



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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

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ABSTRACT

In order to find out whether there is difference in reading comprehension skills between the governmental and non-governmental grade 12 preparatory school students of Jimma town, necessary data were collected by using reading comprehension test, questionnaire for students and for teachers. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively using statistical techniques of percentage and mean. According to the findings of the study the students of Jimma University Community Preparatory School (JUCPS) have obtained a better result in the reading comprehension test than the students of Jimma Preparatory School (JPS). The fact that the reading comprehension strategies, which the students of JUCPS used, such as: being able to guess the meaning of new words in context and from word formation rather than turning to dictionaries now and then and skipping new words, being able to predict the main idea of the whole text from titles and keywords, grasping the gist of the material by quickly reading the first and the last paragraph, background experience and motivation that they got from parents and from their elementary and secondary school teachers, full support and belief of their current teachers to let them use different strategies in their reading comprehension activities every time, were the main factors or reasons that contributed to the difference.

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INTRODUCTION

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

foreign language need to acquire (Levine *et al.*, 2000). To understand and complete the large amount of reading materials, contributory reading strategies are essential for college students. Reading also requires reader's coordination of attention, memory, perceptual and comprehension processes. As research has demonstrated, reading comprehension does not just understand words, sentences, or texts, but involving a complex integration of the reader's prior knowledge, language proficiency and their metacognitive strategies (Hammadou, 1991). It is therefore very crucial to equip the students who enter universities unprepared for the reading demands placed upon them with these helpful skills and practices. Reading without comprehension is nothing than tracking symbols on a page with our eyes and sounding them out. Any reading can be done for many reasons, but understanding it is the main purpose and is one of the essential things to life. If people have the ability to comprehend what they read, they are able not only to live safely and productively, but also continue to develop socially, emotionally and intellectually. The question to be raised in line with this is that do all teachers in governmental and non-governmental preparatory schools try their level best to help their students develop their reading comprehension skills so

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that they can construct meaning from texts effectively, immediately and with little conscious attention? Is it the governmental or non-governmental preparatory school students that have better performance in reading comprehension? This study therefore tried to find out the practice of reading comprehension in private and governmental preparatory schools found in Jimma town.

### Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension skills is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention. In order to make students develop the skills, teachers are expected to let them practice reading comprehension activities and strategies at all levels of reading development. A reading comprehension strategy is an overt process consciously selected and used by the reader to construct meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading comprehension skill. Reading is a basic and complementary skill in language learning. The word "reading" of course has a number of common interpretations by language teachers. It may mean reading aloud, a very complex skill, which involves understanding the printed words first and then the production of the right noises. It may also mean an activity in which students read a passage for comprehension (also called silent reading). Whatever the case, reading involves comprehension and when readers do not comprehend, they are not reading. The goal of all reading instruction is ultimately targeted at helping a reader comprehend a text. Reading comprehension is therefore the most essential requirement for students to be successful in their academic work and life.

If reading is meant comprehending and if comprehending is so important for one's life, due attention should be given to the young boys and girls of any educational level so that they can develop their reading and comprehending skills effectively. As far as the long years teaching experience of the researchers is concerned, some EFL teachers in some governmental secondary and preparatory schools seem to give less attention for reading comprehension activities. Besides this, many students also seem not to be so interested and effective in the skills mentioned. Such kind of situations made the researcher to be eager to know if similar thing existed in non-governmental preparatory school or not. Thus, this study attempted to investigate and compare the practice undertaken to teach and learn reading comprehension skills between the governmental and non-governmental preparatory school students found in Jimma town. This study generally aimed to compare and find out if there is difference in the reading comprehension skills between the governmental and non-governmental grade 12 preparatory school students in Jimma town. Specifically it aimed to find out if there is difference in reading comprehension skills between the two preparatory school students, to identify factors that hindered or enhanced the development of the students' reading comprehension skills, to find out the reading comprehension strategies that the students use whenever they are engaged in reading comprehension activities, to spot out teacher-related factors

that contributed positively or negatively to the development of the students' reading comprehension skills, and, to find out the students' background that contributed to their present reading comprehension skills.

### Research Design

This study was carried out on grade 12 students and teachers of the two preparatory schools found in Jimma town. In this study quantitative method was applied to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires and the reading comprehension test. The results of the data collected from the two data gathering instruments were collated by applying statistical technique of percentage and mean value. Finally conclusions were arrived at through the combined analysis and summary of the findings from the two data sources.

### The Participants

The participants of this study were from the only two preparatory schools found in Jimma town. The schools were Jimma Preparatory School (governmental) and Jimma University Community Preparatory School (Non-governmental). The two schools were different in administration and student population and were selected for the purpose of investigating whether there was difference in reading comprehension skills between the students of the two schools or not. The study was conducted on grade 12 that incorporated the current students and the English teachers as the subjects of the study. The choice of grade 12 was made for the reason that these were students who would join university by the year to come, and were expected to read and understand a lot by themselves at the university. It was therefore necessary to know their level of comprehension skills to facilitate favorable situations for the students before they joined university. The other reason for choosing grade 12 students was that, they were available during the time arranged for data collecting while grade 11 were not completely settled at that data collecting time. A total of 122 (i.e. 20%) randomly selected sample students (100 from Jimma Preparatory School and 22 from Jimma University Community Preparatory School) were taken from the two schools out of the 650 total populations. Besides this all the eleven English instructors from both schools (9 from JPS and 2 from JUCPS) were included in the study. The students were first given the questionnaire to respond to it and then the reading comprehension test. The English teachers were also provided a questionnaire to indicate their views regarding reading and comprehension teaching and learning situations in their respective schools.

### Data Gathering Instruments

#### Questionnaire

The questionnaires used in this study were two, one for the students and another for the English teachers of both schools. The questionnaire for the students consisted of 24 items while the questionnaire for the teachers consisted of 12 items. Most of the items in both questionnaires were of close ended where the respondents have to react to each item by rating their response according to the scales given. Students' questionnaire

included items about using comprehension strategies and their background related to reading comprehension skills. Questionnaire for teachers contained items that are about teachers and their students, about their belief and attitude towards reading comprehension. Both questionnaires were intended to find out what the students and teachers say about the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in their respective schools.

### Reading Comprehension Test

A reading comprehension test of 12 items was used for the sample students of both schools to find out whose performance was better in the skill. An attempt was made to find a reading comprehension test that was appropriate to the level and interest of the students from different sources. Reading comprehension test (compatibility model), and sample test from Reading Comprehension Study Guide created by Oklahoma State University. Some question items (about 5) that the researcher considered them to be appropriate for the purpose of his study were taken from each of these sources. These 15 items were used after they were commented by colleagues and this thesis advisor. Next to this, a pilot study was made on the 15 items taken. About 40 students of grade 12 from JPS were picked from social and natural science streams to conduct the pilot study. From the pilot study it was found that some three items (short passages) were found to be difficult for most of the students and were dropped. The remaining 12 items were used for this study. These data obtained from the questionnaires and the comprehension test were collated and inferred statistically. It was from these two data sources that the conclusion of this study was made.

### Data Collecting Procedures

The data collecting process in this study took place in the following steps. Firstly data gathering tools were subjected to comments of colleagues and the researcher's thesis advisor for validity and reliability. Then the consent of the officials of the target schools and the cooperation of the teachers concerned were obtained. Following this, the selection of the sample students that represent the total population was carried out by using their name list. Finally time and place were arranged for the students to administer the test and questionnaire. All of the sample students of the two target schools were made to respond to the questionnaire first and then do the reading comprehension test. All the papers of the questionnaire and the test were collected on the spot after the students finished dealing with them. This was done in their respective schools at the same time. Lastly, the questionnaire for the teachers was provided according to the time convenient for them and the papers were collected on the next day. The data obtained in these ways were analyzed quantitatively and statistical inference was made in the end.

### Methods of Data Analysis

The data gathered through the reading comprehension test and the questionnaires for students and teachers were analyzed following a specified procedure. After the reading comprehension test papers were marked, the scores obtained were recorded against the name list of the sample students. Then, the mean and frequency of the test scores were

computed and summarized in a table where the result was analyzed and interpreted quantitatively. The responses obtained from the questionnaires of the students and teachers were tallied, computed and tabulated according to the categories of the items. Finally, the data was analyzed statistically using figures and percentages.

## Results and Discussions

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

### Analysis of Data Obtained from Reading Comprehension Test

A reading comprehension test of 12 questions was prepared for 122 sample students of both schools. The test included narrative questions, sentence relationship questions, and vocabulary and reference questions. Before administering, the test was commented by this research advisor and colleagues. This comprehension test was administered for the sample students of both governmental and nongovernmental grade 12 preparatory students of Jimma town. The test was given for the sample students at the same day and time in their respective school by the assistants who are assigned as invigilators in both schools. After the sample students finished doing the test, they were given the questionnaire to respond to and were collected on-the-spot. According to the objective of this research, the purpose of the reading comprehension test was to find out which school students were better in their reading comprehension skill. The data obtained from the test was analyzed in the following way. As indicated in Table 1, sample students of JUCPS have shown a better performance than the sample students of JPS. The least mark obtained was 17% by one (or 5%) student of JUCPS, whereas 3 (3%) of students of JPS obtained from 0-10% result. 14% of the sample students of JUCPS have obtained the highest mark (result) 71-80%. Concerning the sample students of JPS, it was only 1% of the students who got that highest result. When we look at the result where most of the students are in, 41% of JUCPS have obtained 41-50% and 40% of JPS students have obtained the same result. The mean result of the sample students also have shown that it is the JUCPS which showed a better performance in the test i.e. 49.36. On the other hand, the mean result of JPS students was 39.51. From these reading comprehension test result, it can be said that students of JUCPS are better in their reading comprehension performance than the students of JPS.

### Analysis of Data of Questionnaires

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

school. The questionnaires were given before they did the reading comprehension test. They were briefed how to respond to the questionnaire and were given enough time to fill it. The sample students from both schools were taken to their respective hall or classroom where it can accommodate all of them and they filled and returned them on-the-spot. Students' questionnaire was prepared in such a way that they can respond to it by rating. It consists of twenty four items classified in to three main groups, i.e. items related to text-initiated strategies, reader-initiated strategies and previous experience related to reading skill. The data obtained from such kind of questionnaire for students were presented in tables and analyzed quantitatively (decimal values were taken to the nearest whole number)

According to Table 2, the response of JUCPS students shows that it is somewhat true for 50% of them to turn to dictionaries when coming across new words while reading. For 27% of the students, it is completely true of them to turn to dictionaries for the meaning of new words when they read. For 36% of the students, guessing the meaning of new words from the word formation was usually true of them while it was not true for 27% of them, skipping new words when reading in English was not true for 36% and never true for 18% of the students. This means that most of the students don't skip new words; instead they guess the meanings from the word formation. In addition to this, it is completely true for 41% of them and usually true for 27% of the respondent to guess the meaning of new words in context when reading in English. These kinds of reading comprehension strategies concerning vocabulary use has helped most of the students of JUCPS to develop their skill of understanding the idea and meaning of a written text, and that is why they showed a better performance in the reading comprehension test.

With regard to the response of JPS students as shown in table 3, it is usually true for 42% or majority of the respondents to turn to dictionaries when coming across new words while reading. 34% of the respondents of JPS guess the meaning of words from word formation while 33% of them skip words that are new to them. It is only 35% of them that guess the meaning of new words in contexts. 38% of the students use simple words to replace the difficult ones to understand the sentence. From this, it can be said that most of JPS students frequently turn to dictionaries when they come across new words while they are reading. Those who guess the meaning of new words from word formation and in context are few when compared to that of the students of JUCPS. Most of them also skip words that are new to them. These reading comprehension strategies that they use have affected their reading comprehension skill and that is why they showed less performance in the reading comprehension test than the students of JUCPS.

Table 4 and 5 are meant to compare how effectively the sample students of both preparatory schools use the summarizing strategy in order to deal with the reading comprehension activities. According to the two tables shown here, 40 % of JPS students don't bother with the grammatical structure of sentences where as it is only 36 % with the respondents of JUCPS students. This showed that most of JPS students face problem in comprehending a text for they don't

pay attention to the grammatical structure of the sentences. Concerning item 7, it is true and usually true for 36% + 32% i.e. for 68% of the respondents of JUCPS to grasp the gist of the reading material by reading the first and the last paragraphs. This is true and usually true for 38 % and 24% (altogether for 62%) of the JPS students.

This also indicates that JUCPS students are better than JPS students in this regard. With regard to item 8, it is true, usually true and completely true for (36% + 41% + 23% respectively) i.e. 100% of the sample population of JUCPS. This shows that these students are 100 % capable in grasping the main idea of reading materials. On the other hand, this holds true only for (38% + 31% + 11%) 80% of the students of JPS. Pausing and analyzing the structure of complicated sentences (item 9 & 10) to make the summary of the idea of the given text is true for (23% + 41% + 14% ) = 78% of the sample students of JUCPS, where as it is true for 80% (24% + 38% + 18%) of JPS students. In this regard, JPS students are a little better in pausing and analyzing the structure of sentences. In addition to this JPS students also seem to be better in guessing the main ideas of the text on the basis of pictures, charts or figures than the students of JUCPS. This is shown on the table with 84% and 81% respectively in general.

The above two tables (Table 6 & table 7) are used to compare the reader-initiated strategies that are used by the students of the two target preparatory schools so that we can deduce how these strategies contributed to their reading comprehension skill. As it is shown in the tables, the students of both schools are similar in the strategy of trying to interpret the writer's intention while reading. This shows that they have developed the skill that helps them very much in comprehending a written text. According to the response indicated in the table, 86% (27% + 41% + 14%) holds true for JUCPS students in predicting the main idea of the whole passage from the titles and subtitles (Item 14) while it is 79% (20% + 41% + 18%) true for the respondents of JPS.

When coming to predicting the main idea of the whole passage from keywords, students of JPS were better than JUCPS students, because 86% (31% + 30% + 25%) goes to JPS students and 77% (36% + 32% + 9%) to JUCPS students. Paying attention to the implied meaning of the reading material is not true for 64% of sample students of JUCPS and 70% of JPS students. This means that JPS students are better than JUCPS students in giving attention to the implied meaning of a written material. Tables 8 and 9 are designed to compare the past experience related to reading that the students of the two schools had before they joined secondary and preparatory schools.

This is aimed to assess what impact this practice has played in their present reading and comprehending skill. As it is shown in the table, 73% (14% + 32%) of the students of JUCPS were being motivated by their parents who are educated and read books at home, where as this is true for 68% (18% + 25% + 25%) of the students of JPS. This shows that JUCPS students are better motivated for reading than the JPS students.

**Table 1. Reading Comprehension Test Results of JUCPS and JPS**

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

**Table 2. Reading Comprehension Strategies Related to Focus on Vocabulary (of JUCPS)**

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

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

**Table 3. Reading comprehension strategies related to focus on vocabulary (of JPS)**

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

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

**Table 4. Summarizing strategy in reading comprehension (of JPS)**

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

**Table 5. Summarizing strategy in reading comprehension (of JUCPS)**

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

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

**Table 6. Reader-initiated strategies in reading comprehension (of JPS)**

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

**Table 7. Reader-initiated strategies in reading comprehension (of JUCPS)**

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

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

**Table 8. Students' background related to reading and comprehending (of JPS)**

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

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

**Table 9. Students' background related to reading and comprehending (of JUCPS)**

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

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

When we compare the practice of reading and comprehending text while they were in elementary and secondary school (item 19), the highest number i.e. 78% (32% + 23% + 23%) again goes to JUCPS students while 77% (22% + 24% + 31%) goes to JPS students. From this it can be said that JUCPS students are better exposed to reading starting from their early ages and this has helped them to be good at their present reading comprehension skill. Concerning items 20 & 21, which talk about going to library regularly to read books and being encouraged by teachers to read and comprehend written text, respondents of JPS have exhibited a better result, 86% (22% + 37% + 27%) AND 78% (24% + 35% + 19%) respectively than the students of JUCPS whose result was 68% (27% + 36% + 5%) and 73% (32% + 23% + 18%). This has indicated that students of JPS have got a better chance to be encouraged by their teachers and to visit library and read books. Sitting for longer hours when reading interesting books (item 22) was true for 82% (23% + 27% + 32%) of the students of JUCPS. On the other hand this is 78% (25% + 35% + 28%) true for JPS students.

Regarding this, JUCPS students have patience to sit and read a written material for longer hours and this practice has helped them to develop their reading and comprehending skill which is manifested in their reading and comprehension test result. On the contrary, 84% (14% + 32% + 38%) of JPS students are found to do reading comprehension exercises by themselves in order to develop their skill for future study, whereas this is 81% (81% + 36% + 27%) true for JUCPS students.

#### Data from Teacher's Questionnaire

A questionnaire with twelve items was prepared and distributed to EFL teachers of both target preparatory schools. The numbers of teachers from both schools were eleven (two from JUCPS and nine from JPS). All of the teachers were males except one from JPS. Their age ranges from 32-57 year and their service year from 10-37 years. The items included in the questionnaire were categorized in three groups: EFL teachers and their students, EFL teacher's belief and EFL teacher's attitude towards reading comprehension skill. The items were prepared in such a way that respondents could rate each item from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The questionnaires were collected after two days of their distribution. The responses were tallied and changed into percent in a table. The discussion and results are presented in the following way. Most teachers of JUCPS, have strongly agreed that they give different reading comprehension activities to enable their students develop reading comprehension skill. But, 89% (11% + 78%) of teachers of JPS have agreed to this point while the rest of them could not decide anything. The above table generally shows that students and teachers of JUCPS are doing well towards the development of reading comprehension skill. The reading comprehension test results of JUCPS students have witnessed this fact.

#### EFL Teachers' Belief Concerning Reading Comprehension

In the above table 7, it is tried to show what EFL teacher's belief is regarding reading comprehension skill. Teachers of JUCPS strongly believed (100%) that EFL teachers should let their students practice using different strategies to develop their reading comprehension skill. When it comes to JPS teachers, it is only 33% of them that agreed to this point strongly while the other 67% of them showed their simple agreement. With regard to item 6, teachers of both schools have expressed their beliefs similarly. That means all of them have agreed without any exception that EFL teachers should use supportive language technique before a reading comprehension activities. Hundred percent of the teachers of JUCPS were not in a position to agree or disagree regarding the availability of enough text books for the students to conduct reading comprehension activities in class. This indirectly shows that they are not using the students' text book for reading comprehension exercises. On the other hand, 89% of the teachers of JPS have confirmed that there are no enough text books for the students to conduct a reading comprehension activity in class. From the response of the teachers for this item 7, it is possible to say that all of the teachers in both schools face shortage of books to conduct a reading comprehension lesson. If there are shortages of books in the schools, it would have negative impact on the reading comprehension skill of the students. For item 8, which says that there is shortage of time to conduct reading comprehension exercises in class regularly, 50% of JUCPS teachers disagree with this idea while 66% of

JPS teachers agree with it. This means that JUCPS teachers believed that there was time to conduct the reading comprehension exercise in class regularly, while teachers of JPS said that there is no enough time for reading comprehension activities in class. In table 8 shown above, the data about the feeling of the teachers of both schools are clearly indicated. For item 9, which says that it is the first language teacher who should teach reading strategies to students and not the EFS teachers, 100% of the teachers of JUCPS have expressed their disagreement. The attitude of JPS teachers towards this point is not similar to that of the teachers of JUCPS. 33% of them are in doubt whether to agree or not while 66% of JUCPS feel that ESL teachers have responsibility to teach different reading comprehension strategies to their students so that their students will develop and be efficient in their reading comprehension skill.

Item 10 says that EFL students don't need reading strategies to do a reading comprehension test effectively. Regarding this point, JUCPS teachers have totally (100%) disagreed while it is 78% for the teachers of JPS. 11% of the JPS have strongly agreed that students don't need reading strategies and 11% these teachers are not able to agree or disagree. This tells that the teachers of JUCPS have got a positive feeling about reading strategies and if they have this feeling, they are expected to help their students in this aspect. For item 11, which says that the curriculum and the R.C. activities in the text book are appropriate to the interest of the students, teachers of JUCPS were totally (100%) unable to decide whether to agree or disagree with this point. But 44% of teachers of JPS have expressed their agreement while 56% of them were not able to decide. The response to this point indicated that the majority of the teachers in both schools are not sure about the appropriateness of the curriculum to the level of their students. The last item of the questionnaire for teachers, item 12, which asked the teachers to show the number of their students who were very good in their reading comprehension, 50% of the teachers of JUCPS responded that most of their students were very good while the remaining 50% said that it is only some of their students who were very good in R.C skills. When this point is referred to the teachers of JPS, 89% of them said that it is some of their students who are very good in the skills mentioned. From this witness of the teachers we can say that JUCPS students are relatively better than the students of JPS in their reading comprehension activities and skills.

## Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary

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

1. According to the data obtained from the result of the reading comprehension test the sample students of

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

2. The data from the questionnaire of the students showed that 68% sample students of JUCPS used guessing strategy for the meanings of new words in the context and from word formation. It was only 34% of the respondents of JPS that guessed the meaning of new words in context. The majority of JPS students' i.e. 42% of them turned to dictionaries whenever they come across new words in the text they were reading.
3. From the students who filled the questionnaire, 100% of the sample populations of JUCPS were capable of grasping the main idea of the reading material while this was true for 80% of the sample population of JPS.
4. It was found that 86% of the respondents of JUCPS could predict the main idea of the whole text from its titles and subtitles. This strategy was found to be true for 79% of JPS students.
5. The data from the questionnaire of the students concerning the background experience related to reading have indicated that 73% of the respondents of JUCPS were being motivated by their educated parents who read books at home. Besides this, their response for practicing reading and comprehending texts while they were in elementary and secondary school was witnessed by 78% of them, while the above two points were assured by 68% and 77% respondents of JPS respectively.
6. The response of the teachers' questionnaire pointed that the students of JUCPS were interested in reading comprehension activities and they enjoyed doing it. This point was agreed by 100% of the respondents of JUCPS teachers, where as it was agreed by 22% of the teachers of JPS.
7. Concerning the availability of text books for students, the study found that there were no sufficient students' text books to conduct reading comprehension activities, and this was confirmed by the response of the teachers of both schools.
8. All teachers of JUCPS (100% of them) who responded to the questionnaire have strongly agreed in letting their students use and practice different strategies of reading comprehension in order to develop their comprehending skill, where as it is only 33% of the teachers of JPS who responded similarly.

### Conclusions

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

1. The result of the reading comprehension test indicated that students of JUCPS got a better result in all aspects of the test.
2. The fact that the majority of JPS students turn to dictionaries whenever they come across new words



while reading, and skipping some of the new words have affected their understanding of the material that they are reading.

3. The ability of JUCPS students to grasp the main idea of the reading material and to predict the main idea of the whole text from its titles tells that these students have a better practice and experience than the students of JPS in using variety of reading comprehension strategies for a quick understanding of the written material that they are reading.
4. Concerning the students' background related to reading and comprehending, the students of JUCPS had a better chance and motivation for reading and for practicing reading comprehension exercises while they were in elementary & secondary schools indicated that these students had a better background for reading comprehension skill than the students of JPS.
5. Hundred percent of teachers of JUCPS have witnessed that their students are interested and enjoyed doing reading comprehension activities.
6. Teachers of both schools have confirmed that there is shortage of text books for students to conduct reading comprehension exercises in class. These situations pointed the problem what teachers in both schools were facing to help their students develop their reading comprehension skill, and this impinges a negative impact on the skill development of the students.
7. The issue of letting the students use different reading comprehension strategies, which was fully supported by all the teachers of JUCPS, showed that the teachers of this school had a positive awareness about reading strategies and a feeling of responsibility to help their students to practice and develop their reading comprehension skill.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the findings the following recommendations are made

- First and foremost, EFL teachers should be made to change their attitude and belief about reading and comprehending a text as something not important and suitable in language teaching. It is then that they can create an interest and responsibility in students to read and comprehend any written text be it in class or outside on their own.
- EFL teachers of JPS should let and help their students to use different reading comprehension strategies such as guessing meanings in contexts, from word formation, predicting the main idea of the text from titles, keyword, summarizing, etc.
- In order to overcome the shortage of time to deal with reading comprehension activities in class, EFL teachers should provide ample reading comprehension tasks which worth some marks to be done as home work so that the students will practice and improve their reading comprehension skill through time.

- At home, parents should encourage and motivate their children to read and comprehend a written material in any way they can and do so that their children will be efficient in their academic performance and further study.
- Shortage of text books should be solved by the collaboration of the stakeholders for it is not possible or is hard for teachers to deal with reading comprehension activities in class or at home without text books.
- Schools and EFL teachers should discuss and arrange program to meet with partner schools and share knowledge and experience on how to deal with reading comprehension activities and improve the skill of their students in this regard and other language skills.
- Lastly, further and comprehensive investigations should be made on the issue so that the problem of reading comprehension skill among the Ethiopian secondary and college students will get deep understand for finding and implementing a lasting solution.

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