



---

## Collaboration of Parents and EFL Teachers to Enhance Children's Motivation towards Reading Skills: Focus to 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle of Primary Schools in Jimma Zone

Gemechis Teshome<sup>a\*</sup>, Dagne Tiruneh<sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Lecturer at Jimma University, Ethiopia P.O.Box- 378

<sup>a</sup>email- [gammee30@gmail.com](mailto:gammee30@gmail.com)

### Abstract

The goal of this study is to investigate to what extent parents and an EFL teachers work collaboratively to boost children's motivation to reading skills. To achieve this aim, the First Cycle of Primary Schools (1-4) of Jimma zone, two woredas ( Kersa and Mana) and one special town (Jimma) were taken as an example. Clear and measurable attempts were made to investigate the extent to which parents work with EFL teachers to increase their children's motivation to the direction of reading skills. In order to achieve the targeted objective mix-questionnaire and semi-structured interview for teachers, an FGD with parents, and classroom observation were made on the current views of parents involvement to maximize students' motivation of reading and teachers' role as well. Results of the study show that the parents and EFL teachers hardly work cooperatively to enhance students' motivation towards reading skill. They do not have an effective communication way in which they exchange constructive information about the students' reading motivation. There are clearly seen mismatches between the intended curriculum that vehemently sets parents and teachers should work together so as to make students are motivated toward reading skill of English.

**Key Words:** *Parents cooperation; Reading Skill; Motivation; Primary School 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle; EFL Teachers*

---

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [gammee30@gmail.com](mailto:gammee30@gmail.com).

## **1- Introduction**

Reading cannot be regarded as a set of mechanical skill to be learned once and for all; rather it is a complex and gradually process of making meaning from a text for variety of purposes. In order to promote children's reading capacity and sustain through their life parents are expected to contribute their role in good manner. However, teachers are highly expected to provide practice in using different motivational reading strategies. When parents and teachers work together on the issue of students' reading skill motivation, students become not only effective readers but they also begin to facilitate their way of life academy. The 1994 education policy of Ethiopia underlined not only the need to change the then curriculum rather it pointed out that children should develop the capacity of reading to understand their environment before joining the second cycle of primary school (5-8).

As language teacher/instructor, I have had opportunities to observe and work with elementary EFL students. It is an exciting experience to be working with these children. Most of them enjoy learning a "new language" and do it amazingly well.

Finding the right way to teach these children is important, but it is found that they read more effectively when they are motivated. However, children in Jimma Zone in general and Kersa, Manna woredas and Jimma town First Cycle Primary Schools in particular do spend little of their time by attracting students to reading. Thus, for this age of students (1-4 grades) parents and EFL teachers are responsible to motivate their students to read, hence many students are at risk of reading due to the lack of motivation.

Accordingly, every school has got an opportunity to involve parents to improve the quality of education in general and the capacity of students' reading skill in particular. The responsibilities of parents are to participate in each level of classes; they contribute their effort for the betterment of teaching reading skill.

## **2. Materials and methods:**

### ***2.1 Statement of the Problem***

It should be considered that reading is essential for learners' academic success; therefore both teachers and parents need to attribute necessary attention to motivate children towards reading skills. There is a strong agreement among the scholars that the language teachers and parents collaborative work can boost children's motivation to reading skills. However, it seems that parents and EFL teachers collaboration to enhance students' motivation to reading skill is less. Thus, the focus has been on assessing whether the parents contribute with the EFL teachers to encourage children to reading skill based on learning theories/approaches and curriculum.

According to the agreements made among the scholars, most of the parents in developed nations contribute their responsibilities on how their children develop reading skill; to the contrary in my case most of the parents rarely work with teachers to motivate their children. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned, there are various research works particularly MA theses and some PhD dissertations have been conducted universally; however there are no research works locally made on our areas.

As explained earlier, different studies have been conducted to see the importance of motivation in any learning environment including teaching of reading skill. Thus, questions that still remained unanswered and which we need to address are the extent to which parents play their role in supporting EFL teachers to motivate children towards reading skill; and if EFL teachers devise ways in which they can consult parents on how to increase students' reading ability. There are, of course, various questions that seek answer regarding the collaborative working of EFL teachers and parents to increase motivation of learners in Grade 4. Grade 4 seems turning point since it is a level where they begin to prepare themselves for the second cycle of primary school (5-8).

## **2.2 Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate to which extent EFL teachers and parents cooperate to motivate students towards reading skill in the First Cycle of Primary Schools in government schools of Jimma Zone. To the specific the study tries to:

- Identify the EFL teachers' contribution in motivating learners towards reading skills;
- Assess to what extent parents work cooperatively with teachers to motivate their learners towards reading skill;

## **2.3 Research questions**

The study answered the following two basic questions,

- What do the EFL teachers contribute in motivating children towards reading skills?
- Do parents play their role so as to motivate children towards reading skills?

## **2.4 Significance of the Study**

Assessing the collaboration of EFL teachers and parents' collaboration to what extent they motivate learners for reading skill could have benefits for language teachers, their students, parents and other researchers. First, teachers who have taken part in this research could benefit more from their involvement. This is because, it initiates them to use the motivational strategies for teaching reading skill and also it helps them to know to what extent their activities are engaging and interesting to attract the students towards reading skill. Second, the finding raises the awareness of the parents to contribute their indispensable role in motivating their children towards reading both in outdoors and indoors.

The other purpose of the study would be exposing the learners to different phases of motivation to read effectively and informing reading skill is the key factor for their future learning. Furthermore, the study helps other researchers to conduct on the ways to motivate children towards reading skill.

### **2.5 Limitations**

This research methodology lacked the participation of all or the majority of parents who enrolled their children to the school, since the sample size was not involved all families who enrolled their children to the school. The research was conducted at second semester of academic year, so had it been during first semester of the academic year it could have represented the entire students of Grade 4 in the setting. The other limitation of this research is that, had the data been collected from the whole first cycle primary classes, i.e. from Grade 1-3, the quality of the research could have been increased.

### **3. Literature Review**

According to [2] motivation is a broad topic in psychology today. A characteristic once viewed as either present or not in a child is now seen as a multifaceted and dynamic quality that exists in each human being. As education is the key to success in life, academic motivation comes to the forefront of a student's learning style. In examining the different contributions and components of motivation, it becomes increasingly clear that the teacher plays a significant role in a student's drive to succeed though he or she could not do alone. As educators, it is only possible to affect change relative to our personal roles in schools and education, focusing on ourselves becomes the best way to incite change in a student's life. It is a beautiful and sometimes frightening thought that the role of teachers has such a huge impact on a student's academic success and failure. However, powered with years of research on motivation and the ambition to enact change, it is up to teachers and parents to ensure that motivation exists in classroom.

Motivation, in its most unpretentious form, is simply the justification behind a particular action, yet it is an extremely vital determinant of human behavior. According to [ 1 ] "The Latin root of the word 'motivation' means 'to move'; hence, in this basic sense the study of motivation is the study of action". In the elementary classroom, where reading has been the central action, with particular to 1<sup>st</sup> cycle primary schools in Jimma zone, teachers must ask: what, then, "moves" students to read, and are teachers aware of and employing these motivating practices in the classroom? Of course, not only the language teachers but also the parents are the center of this question according to the current investigators.

Many scholars agree that motivation is among the most powerful determinants of students' success or failure in school. Much research on reading skills has been done in Ethiopia, but less research is worked in the areas of reading motivation. Given the cultural influences relevant to motivation, there are no findings generalized as the knowledge of the researchers concerned in general and for 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Primary School in Jimma zone in particular.

As quoted by [8] simply define academic motivation as commitment to schooling. Motivation is also closely tied with the term engagement or a student's involvement in and determination to complete academic tasks. However, motivation is defined the one characteristic that is universally accepted is that most students cannot succeed academically if they are not motivated to learn. When students do not feel connected or compelled by their academic tasks, it would be unfair for educators to expect them to complete these tasks efficiently or

enthusiastically. According to [5], motivation can be defined as “a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal directed behavior.”

According to [9] teachers “...recognize that motivation may be correlated to the amount and breadth of children’s reading”. As educators themselves, [10] also share that while teachers are aware of the importance of motivation, and the instructional practices that have been shown to motivate students to read, it was their experience that the current and evidence-based practices were not always effective for their students. After taking the time to ask students what motivated them to read, [10] state, therefore, that, “it was critical for us as teachers to take a more in-depth look at what really motivates children to read”. Through the acquisition of this information, educators should be certain, then, that the context of the classroom matches the motivational factors of the students in the classroom.

According to [6] older models of motivation have proposed that motivation is a student-centered construct that exists on a continuum, beginning with those students who are highly motivated to learn and ending with those less motivated. There are several theories regarding the range of motivational levels seen in children.

As quoted by [6] parental involvement is a catch-all term for many different activities including ‘at home’ good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance. It is relatively easy to describe what parents do in the name of involvement. It is much more difficult to establish whether this activity makes a difference to school outcomes particularly since school outcomes are influenced by so many factors.

Further, [7] found that regardless of the child’s SES, literacy could improve if parents were enticed to become involved. Many authors found that facilitating parents’ interests in their children’s schoolwork was crucial for increasing involvement. Significantly, this finding occurred across SES and racial characteristics. Therefore, creating homework that appeals to parents can serve to increase parental involvement and facilitate closer home–school connections, thus improving students’ performance.

Deeper understanding of the ways and extent to which parents’ support for reading is related to their adolescent children’s reading habits, motivations, and attitudes may help inform the work of the many educators, researchers, and policy makers who are currently pursuing the goal of improving adolescent reading engagement and achievement. According to [4] positive forms of reading motivation, which encompasses “the individual’s personal goals, values, and beliefs with regard to the topics, processes, and outcomes of reading” appear to increase children’s reading amount

The more teachers and parents encourage their learners to read, the better they tend to read, the more the students enjoy it, and... the more they read. Keeping kids interested and motivated to read is sometimes a challenge. Some students who can read would rather do other things instead. Other students struggle with reading and so don't enjoy it. So, finding out the way to motivate kids to read a foreign language is an important task for both parents and EFL teachers.

#### **4. Methodology**

To investigate the role of parents and EFL teachers in motivating students of Grade 4 towards reading skill, a descriptive design was applied.

##### ***4.1 Sample Size and Sampling Technique***

Six primary schools from two woredas and Jimma town were included in the study. Serbo and Kitimbille are selected from Kersa woreda; Yabu and Gar Uke Jimmate are included from Mana woreda, whereas Dilfire, and Mandara are taken from Jimma town. The performance of each school particular the active participation of parents in the school would help the researchers to select the mentioned schools based on the obtained document from education office of Jimma zone.

To decide the sample size, visits were made to the respective schools and clear discussions were made on how to contact parents. Such and other discussions helped the researchers to organize sampling frames for teachers and parents. After identifying the number of parents who are active in participating for the issue of teaching learning process, eight parents from each school with the total of 46 parents were decided to involve in the study. Besides, three language teachers of first cycle in each primary were engaged.

Purposive sampling was employed to identify the study subjects. This is to keep the more the parents are working with teachers; it is the more they understand and feel the extent to which they contribute and their students read as well. Therefore, the researchers decided to engage not any parents who enroll his or her students to the school rather they decided to get involved parents who are actively working with parents for the benefit of their students.

##### ***4.2 Data collection tools***

Questionnaire, interview, FGD and observation were used as a means to achieve the target of the current study. Both questionnaire and interview were the original work of the researchers except the adaptation of few from review of related literature, particularly in the questionnaire whereas observation tool was followed, which emphasizes the creation of cultural background and holistic approach of the participant.

##### ***4.3 Data Analysis***

Quantitative and descriptive analyses were conducted using multiple sources of information for the analyses. Analyses were conducted quantitatively on the questionnaire only from EFL teachers. To examine the natural variability within the sample, researchers developed empirically driven indices of effectiveness for the teachers, grouped teachers into categories of how frequently they motivated (always, usually, sometimes, occasionally, and never), and then investigated the systematic differences among teachers on the sets of variables. The process of qualitative data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic.

In this study both qualitative and quantitative (mixed approach) data analyses were employed. The data from closed ended questions was analyzed in percentages, whereas, open-ended questions, interview, FGD and classroom observation were analyzed and then be examined in terms, patterns and relationships they have. Percentages obtained were used to analyze the data. Interviews from teachers were kept and organized based on their items.

The data from observation was mainly used to assess to what extent the children read reading materials when their teachers prepare supportive motivating materials, and if the teaching classroom was attractive as well. More systematic analysis was conducted after the data collection was completed and the interviews and FGD were transcribed.

#### **4.4 Ethical Consideration**

Since the age of students in Grade Four is about 12 in average, permission was requested from their parents and consent was made.

#### **5. Findings**

The Tables 1,2, 3 represent the way parents and teachers work collaboratively so as to motivate learners towards reading skills in English.

#### **6. Discussion**

The questionnaire was collected from thirty English language teachers; the items were 20 close-ended one. The items were categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and to what extent teachers cooperate with parents were the aspects tried to address in the questionnaire. The responses to the questionnaire was tallied and analyzed by working out the frequencies and percentages for each item. According to the understanding of the investigators the information obtained through the three data collecting tools i.e., interview with EFL teachers, an FGD with parents/ guardians, and classroom observation were mainly discussed and interpreted in qualitatively.

The observation and the FGD results showed to what extent EFL teachers and parents/guardians communicate to each other to motivate learners to reading skill. According to the observation, teachers were observed whether they:

- create a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the reading classroom(pictures, diagrams, charts on the wall )
- provide an interesting reading materials( stories, riddles, folklores, puzzles)
- make sure that there are no serious obstacles to read.( extra books, classroom sitting arrangements)
- appreciate those students who answer questions from reading exercise

To what extent teachers motivate children to reading was also followed with the 20 item general scale which was adapted from the Children’s Academic Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (CAIMI), developed by [4] for fourth through eight graders. Likert items address teachers’ curiosity, persistence and enjoyment of not only teaching reading but also motivating. The major objective of the above table was designed mainly to elicit how often English teachers prepare materials which motivate students towards reading skill. The researchers divided the approach of the questionnaire into how the teachers set goals for reading (intrinsically), extrinsically motivating material, to what extent the teachers work with parents to motivate children for reading. In addition to the close-ended questionnaire, the researchers tried to analyze open-ended questionnaire by triangulating.

**Table 1: Responses of Intrinsic Reading Motivation Frequency**

Items No	Responses													Mean
	A		U		S		O		N		Total			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1. Inviting students to read in library	0	0	2	6.7	8	26.7	12	40	8	26.7	30	100	2.13	
2. Appreciating students when they make mistakes	0	0	0	0	6	20.0	16	53.3	8	26.7	30	100	1.9	
3. Identifying good readers as a model for lower readers	0	0	0	0	8	26.7	14	46.7	8	26.7	30	100	2.0	
4. Encourage learners to reading to understand their environment by reading	0	0	1	3.3	8	26.7	13	43.3	8	26.7	30	100	2.0	
5. Advising students to read to get information of others	2	6.7	2	6.7	7	23.3	11	36.7	8	26.7	30	100	2.3	
6. Encourage students to read stories, tales and games	0	0	2	6.7	6	20	10	33.3	12	40	30	100	1.9	
7. Inform students to read is a base for knowledge	1	3.3	3	10	8	26.7	12	40	6	20	30	100	2.3	
8. Encourage students to read textbooks	0	0	2	6.7	6	20	14	46.7	8	26.7	30	100	2.0	
9. Order to read even long and uneasy texts	1	3.3	3	10	9	30	8	26.7	9	30	30	100	2.3	
10. Prepare fun and attractive reading materials	2	6.7	2	6.7	10	33.3	9	30	7	23.3	30	100	2.4	



**Table 2: Responses of Extrinsic Reading Motivation Frequency**

Items No	Responses													Mean
	A		U		S		O		N		Total			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
11 Advise to read in order to score good marks	0	0	2	6.7	9	30	11	36.7	8	26.7	30	100	2.9	
12 Tell to read when there is home take works or assignments	0	0	1	3.3	10	33.3	12	40	7	23.3	30	100	2.1	
13 Inform students that to read in the absence work in English is to	0	0	0	0	10	33.3	11	36.7	9	30	30	100	2.0	
14 Advise students not to read difficult reading materials	0	0	1	3.3	9	30	13	43.3	7	23.3	30	100	2.1	
15 Inform students to read is a basic to other	0	0	3	10	9	30	8	26.7	10	33.3	30	100	2.1	
16 Advise students to reading to get a job	2	6.7	2	6.7	9	30	11	36.7	6	20	30	100	2.4	

**Table 3: Responses how often EFL Teachers Communicate with Parents**

	Responses												Mean
	A		U		S		O		N		Total		
Items No	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
17. Devise mechanisms in which parents get involved to motivate children's reading	0	0	2	6.7	9	30	13	43.3	6	20	30	100	2.9
18. Give values for parents' assistance on reading English for students	0	0	2	6.7	9	30	13	43.3	6	20	30	100	2.2
19. Invite parents to visit their children's reading skill in class	0	0	0	0	8	26.7	13	43.3	9	30	30	100	1.9
20. Exchange information with parents about students' reading condition	0	0	1	3.3	8	26.7	12	40	9	30	30	100	2.0

As it can be seen from the table 1, items from question 1-10 were mainly designed to elicit information how often the EFL teachers set goals to motivate children's towards reading skill intrinsically. For item 1, two teachers responded that they occasionally invited the students to read materials from the library and then to report.

To the contrary, twenty eight respondents (84%) were not to invite their students neither to read whatever they like nor to report what they read. This item was supported by the data from open-ended that teachers were not comfortable position to send children to the library. They answered that some of their school do not have appropriate library which can serve those children for reading. Most of the books in the library are out dated and beyond their level.

As the data obtained from the teachers in item 2 shows, 6 (20%) of the teachers sometimes accepted that students should be appreciated in making mistakes so that they could learn from their errors whereas, 16 (53.3%) teachers occasionally appreciated those students making mistakes. And 8 respondents (26.7%) never accepted students making of mistakes during reading. Most of the teachers according to the information elicited via the interview showed that they believe children's error should be corrected soon.

As we can understand from the table 1, on item 3, 8 (26.7%) respondents never identified those students who read as a good model and 46.5% of the respondents occasionally identified the good readers. In the other way round, 8 respondents (26.7%) of them sometimes did the task. Items 4 and 5 in the above table intended to reveal how often the teachers motivate the learners towards reading in order to know their environment through reading and read in English to get an access of information. The data obtained from item 4 reveals that 8 respondents (26.7%) replied they never encourage their students to read in English so as to know their environment, 43.3% of respondents occasionally encourage the student to read for such purposes. On the other way round, only a teacher (3.3%) usually encourages the students to reading so that they could understand their environment. Whereas, item 5 elicited how often the respondents advise the students to reading in order to access information. Thus, the data showed that 8 respondents replied they never advise their students to read for the purpose of information access. And 11 respondents (36.7%) answered they occasionally motivated their learners for such activities.

The data obtained from item 5 shows that 62% of the respondents never or occasionally advise their students to reading so as to discover other information. Only four respondents replied that they usually advise their students to reading so that they could be motivated in other reading materials. Item 6 was designed to know to what extent teachers encourage students to read stories and folklores. From the obtained data, 22 respondents (73.3%) answered that they occasionally or never encourage their students to read stories and folklores. How often the EFL teachers inform their students to reading since it is the base of knowledge was the target of item 7. Thus, 60% of the respondents replied that they never advice their students to reading material as reading is a base for knowledge. And 37.7% of the EFL teachers said that they sometimes inform the students reading is a base for knowledge. Whereas, 3.3% of the population always inform reading is fundamental to reading. Item 8 was designed to elicit to what extent the respondents initiate the learners to read the text book. As it can be seen from the table on the same item 22 respondents (73.3%) answered they occasionally motivate their students to read textbooks. And 26.7% of the respondents sometimes initiated the students to read the textbooks.

As it can be seen on item 9, it was planned to elicit information from the respondents to what extent they order students long and uneasy texts. 17 (56.7%) respondents replied that they occasionally advise their students to reading long and uneasy texts. Whereas, (43.3%) of the EFL teachers usually tell them to read long and easy materials. In item 10, the data obtained shows 53.3% of the respondents replied that they never prepare fun materials to attract students towards reading.

Table 1 describes how often EFL teachers prepare a lesson that could foster learners' intrinsic motivation. The analysis would seem to show the majorities of the EFL teachers contributed less in motivating the students intrinsically towards reading English skill. According to data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire EFL

teachers fail to motivate learners towards reading intrinsically. Their main arguments of the failure are, the majority of the school would have library though it has lack of interesting reading materials, and the books are very outdated. Most of the books in the library do not fit the academic level of the students and very irrelevant to their culture. Some of the schools like Garuke Jimate primary school do have an opportunity to the access of book donated; however, the materials are uneasily understandable by our learners. It is a belief of most the language teachers to motivate students towards reading skills. However, this seems challenging to put into practices because of various reasons from the side of learners, parents, curriculum, school administration, and the teachers themselves.

Items 11-16 wanted to know how often EFL teachers prepare reading lesson in relation to enhancing students' extrinsic motivation. The result indicates that teachers who sometimes order their students to read for assignments and home take works were (10 =33.3%), while 12 teachers (40%) said they occasionally order students to read for such purposes. In response to item 13, 21(70%) answered they occasionally inform to read without assignment is just waste of time. Whereas 9 (30%) of the teachers never give such order for their students. Item 14 and 15 asked how often the teachers advise to leave difficult expressions and order reading is mandatory to cop-up with other learning respectively. Accordingly for item 14, 22 (73.3%) replied that they occasionally advise not to read difficult reading materials. But, seven of the teachers never give such advice. In item 15, the investigators asked to what extent language teachers initiate their students towards reading since reading is mandatory. Thus, 12 (40%) of the respondents replied they sometimes encourage their students for reading is basic for other skills. In item 16 respondents were asked how often they advise their students to read so as to get job. 4 teachers (13%) replied that they always advise their students to read in order to get job. Whereas, 20 (66.7%) of the teachers replied they occasionally advise their students to do that.

The analysis of table 2 reported that EFL teachers neither neglected nor appreciated extrinsic reading motivation for the students. However, the majorities of the teachers were seen during the classroom observation giving focus for tasks, such as reading for exams, reading for home take assignments, and reading for getting jobs.

In the above table 3, items 17-20 were designed to elicit how often EFL teachers make communication with parents to motivate students towards reading skill. Item 17 asked teachers how often they devise mechanisms in which parents get involvement so as to motivate students' reading. 11 (36.7%) of respondents replied that they sometimes devise mechanisms to contact parents' to cooperate in the students' reading skill. With the same item, the majority of the respondents 19 (66.3%) answered that they never made communication means to motivate students' towards reading skill. Item 18 asked to what extent teachers need the assistance of parents to motivate learners towards reading skill. As seen in item 17 the teachers performed identical figure with the mentioned item 17. The target of item 19 was to elicit information from the respondents how often they invite parents to the school in order to work with them to motivate students' reading ability. 21 (70%) answered that they sometimes invite parents to the school so as to discuss on the issue of reading motivation. Whereas, 9 of the respondents replied they never invite parents to deal on the issues of students' reading motivation, however in their interview they said that there are cases when they invited parents, like school meeting. The last item of the questionnaire, item 20, asked the EFL teachers how often they exchange information about the students' reading condition. 20 (67.7) of the respondents replied that they occasionally exchange information on the reading

conditions of students. Whereas, 9 (30%) of the teachers said they never exchange information on the students' reading condition. In the interview session the team of the investigators tried to know why most of the respondents were unable to exchange information on the reading conditions. They strongly replied that the current number of students accommodated in the classroom is inconvenient even to know students by their name leave alone to exchange information on in individual cases. They rarely exchange information with parents when the situation concerns the majority of students in the class.

Table 3 analyzed that to what extent the EFL teachers cooperate with parents to motivate children towards reading. As the statistics above describes the communication made between parents and EFL teachers is very less and ineffective.

## **7. Parents' FGD**

The 6-item on FGD was constructed by the investigators in order to see whether the parents motivate their children's towards reading skill. The first item was planned to discuss whether the parents schedule time and select books for their children to read some materials. Providing books and scheduling would encourage interaction between parents and children increases reported interaction and improves children's performance on reading. Although parents strongly agree that selecting books and scheduling time for reading are important in achieving students' success, the report from the FGD revealed that all of the parents did not select a book for reading and they also were not to schedule rather than ordering them simply 'read it' According to the parents from Garuke Jimate, Yabu, and Kitimble schools, they ordered their children only to read after accomplishing home activities, like fetching water and rearing animals. It was not difficult for the researchers to realize from the parents' discussion that once the students join the school the involvement of parents is not this much important as that of classroom teacher to motivate reading. Even, some parents believe that their children finish learning in general and reading in particular in the school.

But it is interesting and important to note that parents play great role in scheduling times and selecting reading books as well. Thus, teachers' interaction in terms of scheduling and book selecting alone do not warrant students' motivation to reading.

The other point raised for discussion to parents was if they bought interesting books such as stories, games and others. The researcher chose to keep the direct expression of most parents in their native language Afan Oromo on the above issue.

*“ Kitaaba bituun maaliif barbaachise? Manni barumsa ijoollee keenyaaf kitaaba ni hir'a. Yeroo tokko tokko hanqinni kitaaba gosa barnoota muraasarratti yoo mul'attelle kitaaba tokko lamatti yookiin kitaaba tokko sadiitti ni argatu. Kanaaf kitaaba bituun barbaachisadha miti.”*

Parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, and progress reports are just the “at-school” academic involvement parents can have. At home academic involvement is much more subtle and far-reaching. “Families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels encourage their children...and keep them focused on learning and homework. In other words, all families can, and often do, have a positive influence on their children's learning”. Providing a quiet place to work, creating a daily study schedule, inventing more opportunities for students to make choices, asking questions about each subject, and asking their child teach them are ways that parents can be involved in their child's education. It is important to note that parents have “different skills and differing levels of comfort when it comes to school involvement”

An FGD made with parents in Jimma zone did reveal neither what the review of literature says nor the experience of the main investigator of a research. According to the information elicited from parents there was no parent communicating via telephone, notice-reminder, letter or any other means of communication with an English teacher. Parents are expected to tell the teacher about their expectations and their child's reading interest. They have to ask teachers for suggestions on achieving their interest. Parents must agree on a way for the two of them to exchange information about the child. After an initial face-to-face meeting, many teachers and parents find accessible way to keep in touch.

## **8. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### ***8.1 Conclusion***

In the study, it was discovered that in terms of cooperation, the teachers and parents have only worked little to motivate the students towards reading skill. Their communication and experience of their understanding each other to motivate children to reading did little. It was easily understood that EFL teachers in the investigated school had various good experience in teaching reading; however, they had less practice in cooperation work with parents so as to motivate students of Grade Four on English reading skills. In addition to this, in most of the schools except in few the EFL teachers practiced little ways to communication with parents. For instance, they had less experience in writing letters, calling through telephone and trying to visit parents. The teachers only tried to communicate with parents when the administration had a plan with PTA or parents as whole. Thus, it is evident to summarize those EFL teachers in Jimma zone in general and the First Cycle Primary School and two

schools from Jimma town in Jimma zone in particular have less practice to work in cooperation with parents in order to motivate children to reading skills.

It is evident that parents and teachers in Jimma Zone rarely work together in general and to promote students' reading capacity in particular; they rather inclined to blame one another for lack of student motivation in reading. Thus, EFL teachers are advised to establish partnerships with parents and keep them informed of progress. Not surprisingly, many parents – especially parents for whom English is not their daily language, like in Jimma Zone where some parents send unintentionally their children to school routinely have difficulty communicating with the teachers of their children.

Furthermore it is strongly believed by the current investigator that parents are expected to share the responsibility of cooperating with teachers. As we can realize from the age of Grade Four students, more or less in this age children stay with their parents most of the time when we compare to other youngsters. Thus, from this point of view one can deduce that parents do have good opportunity in treating their children in general and motivating towards reading in particular. However, this does not seem practicable in Jimma zone due to some reasons. According to the discussants in FGD and interview, parents do not really work hand in hand with the teachers to enhance their children reading skill. This is not because they do not want their children to be competent or achievable; rather their understanding about the cooperative work is 'ill'. They think once they send their children to the school most of the responsibility to teach is the teacher. Some of the parents agreed that they changed information with school principals when there is a need, but they are less familiar in communicating with language teachers and dealing about his/her child's activity. It was clearly understood that parents fail in preparing supporting materials for their children so as to motivate towards reading. Few of them even complained that why they need to buy extra materials since the government distributes books. To the contrary, few of the parents do have good understanding in how to motivate their children towards reading skill. For instance, they order to read their exercises during night time and even ask some general questions.

Therefore, we can conclude that the students are not motivated to reading skill to the expected degree due to the less parents and teachers collaboration. As a result, it is crucial for both teachers and parents to play their great contributions on the way to motivate students to reading skill.

### **8.3 Recommendations**

- Teachers in general and EFL teachers in particular should consider teaching reading incorporate elements for increasing the likelihood of parental interactions and also consider the parents' and students' interests.
- EFL teachers are also urged to involve parents in teaching reading workshop sessions that will provide them with the skill they need to effectively assist their students to draw conclusions about reading selections, utilize their ideas for creating reading assignments that are interesting to parents and students.

- Teachers can provide parents with periodic updates of class activities, assignments and expectations. This gives parents ongoing information about their child's school experience and provides the opportunity to seek more information about what is being taught and how their child is performing.
- It should be the concern of parents to deal with not only children's time to eat, sleep, play, work, but also great emphasis must be given for their reading.
- More collaboration between the EFL teachers and home will need to be focused on dealing with these problems. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children”
- Implement a system for making parents and teachers accountable using as a reference a current research results.
- Develop stronger EFL teacher ties and improve parents' ability to read and hold schools accountable by using a simple set of indicators to identify progress in reading skills (e.g. number of words a child should read per minute).

## **References**

- [1] A. Wigfield, “Children's motivation for reading: domain specificity and instructional influences”. *Journal of Educational Research*, pp 97, 299–309 2004.
- [2] D. Brown. “*Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*”. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents. 2007.
- [3] Government of Ethiopia, Ministry of Education. *New Education and Training Policy*. Addis Ababa: St. George Printing Press. (1994).
- [4] J. T. Guthrie. and, A. Wigfield. *Motivating reading comprehension: Concept-oriented reading instruction*.2004.
- [5] L. Baker, &, D. Scher. “Beginning readers' motivation for reading in relation to parental beliefs and home reading experiences”. *Reading Psychology*, (2002). 23, 239–269. Mahwah: Erlbaum. 2004.
- [6] L. Baker. “Opportunities at home and in the community that foster reading engagement”. In J.T. Guthrie &.D. Alvermann (Eds.), *Engagement in reading: Processes, practices, and policy implications* New York: Teacher College Press. (pp. 105–133). 1999.



- [7] R. Wells. Parents and reading: What fifth graders report. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 11, 20–26. (1978).
- [8] T. B. Murdock. and A. Miller. “Teachers as sources of middle school students’ motivational identity”: Variable-centered and person-centered analytic approaches. *Elementary School Journal*, 103, 383–399. 2003.
- [9] Z. Dornyei. “Motivating Language Learners”: A Classroom-Oriented Investigation of the Effects of Motivational Strategies on Student *Motivation* *TESOL*.2008.
- [10] Z. Dornyei, &M.J. Guilloeaux. “Motivating language learners”. *TESOL quarterly*, Vol. 42 (1), pp. 55-77. Retrieved April 22, 2012. .(2008)