might have influenced the reading proficiency of the students in the three groups of this study in which the presence of some exceptionally outperforming students might be the one. This could be observed from the

abnormally dispersed score of the students from the mean and through the inflated value of the standard deviation; besides, the individual differences, the attributes they associate with their reading ability might have negatively influenced them to the extent that the majority of them are categorized as unsuccessful or poor readers in their level of reading proficiency.

The Reading Attributes Result through Questionnaire Data

The result obtained through this tool is geared towards answering the research question of the relationship between the reading proficiency level and reading attributive behaviour of students in relation to their reading success or failure.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics about Reading Attributive Behaviours

|	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MCBSQR	99	2.23	4.26	3.0357	.38144
AWACSQR	99	2.56	4.44	3.3502	.50010
WOFSQR	99	2.46	4.84	3.6155	.56226

Table two above provides the summary of the reading attributive behaviour of the students in terms of five likert scales result. In this table, the overall reading attributive behaviour of students could be categorized as high when it is (3.5-5.0), medium when it is (2.5-3.4), and low attribution (1.0-2.4); this is done by summing up the overall rates of the attributive questionnaire result and dividing it by the number of the questions, that is the thirty items of the questionnaire in five likert scales, are multiplied by five and divided by thirty; that gives us the expected behavioural attributes out of five to be high, medium or low/insignificant attributive behaviour to reading success or failure; when we see the overall reading success or failure attributive behaviour of the subjects of this study in light of the above standard, Biology and Accounting students tend to have medium attributive behaviour to their reading failure, while the Forestry students have high attributive behaviour; what can be inferred from this is that students reading success or failure is closely associated with some kind of ability they have, effort they make, materials they read and the like. Reading success or failure cannot exist in a vacuum in the absence of some sort of association; the students clearly stated this reality when they were asked to express their views about the conceptions they have in certain reading activities to become either successful or unsuccessful; many of the students who participated in the study stated that their reading success or failure cannot exist out of the external or internal explanation they give to the various reading activities they come in their daily life reading practices; thus, the correlation between the reading proficiency level and their reading attributive behaviour level could be observed from the

table below: Table3: correlations of Test Result with questionnaire Result of Reading Attributive Behaviours of the Students

Department	correlation	MCBSTR	AWACSTR	WOFSTR
MCBSQR	Pearson Correlation	1	.088	.292[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.428	.007
	N	84	84	84
AWACSQR	Pearson Correlation	.088	1	.388[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.428		.000
	N	84	84	84
WOFSQR	Pearson Correlation	.292[**]	.388[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	
	N	84	84	84

The correlation between the students' reading proficiency level (that is realized as failure level for most of the students under this study) and their reading attributive behaviour towards their reading proficiency (which is from medium to high level) is not perfectly negative. The medium attribution to some extent positively correlates with medium reading proficiency level of some students and some outlier result of few students in the study; thus, the correlation between the reading proficiency level and their reading attributive behaviour level could be observed from the graphic depiction below in an elaborated manner:

Figure 1: Graphic depiction of reading proficiency and Reading attribution correlation
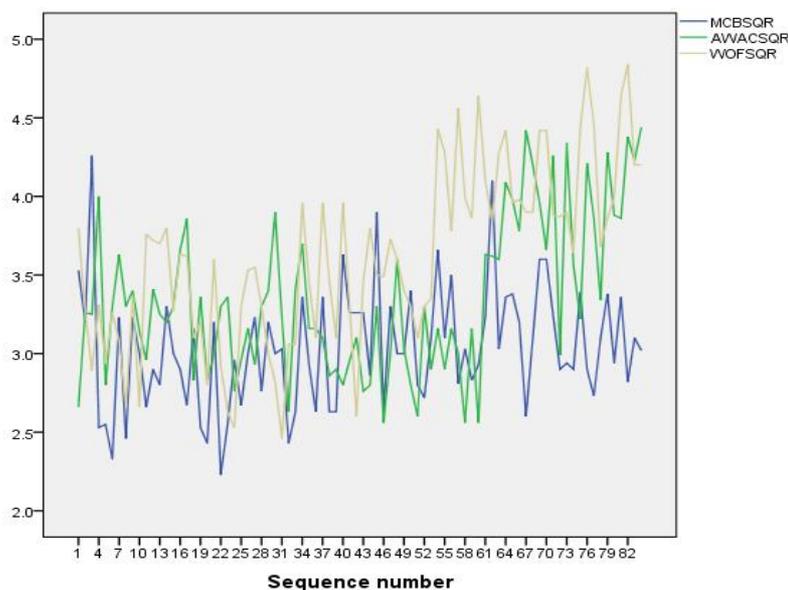
The Results of Interview Data

The Result of Interview Data from Instructors

In this study, semi-structured interview was conducted with five instructors who were purposively selected from the three campuses of the study; the issues of the interview focused on the major thematic issues; towards this end, the instructors were inspired to elicit their views on the reading proficiency level of the students, the conception of the students about the importance of reading, and the students' attributive behaviour of their reading success or failure; thus, the core ideas of the five instructors' interview data is presented as follows:

When the first interview question was presented to the instructors to express their views in relation to the students' reading success or failure level, they unanimously expressed, 'most of the students are at alarmingly low level of reading'. As to their view, the students' failure in reading could be explained in terms of their lack of reading habit, inappropriate methods of teaching-learning reading employed so far, irrelevant materials used for teaching-learning reading in schools, and the like. Indeed the instructors capitalized on such issues as, 'most of the students are not usually ready to accept their reading failure; rather they try to explain it in terms of lack of time, material, good teachers and the like.' Not only the students, even some instructors address the students' reading failure in terms of what they or the students do or not do externally, so everyone seems to push the problem aside/externalize/ to various external factors like, overall language

problem, poor reading habit/background, poor teaching methods, bad teachers and the like., the instructors expressed their concern that many students are not able to enjoy various merits of reading, as a result of these problems ; hence they forward the importance of reading as, "It is an essential skill for their academic life in campus and for life outside the campus, as they cannot do any academic activity at poor/failure level of reading; however, most of the interviewed instructors feel that the students as well as the instructors are not doing their level best to get the most out of this receptive skill; thus, they suggest, " the students need to get initiated by themselves from within to make use of all the conscious plans of actions that enable them to improve the existing alarmingly low/poor level of reading while the reading instructors too, get committed to providing all the opportunities of creating conducive atmosphere for better reading performance in terms of making use of effective teaching strategies, methods, materials and assessing causes of reading failure for most of the students.

The Result of Interview Data from Students

In line with the purpose of the study, interview questions of similar nature with that of the instructors, were presented to six students that were purposively picked up from the three campuses (two from each campus). In due process of the interview with the student a meticulous attempt was made by the researcher to elicit pertinent information about their reading proficiency level, their reading attributive behaviours and their overall reading habits/practices. To that end, the core responses offered by the six student interviewees are   presented as follows:

For the question that was presented to the students in relation to their conception of their overall reading proficiency level, most of them (four out of the six) expressed that they see themselves as 'struggling readers who are trying to read and understand , but so far not yet successful readers. 'And they associate this struggling reading practice with such factors as, poor reading habit/background, lack of interest and lack of materials and good teachers. As to them, a successful/proficient reader is someone who can locate, identify, understand and retrieve the most important ideas and supporting details easily and well within a given short period of time, while the unsuccessful reader is someone who cannot do that; so in light of that, most of the interviewed students, except the two who consider themselves as average readers, others consider themselves as unsuccessful/poor readers who struggle to locate, identify, understand and retrieve the essential information as quickly as possible.

In terms of the explanations the students gave for their reading success or failure, they stated as, 'our reading success or failure is attributed to the nature of teachers, our reading habit and interest, and relevance , importance and availability of reading materials.' All the interviewee students expressed that reading is essential part of their life; however, as to most of them, to benefit from this important skill, the methods of teaching reading are not effective; at higher level of education, like our university, self-initiated and self-regulated ways of reading are more fruitful than the traditional ways of teaching reading for

checking comprehension. In this way, the learners expect everything from the instructors like the case in elementary schools. As to their self evaluation, most of them are unsuccessful readers mainly because of the practices they have been exposed to since elementary school up until university level. So, in order to improve this situation, they feel that the role of instructors is of paramount importance, besides the strategies, the habit and interest the learners try to develop; In general, what the students suggested for improving the existing prevalent poor reading level of students at first year university level is that first the instructors should take the initiative and encourage the students by offering relevant and useful materials of reading by even adapting some of the text book reading materials; thereafter, they need to follow up the students' progress of reading in terms of their interest, readiness, self-regulation and self-initiation.

3. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

Reading is one of the most important skills for students' academic or life success at university level; however, the reading performance of students at first year university level in our context is affected by a number of cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social variables; this is what local and international researches in the area of reading confirm (Oxford, 1990; Macaro, 2001; Taye, 1999; Gessesse, 1999). As a result of the very complex nature of the reading process, EFL readers like ours, are oftentimes challenged by the apparently inevitable threats of the skill that usually makes them be under the category of unsuccessful/poor readers. This is what the findings of many studies like the ones afore-cited and others approve; most of the students at first year university level under the study areas, are not able to locate, identify, understand and retrieve the information they read easily and well for immediate use, as could be witnessed by the findings of this study and earlier literature (Ghirett, 2007; Andargachew, 2004; Williams, 1984; Patel, 2005).

The result of the reading test in this study has confirmed the commonly held belief that most of the students at first year university level are not able to easily locate, identify, understand and use the information they get through reading; as to the test result, most of them are found by far below the expected level of reading proficiency at first year university level (in average, they are found at a very poor/frustration level of reading, though there are very few good readers (See table 1 for details).

As could be seen from the results of many researches done on reading in our country at different levels right from the elementary level (like EGRA and others), the reading performance of our students is at a very low and alarming level; the researchers have been trying to address the problem from different prospective; in this study also an attempt was made to see the existence and prevalence of the problem in light of the affective variable of the reading problem, particularly in terms of the explanations that the students give for their reading

success/failure; the failure seems to have been taken for granted by the students, as it is recurring in different studies; what is probably bewildering the researchers, including the present one is, what could be the root cause of the problem? What could be closely associated as an explanation with their reading failure?

As the result in this study indicated, the students have a high rate of association with various external factors of teachers, materials, methods and the like, as has always been the case for their reading failure; so the present researcher believes that, in so far as the students are not ready to take their own self-regulated and self-initiated strategies and habits of reading, they could never be successful readers. This is what the result of the interview data with teachers and students also depicted. It has clearly been indicated in the interview and questionnaire data result that the apparent reading failure of the students is commonly addressed from the point of view of external factors, like lack of good teachers, materials, methods and the like which are good, but they are not sufficient conditions to bring about success in complex language learning skills, like reading; the students must learn to attribute their reading success/failure with conscious plans of actions that enable them to regulate their reading success and failure Grabe W. (1991).

Conclusion

The reading proficiency problem of our students is becoming the problem of overall language proficiency in our situation for first year students, because the secret behind successful language mastery is the information they gather through the receptive skill of reading; thus, the seemingly taken granted nature of the reading problem should be addressed from various internal and external angles for mitigating the degree of reading failure of most of the students at this level. The research conducted in the area of reading problem need to target the multi-faceted nature of the complex process of the reading skill. As the results obtained in this study through the reading test, questionnaire and interview showed, most of the students at this level are extremely poor readers who cannot easily understand the text they read; they substantiated the test result with the view they expressed in the interview, in which they said that most of them are struggling readers. In the explanation they gave in the questionnaire about their self conceptions of their reading attributive behaviour, they directly associated their reading failure with various external factors of reading variables; although the external variables have got their own roles, pushing aside the whole problem to the external factors only, may not enable them to significantly overcome their reading problem; hence, the complex nature of the reading skills needs an integrated approach and effort in teaching-learning and research.

Recommendations: Based on the results and conclusion arrived, the following recommendations are made:

➢ Instructors should take into account the reading attributive nature of students and act accordingly in reading classes;

➢ Students should be encouraged by instructors to take self-initiated attributes for their reading success;

➢ A reading research that addresses cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective and social attributes of reading problems, needs to be systematically carried out;

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