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Department of English Language and Literature

An Investigation of Grade 9 English Language Teachers' Awareness and Practices of Continuous Assessment in Reading Classes: The Cases of Abdi Bori and Gore High Schools

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Art in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL)

By

Yidnekachew Tesfaye



Advisor: Yohannes Tefera

June, 2014

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Jimma, Ethiopia.



**Declaration, confirmation, approval and evaluation**

**Research Title: An Investigation of Grade 9 English Language Teachers' Awareness and Practices of Continuous Assessment in Reading Classes: The Case of Abdi Bori and Gore High Schools**

**Declaration**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, not presented for any degree in any Universities, and that all the sources used for it are duly acknowledged.


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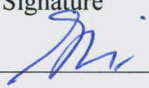
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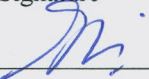
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## **Acronyms**

CA: Continuous Assessment

ETP: Educational Training Policy

MOE: Ministry of Education

NIED: National Institute for Educational Development

OEB: Oromia Education Bureau

WEO: Woreda Education Office

ZEO: Zonal Education Office



## **Abstract**

*The central intention of this research was to investigate grade 9 English language teachers' practice of continuous assessment (CA) in reading classes of two secondary schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone, namely, Abdi Bori and Gore High Schools. To attain this objective, a descriptive survey research method was employed. The sample consisted of 7 grade 9 English language teachers and 366 students drawn from 1461 grade 9 students of the respective schools. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the target schools while comprehensive and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select the sample teachers and students respectively. To gather the necessary data, questionnaire, interviews, document analysis, and observations were employed. In analyzing the data, percentage and mean were used. The results of the study indicated that teachers' understanding of the principles and purposes of CA were insufficient. Besides, there was a gap in the implementation of CA in their reading classes properly. From the results of the study, teachers had experience in supplying feedback for their students based on the effect of the assessment but the provision was below expected. Even though there are various assessment devices in assessing reading skills, a few of them were only implemented in the reading classes, namely tests and quizzes, group assignment and think aloud predominantly. Furthermore, the finding of the study indicated that large class size and high teaching loads were identified as the main impeding factors of the implementation of CA in their reading classes. Thus, based on the findings of the study, recommendations are forwarded to alleviate the aforementioned problems in the schools under study.*

**Key terms:** *Continuous Assessment, Practice, Feedback, Implementation*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

One can hardly deny that English language plays a very important role in the major aspects of life in this global era. It is the most widely spoken language in the world. It has been used as a medium of instruction in Ethiopian's secondary schools. Despite its prominent position in secondary schools of Ethiopia, students' level of performance in English language is reported to be declining. Teshome (2001) confirmed that the English language competence of students is unsatisfactory for their level.

This poor performance of students in English language is attributed to a variety of factors such as teaching methodology of teachers, quality of teachers' training, quality of curricular materials, the evaluation system process, lack of continuous (on job) training and attitude of both teachers and students (Rogers, 2001; Cross 1995). Of the determinant factors which contribute to the inadequacy of students' performance in English language, teachers' of evaluation system can be the one that might be emphasized.

In a broad sense, in striving to assure quality education, emphasis on assessment is indispensable. In line with this, Rink (2006, as cited in Abera,2012) asserts, "One of the recent directions of educational reform has been the emphasis of assessment in the teaching learning process" (p.14). This is to mean that as assessment and instruction are integrated together, what behaviors students can demonstrate because of increase in their knowledge, skills, and attitudes can be developed through careful assessment.

The main purpose of assessment in curriculum is to gather information about the learner's development. The exact status of learner's development can be obtained by assessing the learning process continuously. Students receive feedback from their teacher based on their performance and this allows them to focus on topics they have not yet mastered. Besides, teachers also

identify which students need review and remedial teaching and which learners are ready to begin complex lessons.

Therefore, the practices of CA help to ensure that all students make learning progress throughout the school or education cycle thereby increasing their academic achievement. Likewise, as to our country's Education and Training Policy (ETP) due attention has been given to CA, "Continuous assessment in academic and practical subjects, including aptitude tests will be conducted to ascertain the formation of all round profile of students at all levels"(MOE, 1994, p.18).

Like in any other subjects, teacher's practice of CA in English classroom enables them to realize how learners' are progressing in the development of skills, knowledge and values. In line with this, out of the four macro skills, the practice of CA of reading class has to be emphasized because assessing reading ability is regarded all over the English-speaking world as one of the most important ways of monitoring educational standards (Harrison & Salinger, 1998). Consequently, English language teachers' are expected to put this mode of assessment into practice. This study mainly aims at investigating the practice of CA in reading classes of grade 9 English Language teachers, particularly at two high schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It is believed that continuous assessment is being implemented with the intention of improving learning and guiding teaching in particular and raising the standard of education in general. For this reason, CA is widely under the system of any school level of our country to realize the fact that underpinned these concepts.

The prominent factor that motivated the researcher to focus on the practice of CA in reading class is that CA is highly recommended to support learners' learning and to inform teachers' instructions. There is substantial evidence on literature to confirm that effective practice of CA enhances learners' performance and improves the standards (Taras, 2009). Most education institutions around the world have adapted the use of CA to support learners' learning and guide teachers' instructions.

Besides, the other reason that motivated the researcher to embark on this topic is the researcher's experience. As the researcher is currently an expert in Ilubabor Education office, he has good



opportunities to observe different schools teaching learning process (real classroom teaching, documents, etc.). Consequently, CA is considered as tests given at different intervals, mid-term exam and final exam. In addition, students are expected to learn cooperatively; however, when a project work or group work is given to them, only the leaders of the group do the activities and the rest simply gain the mark on his/her performance. Also students, who do not succeed in CA, are not given appropriate remedial solution for their failure rather only they are provided with re-exam.

These inspired the researcher to look into the investigation of the practice of CA in reading classes among grade 9 English language teachers exhaustively. In line with this, their awareness about CA has to be considered in order to see the existence of the fundamental theoretical aspects of CA.

Different studies have been conducted on the practice of CA in language learning and teaching in different institutions from the lower to the higher one. As a result, they came up with a variety of recommendations in line with varied problems of the institutions.

For instance, a research conducted by Sileshi (2007) was confined only to the implementation of CA in Dehub Ethiopia Teacher Education College. His findings showed that teachers in Dehub Ethiopia Teachers Education College had inadequate understanding about CA. Mbea (2008) carried out a study on the challenges of continuous oral assessment in EFL classes of Debrebirhan Teachers' College, and revealed that there was positive attitude towards continuous oral assessment even though it is neglected. Besides, different factors that hinder its implementation were identified. The other research which was conducted by Dagne (2009) was also concerned with the practice of CA in Jimma Teachers' College and it came up with the fact that the teachers did not always use CA in order to assess students' English language performance. In connection with this, teachers did not get adequate training on it. In the same year, Habtamu (2009) conducted a research focusing on the implementation of CA among Dilla University EFL teachers. Lack of adequate knowledge, limited use of assessment devices and different challenges during implementation were identified in his research.

What makes this study unique from the other was more attention was given to the practice of CA in reading classes of high school teachers; specifically grade 9 English language teachers. Grade

9 is the beginning of secondary school in which students need a great support for the rest of their academic career. Moreover, the focus area of the study was two government high schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone, namely, Abdi Bori and Gore high schools.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study tried to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do English language teachers have understanding of the principles and purposes of CA in reading classes?
2. To what extent do grade 9 English teachers implement CA in reading classes?
3. What are the CA devices mainly employed to assess reading skills by the teachers?
4. How often do the teachers provide feedback based on the result of CA in reading classes?
5. What are the major problems that the teachers face in implementing CA in reading classes?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the practice of CA in reading classes in line with the principles and purposes of CA among grade 9 English Language teachers of the two government high schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone. Besides, it was intended to look into appropriate provision of feedback and to detect the challenges during the implementation of CA.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

Specifically, this research intended to:

1. find out whether or not grade 9 English language teachers have sufficient knowledge of the principles and purposes of CA;
2. point out the extent to which the teachers implement CA in reading classes;
3. identify the CA devices mainly employed to assess reading skills by the teachers;
4. find out whether or not appropriate feedback is provided based on the result of CA;

5. identify the major challenges teachers encountered in implementing CA in reading classes.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

As to Puhl(1997), CA in the English language classroom is one response to new global realities as they shape the classroom. It acknowledges that instructional process can only be changed when we change our assessment process. It is worthwhile to give emphasis to the practice CA. Therefore, this study will have the following significance.

1. The findings of the study will be helpful to grade 9 English language teachers to examine their practice of CA to boost their awareness towards CA in reading classes for better success.
2. It can assist supervisors to see the extent of grade 9 English language teachers in using the varied devices of CA in teaching reading skills and to support them where necessary.
3. The outcome of this study will also help administrators and any stakeholders to identify the main challenges that hinder the implementation of CA in reading classes in order to deal with them.
4. This study can also be a background for those who want to conduct a study in similar area in the future.

### **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

The study was delimited to two secondary government schools, namely Abdi Bori High School which is found in Mettu town and Gore High Schools. The scope of this study was also to the implementation of CA in reading classes by grade 9 English language teachers. Besides, of many aspects of CA, the content areas like the principles, purposes, types of devices, feedback provision and major problems while implementing CA were the major focus of this study.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The study incorporated only two government secondary schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone, Abdi Bori high School of Mettu town and Gore High School of Gore Town. Besides, the sample size of the study was limited to only 7 English language teachers who were teaching 9<sup>th</sup> grade from the two schools for the purpose of this research. As a result, the findings of the study



may not be sufficient to make generalization at the country level. It would be better and more effective if much number of schools and participants were to be included in the study to gather adequate information to make sound generalization.

### **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

Assessment: is a way of observing and collecting assessment information and making decision based on the information (Plessis et al., 2003)

Continuous Assessment: refers to making observation and collecting information periodically to find out what the students known understands, and can do (Plessis, et al, 2003).

Reading assessment: is the gathering of information to determine a student's developmental reading progress (Mariotti & Homan,2005).

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter treats the introductory part that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and definitions of key terms. The second chapter focuses on literature reviewed. Chapter three deals with design of the study while chapter four is the presentation, analysis, interpretation, and discussions of the data. The last chapter treats the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides the literature review of the relevant sources on assessment. In particular, explanation of continuous assessment and its purpose, principles and significance are also discussed. Furthermore, of the four macro skills, reading assessment is discussed in relation to formative (continuous) assessment with its assessment devices. In the last section, feedback in continuous assessment and its principles, features and functions are also taken into account.

#### **2.1. Testing and Assessment in English Language Teaching (ELT)**

Certainly, it is thought that testing and assessment are synonyms. However, this is understood in misconception way in educational practice. In line with this, Brown (2004) has clearly distinguished that “ Tests are prepared administrative procedures that occur at identifiable times in a curriculum when learners muster all their faculties to offer peak performance, knowing that their responses are being measured and evaluated” (p.4). On the other hand, assessment is considered as an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. It is shortly mean that tests, then, are a subset of assessment; they are certainly not the only form of assessment that a teacher can make.(ibid)

With respect to the relationship between assessment and testing, Hedge (2000) states:

... assessment is the more inclusive term: It refers to the general process of monitoring or keeping track of the learners’ progress. Testing is one kind of assessment, one which is typically used at the end of a stage of instruction to measure student achievement. (p.376)

Assessment includes testing and other ways of gathering information about the students’ language ability in general and their progress in particular. Similarly, Mc Namara (1999) adds:

... assessment is the set of processes through which we make inferences about a learner’s learning process, skills, knowledge and achievements. Thus, testing is only one instrument out of several (including portfolio assessment, exhibitions, performances, group projects, self and peer assessment, etc.). (p.220)

Testing is thus one of the various forms of assessment that can be used for gathering information about the students’ achievement on the course.

Moreover, testing takes different forms ranging from standardized formal tests to short informal classroom based tests (Brown, 1987; Heaton, 1990).

Doff (1988), for instance, states:

As they progress through the various stages of learning English, students are usually given formal tests and examinations from time to time... But in addition to those formal kinds of test, the teacher can also give regular informal tests to measure the students' progress. (p.257)

It seems thus reasonable to regard assessment as a general process that involves using a range of different assessment methods, of which testing is a part, to collect information about the level of attainment of instructional objectives in general and strengths and weaknesses of individual students in particular. Moreover, testing as a component of assessment entails both formal and informal testing procedures. Furthermore, it is believed that assessment is undertaken for different purposes. According to Hedge (2000), assessment is said to be formative if the purpose is pedagogically motivated, whereas it is said to be summative if the purpose is product-oriented. This means that formative assessment is ongoing feedback during the learning. Summative assessment, on the other hand, summarizes the process at the end.

## **2.2. Continuous Assessment**

According to Aggarwal, cited in Mwebaza (2010), CA is not simply continuous testing. CA does not solely depend on formal tests. CA is more than giving a test; it involves every decision made by the teacher in class to improve students' achievement.

As to a policy and information guide of Republic of Namibia (1999):

Continuous assessment is assessment (both formal and informal) that is done on a regular and continuous basis. CA is meant to be integrated with teaching in order to improve learning and to help, shape, and direct the teaching-learning process. The assessment is continuous because:

- (1) It occurs at various times as a part of instruction,
- (2) May occur following a lesson,
- (3) Usually occurs following a topic, and

(4) Frequently occurs following a theme. (p.40)

Since assessment is integral to teaching and learning and teachers are dependent on assessment for the improvement of their practice, assessment needs to be continuous. Learning is a continuous process and learners learn in different ways and at different paces. We will only get a good picture of the learner's development if we assess the learning process on an ongoing basis informally and formally.

Capper (1996, as cited in Dagne, 2009,) explains CA that,

It is a systematic way that teachers can determine how well their students have learnt what has been taught. It may consist of various measures that a teacher can use to tell whether his or her instruction has been effective and to pinpoint students who have or have not mastered particular skills. (p.7)

CA is a school based assessment process of gathering valid and reliable information about learner performance (on an ongoing basis). It involves assessment activities that are undertaken throughout the year, using various kinds of assessment forms that ensure a fair and representative sampling of the learning outcomes and assessment standards covered in languages. In Languages, all speaking, listening, reading/viewing, writing, thinking and reasoning, and grammar should be assessed on an ongoing basis.

### **2.3. Formative (Continuous) Reading Assessment**

As to Mariotti & Homan(2005), reading assessment is the gathering of information to determine a student's developmental reading progress; it answers the question 'At what level is this student's reading?'. In addition, assessment procedures provide information about the student's comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, interests, attitudes, and communication skills.

If students are not progressing as expected, then diagnosis is in order. Teachers identify their students' strength and weakness in order to maximize their reading progress.

According to Williamson (2004) , formative assessment of reading, like all classroom assessment, is an ongoing, recursive cycle that includes the following:

- ✍ Learning targets are defined clearly, and students understand them.



- ✍ Evidence of student learning is gathered in multiple and diverse ways over time.
- ✍ Inferences and interpretations are made based on the evidence.
- ✍ Instructional plans are made based on those inferences and interpretations.

## 2.4.Purposes of Assessing Reading

Reading is a crucial skill of language which has got due attention in the changing world.

Alderson(2000) has confirmed that

Reading through which we can access words of ideas and feelings, as well as the knowledge of the ages and visions of the future, is at once the most extensively researched and the most enigmatic of the so-called language skills. Reading has been investigated from numerous perspectives-by linguists, psychologists, educators and second language reserachers, and a huge volume of research is now available. Reading also plays a critical role in applied linguistics research and in the day to day professional life of the language teacher. (p.x)

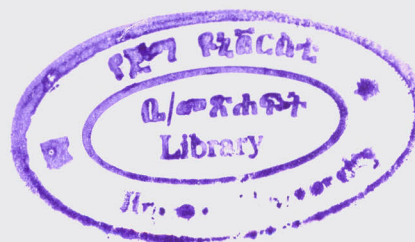
Based on the ground truth of reading, an understanding of the principles and uses of assessment is essential for all teachers and in particular for teachers of reading. (Snow, Griffin,&Burns, 2005, as it is cited in Grabe, 2009)

Reading assessment has great power to inform researchers, teachers, administrators, and policy makers. Assessment practices can significantly benefit the learning environment or they can inflict great harm. Reading assessment, therefore, needs to be treated with great care, attention, and respect. Teachers specially have responsibility to understand the uses and the impacts of reading assessment and mindful of the consequences of assessment.(ibid)

As to Caldwell (2008), there are four basic purposes of reading assessment.

### **a/ To identify good reader behaviors'**

A teacher uses the assessment process to identify the good reader behaviors a student displays. Readers are not passive. They engage in a variety of activities as they construct meaning. Teachers and coaches must have an understanding of these processes, so they are equipped to select valid evidence that documents good reading.



### **b/ Identify areas of weakness**

A teacher must identify areas of weakness with regard to the good reader behaviors, in order to align instruction with student needs. If the teacher or coach recognizes which good reader behaviors are absent or weak, he or she can design and focus instruction to introduce or strengthen them.

### **c/ To determine the type of reading material**

Teachers need to know how to determine whether a specific book is too difficult for a student. They also need to know how to determine a student's reading level—that is, the grade level at which a student can read in an acceptable fashion. Knowing a student's reading level allows us to choose appropriate reading material for the student to read on his or her own, as well as appropriate material for instruction. In addition, comparing a student's reading level with his or her chronological grade level can suggest the existence of a reading problem and how serious it may be. For example, a fifth grader who can only read second-grade material is probably experiencing quite a bit of difficulty in school.

### **d/ To document evidence of progress**

Teachers need to document evidence of progress on the part of the student. Unfortunately, much assessment compares the student to his or her peers. Often, for a student who is reading below the level of peers, this obscures any progress that the student may have made. A teacher or tutor needs to compare a student to him or herself.

Besides, Hempenstall (1998, as it cited in Westwood ,2001) similarly, has suggested that the purpose for assessment in reading include:

- ✍ diagnosing particular areas of strength or weakness
- ✍ using the information for decisions about instruction
- ✍ measuring a child's progress over a period of time
- ✍ comparing one child's progress to that of his or her peers
- ✍ screening children for special assistance.

## **2.5.Principles of Continuous Assessment**

As to James (2003, cited in Fisseha 2010) in implementing CA the following can be used as guiding principles:

- ☛ Ensure that assessment procedures promote and reward desired learning activities and outcomes,
- ☛ Communicate assessment requirement clearly to students, and
- ☛ Strive for providing effective feedback and comment to students on a continuous basis

In detail way Hopkins and Harris (2000) summarize the fundamental principles that underpin CA. These include:

1. Diagnosis: Teachers are required to know what their students are able to do or capable of doing. This will provide them with the opportunity to know the ability of individual learners in their class.
2. Goals: Teachers are required to have a clear idea about the learning objectives of the language program in general and each lesson/activity in particular.
3. Diversity of assessment: CA requires the use of a range of different assessment methods to gather valid and reliable information about the students' language ability.
4. Shared criteria: Teachers are required to share assessment criteria with their students.
5. Feedback: Feedback is an essential component of CA
6. Self reflection: CA creates opportunity for learners to manage their own learning and reflect back on their performance.

## **2.6.Advantages of Continuous Assessment**

Brown (2004) has identified the following advantages:

- ✓ Periodic assessment aid in the reinforcement and retention of information
- ✓ Assessment can provide a sense of periodic closure to modules within in a curriculum



- ✓ Assessment can promote students autonomy by encouraging students' self-evaluation of their progress.
- ✓ Assessment can spur learners to set goals for themselves
- ✓ Assessment can aid in evaluating effectiveness

Reddy (1998) was also identified the following advantages

- ✓ CA makes it possible to assess qualities that are not assessed in traditional examinations and provides the teacher with complementary information
- ✓ Both the teacher and learner are provided with ongoing feedback about the learner's progress
- ✓ Individual monitoring is required and teachers and learners have to work very closely; in this way, teacher-learner relationships may be enhanced
- ✓ A variety of assessment methods are possible.
- ✓ A wide range of abilities, skills and attitudes are assessed, which engenders more authentic assessments
- ✓ Less emphasis is placed on memory work.
- ✓ Examinee stress that usually accompanies formal written examinations is alleviated.

### **2.7. Reading Skills Assessment Tools**

As to Madsen (1983), assessments of reading come in a wide variety of forms and evaluate a broad spectrum of reading activities. These range from pre-reading concerns to reading comprehension, reading speed, and skimming techniques. Advanced and more specialized applications include translation, reading aloud, and reading literature.

In order to address the concerns of reading assessment, reading assessment tools plays a vital role. Different techniques almost certainly measure different aspects of the reading process or product and any techniques will be limited in what it allows us to measure.



As to Alderson (2000)

Any single technique for assessment will necessarily be limited in the picture it can provide ..... we should always be aware that the techniques we use will be imperfect, and therefore we should always seek to use multiple methods and techniques, and we should be modest in the claims we make. (p.270)

The handbook which was designed by Williamson (2004) and the works of other scholars presented various reading assessment devices. The tools are designed to help teachers clarify and assess, for themselves and for their students, important targets for reading. Moreover, it was designed as formative assessments provide feedback to students and information about what further instruction students need in order to improve their reading.

### **2.7.1. Reading Strategy Checklist**

As to Williamson (2004), this assessment tool helps learners to know what good strategies are. Undoubtedly, effective readers use strategies quickly and easily without consciously thinking about how they are using them. However, less effective readers need to be more deliberate in their thinking about and use of strategies.

The checklist reminds students of the reading strategies they may engage in and asks them to monitor those strategies. Teachers could also monitor students' use of strategies, especially if strategies match the text and purpose for reading.

In using the instrument, the students are required to check appropriate strategies or write a short explanation of how certain strategies were used. Teacher may make a classroom poster for it to refer to the strategies or modify and choose particular strategies to apply to particular place of text. Teachers may also use the list as a spring board of small group or classroom discussion about how to strategies before during, and after reading besides may ask students to add other strategies to the list or share strategies with parents or siblings. As to Alderson (2000)" Good readers are said to be flexible users of strategies" (p.307).

Besides, checklist helps teachers to assess attitudes towards reading. Certainly, effective readers develop attitudes toward reading. They are self-aware and insightful about their attitudes and behaviors, and they actively and purposefully construct and work toward goals.

### **2.7.2. Self Assessment**

As to Williamson (2004), this assessment tool can be used in conjunction with strategies checklist. It asks students to fill out this tool periodically to self-assess how their uses of strategies change overtime. It helps students to engage in meta-cognition, which is the ability to self-reflect and to become more aware of, insightful about, and purposeful in their use of reading strategies. It is particularly useful in reading content-area materials, will give the teacher valuable insight to help monitor students' use of and application of the strategies overtime.

Puhl (1997) says self-assessment is an assessment method which offers, among other things, numerical scales and checklists. It can also use a 'yes' 'no' checklist or it can have an open ended format. On the basis of the learning outcomes expected of him/her, a student can assess him/her self using the given lists of checklist.

Furthermore, student can be given materials which guide them in making their own judgment about their performance. They can also be asked to explain how well they think they have been performing in their learning. In self-assessment process, a teacher can also tell his students to add a written comment on their performance, giving their own assessment of that performance. (Harmer, 2001, p.103)

### **2.7.3. Peer Assessment**

Peer- assessment creates a community of learners. It encourages interactive and reflective learning, involves both the process and product of learning, stimulates meta-cognition and motivates the students'. (Puhl, 1997)

On the whole, both self-assessment and peer-assessments are vital to the continuous reading assessment process. This is because they provide a good range of input and responsibility to the students in their learning. These assessments also enable students to take control of their own learning. In line with this, Brown & Hudson (1998, as cited in Brown, 2000,p.415) stated that there are a number of advantages of self and peer assessment: speed, direct involvement of students, the encouragement of autonomy, and increased motivation because of self-involvement in the process of learning.

Besides, Brown (2000) has also stated the ways in which self and peer-assessment can be implemented in reading classes. These are reading textbook passages followed by self-check comprehension questions; reading and checking comprehension with a partner, vocabulary quizzes; self-assessment of reading habits and setting goals.

#### **2.7.4. Tests and Quizzes**

These are the widely used CA devices in language classrooms. Their difference is in the purpose for which they are designed rather than their item content. Students are informed about tests in advance in order to prepare well. Tests also cover a limited unit or part of instruction. However, quizzes may not be announced or told beforehand. They can be given in written form or in oral medium.

With regard to good tests and quizzes and their values, Headge (2000) contends the following:

... the opportunity for learners to show how much they know about language structure and vocabulary, as well as how they are able to use these formal linguistic features to convey meanings in classroom language activities through listening, speaking, reading and writing, is identified by the results students get from tests and quizzes. (p.378)

As to Williamson (2004), teachers can ask questions in written form about monitoring thinking, organizing details, analyzing information in reference material, determine the purpose and certain elements like in fiction, draw conclusion, analyze and evaluate the text critically, define unknown vocabulary words by examining context, analyze and compare different types of text and paraphrase the main idea of the the reading text in order to assess comprehension and high order thinking of learners.

#### **2.7.5. Discussion**

As to Williamson (2004), students need to be able to discuss the text they have read in order to clarify ideas and deepen their comprehension and understanding of what they have read. In addition, the teacher needs to have a written record of observations he/she makes during the student discussion, which provides:



- ✍ A mechanism for fair and consistent feedback to the students.
- ✍ A way of making sure that every student is being observed in a timely fashion
- ✍ Assurance that the information from observations is not forgotten over time

#### **2.7.6. Retelling: Assessing Comprehension**

As to Williamson (2004), the retell allows the teacher to understand how well the student comprehends text and is able to summarize the main ideas or sequence of the story. Retell is beneficial to the teacher in pinpointing problems that students have in basic understanding of text, in seeing the structure of the text, and in remembering important details.

Schumm (2006) says “Students use retelling activities to improve reading comprehension. Upon completion of the reading text, students retell what they have read for two minutes” (p.212).

Besides, Westwood (2001) stated that when assessing comprehension it is important to ask the child to summarize in his or her own words the main gist of what has just been read. This can be followed up with specific questions to cover factual information at the literal level, as well as questions requiring the child to interpret, infer, predict and respond critically to the material.

#### **2.7.7. The Thinking Aloud**

As to Williamson (2004), the think aloud is an activity where the teacher provides a text for the student to read and asks the students to say aloud everything that comes to his or her mind immediately after he or she has read. It enables the teacher to assess the students’ ability to process information during reading. This information is important in helping the teacher understand the cause of any misunderstanding the child may be having in making meaning of the text.

As to Pressley (2002b, cited in Schumm, 2006) “Think alouds are used to activate an awareness of the thinking process and are important in teaching processes. Think alouds consist of thinking about the text as you are reading it and of the comprehension strategies you are using” (p.239)

### **2.7.8. The Reading Record**

As to Williamson (2004), the record of a student's self-selected reading of text outside of class encourages fluency, provides a way for the teacher to give feedback to the student, and helps the student to develop organization skills and a method of tracking what he or she reads over a period of time.

As to Cook (1997) the reading record enables teacher to track their learner's reading skills development as well as the pace at which he/she is making progress.

### **2.7.9. Fluency Check**

As to Williamson (2004), fluency is the ability to read text accurately and quickly, recognizing words automatically and gaining meaning from the text. Fluency allows readers to read effortlessly, with natural expression, as if they were speaking. Readers who lack fluency read slowly, word by word, in a choppy, plodding manner. Thus, fluency, because it helps the reader to focus attention on what the text means, is a necessary characteristic of an effective reader.(ibid)

In similar way, "A fluency measure can tell you whether students can handle the word level and prosody demands of a text." (Blachowicz&Ogle,2008,p.66)

Classroom fluency can be used for gathering different types of information and has four basic goals:

1. To help you get a quick sense of the class baseline in the fall.
2. To identify those students who may need special support and/or more time when working with grade-level material.
3. To help you in the selection of independent reading material.
4. To enable you to chart the progress of students' fluency over the year as a measure of overall progress.(ibid)

### **2.7.10. Response Journal**

As to Williamson (2004), effective readers stop and reflect upon what they are reading. They make connections to their own lives, and they monitor emotional responses to what they are reading. A journal allows students to record these kinds of responses in a systematic way, and it allows the teacher to understand how well students are making connections as they read.

According to Genesee and Upshur (1996, as cited in Dagne, 2009), journals are written conversations between students and teachers. Richards and Lockhart (1996) stated that keeping a journal has two main purposes. These are:

- ✍ Events and ideas are recorded for the purpose of later reflection.
- ✍ The process of writing itself helps trigger insights about what has been learned

### **2.7.11. Teacher-Student Conference**

As to Spandel and Stiggins (1990), cited in Habtamu (2009), short conference can occur while students are reading, writing, listening and speaking. Extended interviews about their processes and products can be organized into each class period. The questions asked by teachers promote students reflection up on what they understand and how they work and learn.

Conferences and interviews, according to Smith (1996), Allerson and Grabe (1986) and Shaaban (2001) as cited in Mbea (2008), provide opportunities for one-on-one interactions where the teacher can learn about a student's communicative abilities.

Moreover, according to Tombini (1991) in Shaaban (2001), conferences will be more effective if they follow focused observations and concentrate directly on the learning processes and strategies employed by the student.(ibid)

### **2.7.12. Reading Portfolio**

One way to collect evidence of each student's reading effectiveness is to create a reading portfolio, a collection of student work over time with an emphasis on progress (Williamson, 2004).



Besides, the following useful criteria in planning and implementing a reading portfolio with students are suggested:

- The student should decide, at least in part, what will be included.
- The student should assess and reflect upon his or her work.
- The portfolio should represent growth over time.
- There should be specified criteria for evaluation of work to be included and specific criteria for evaluating the portfolio as a whole.
- The portfolio should be the student's responsibility (not the teacher's).(ibid)

### **2.7.13. Reading Logs**

As to Schumm (2006), before deciding regarding student reading progress, multiple sources of information on a regular and systematic basis should be obtained using various formats like reading logs and others.

Students use reading logs to maintain a written record of their personal reactions to the text on several levels. The logs are an opportunity for students to express their attitudes towards a text, reflect on their discoveries, and make connections between what they know and what they are learning (Lyutaya, 2011).

### **2.8.Feedback in Continuous Assessment**

In formative CA feedback is regarded as the fundamental component. As to Eliss cited in Mbea(2008) feedback is "a major goal of formative assessment". Similarly, Shepard(2000) confirms that" providing feedback to the learner about performance will lead to self correction and improvement" (ibid).

In one way or in other way, providing relevant feedback on time does not only indicate where learners' strength and weakness lies but it also assists learners to monitor their own progress and distinguishing the area where they want to develop further.



Furthermore, Hedge (2000) points out that the feedback from classroom based CA has an important role to play. Formative feedback should endeavor to provide students with an indication of where they are in relation to achieving learning outcomes or standards, where they need to progress to and how they will be able to reach the expected level.

### **2.9.Principles of Feedback**

There is a close relationship between formative (continuous) assessment and formative feedback. According to Black cited in Alastair (2008) suggests the following as the basic principles of formative feedback:

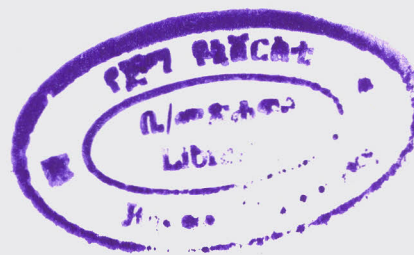
- ✗ Goals (learning objectives) need to be clear to students;
- ✗ Feedback should measure (give guidance to) the student's current learning state;
- ✗ Formative feedback should be used as a means for closing the gap between the student's learning state and the learning goals;
- ✗ Formative feedback needs to be high quality and effective in its advice.

### **2.10. Features and Functions of Feedback**

Race, Brown and Smith (2005) in Baye (1998) summarize the basic features and functions of feedback in CA like this:

1. **Timely:** students should receive feedback on their performance based on the principle of providing opportunity for students to make improvement before proceeding to the next performance.
2. **Personal and individual:** Feedback in CA should indicate each student's strength and weakness.
3. **Articulate:** Feedback given to students should be simple and easy for the students to understand.
4. **Empowering:** Feedback should help students make progress
5. **Manageable:** Teachers need to make the necessary preparation before the delivery of feedback to students so that they can manage it easily

6. **Developmental:** Feedback should be detailed and informative so that both students and teachers can use it as an input for further decisions.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This part focuses on the methods that were used in the study. They include the research design, the instruments of data collection, the sampling techniques and the method of data analysis.

#### **3.1.The Research Design**

This research employed a descriptive survey research design. In descriptive survey method, data can be gathered from wide population regarding their attitude, practices, opinions, etc. In line with this, Kumar(2006) states that descriptive surveys or studies also serve as direct sources of valuable knowledge concerning human behavior. Thus, as the study aimed at investigating the practice of CA among English Language teachers, descriptive survey method was used to reveal their practice.

#### **3.2.Participants of the Study**

The primary Sources of data for the study were all English language teachers and sample grade 9 students of the two schools. Whereas, the secondary sources were school documents such as teachers mark lists, attendance and other policy documents.

#### **3.3.Sampling Technique**

There were 38 high schools in Ilubabor zone. Out of them, the two high schools were selected purposively because they contain high number of grade 9 students. And also the number of grade 9 English language teachers was more than two, only in these schools. Moreover, more experienced teachers were found there.

Based on that fact, seven English language teachers were taken for this study by comprehensive sampling as they were available in the schools. Regarding students' participation, there were 675 males and 786 females, totally 1461 students in both schools in 24 sections. Out of them, 25% that was 366 students were selected in random sampling technique (Lottery method), as they were in the same class under the same school curriculum.

### **3.4.Data Collection Instruments**

The instruments used to collect data for the study were questionnaire, interview, classroom observation and document analysis. In order to supplement the data gathered using questionnaires, interview questions were prepared. In addition to this, classroom observation was conducted to see the implementation of CA in the language classrooms. These questionnaire and interviews were developed on the basis of the objectives of the study which was aimed at exploring English language teachers' practices of CA in the high schools under consideration and on the literature reviewed. The classroom observation was intended to verify if the responses given to the questionnaires and the interviews were seen in the real language classroom situations using the designed checklists. And, also document analysis was used so as to see their CA practice with evidences.

#### **3.4.1. Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was one of the data gathering tools employed for securing pertinent information for the study. It was used as a main data collection tool in the study and was designed to collect relevant data from the 7 grade 9 English language teachers and 366 students of the two high schools. To gather the necessary data, questionnaires containing 53 and 28 items were administered to the sample teachers and students, respectively.

Teachers' questionnaire has five parts consisting of 53 items (see Appendix-A). The first part contains sixteen close-ended items which were framed in Likert scale type with five points (strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree). This section dealt with understanding of the principles and purposes of CA. In the second part of the questionnaire, seven close-ended items with five options (Always, usually, sometimes, rarely and never) were used to see the implementation of CA in reading class. The third part focused on how often continuous assessment devices were used by the teachers and two open-ended items were also included. The fourth part comprised of seven close-ended and one open-ended questions which was intended to see how often feedback was provided. The last part mainly emphasized on the impeding factors of CA in reading class. It contained five close-ended which had five options (Always, usually, sometimes, rarely and never) and two open-ended items. The open-ended items were incorporated to give the respondents freedom to express their feelings as they want.



Students' questionnaire, which consisted of four parts, was also prepared with almost similar manner with the teachers' and translated into their vernacular (Afan Oromo). (See Appendix-B and C).

#### **3.4.2. Observation**

As to Kothari (2004), observations are important tools that can be employed in descriptive research and other qualitative research types for gathering genuine and pertinent data on teachers' and students' behaviors in the actual setting. Accordingly, the goal of the observation was to check whether or not the teachers practice CA using various assessment devices in their reading classes. Also it was intended to observe how feedback was provided and recognize class size as the impeding factor in appropriate practice of CA. As a result, structured observation checklist which consisted of nine categories with two scales showing agreement and disagreement, i.e. "Yes" and "No" was designed to examine the practice of CA in reading classes (see Appendix E). Accordingly, the classrooms of the teachers were observed for three days each.

#### **3.4.3. Interview**

Unstructured interview was one important research tool employed in order to get in-depth information from the respondents. It is this type of interview the researcher attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewees' point of view or situation (Dawson, 2002).

In the study, to get additional information to the data obtained from the teachers through the questionnaire, interviews were used as data collection instruments. To this end, unstructured interviews were set to collect related information from 7 grade 9 English language teachers (see Appendix-D).The teachers were interviewed about their awareness about continuous assessment and how often they implement it. Besides, their feedback provision and challenges during implementation were in focus.

#### **3.4.4. Document Analysis**

As to Best and Kahn (1993), when document analysis is used as descriptive research, current documents and issues are the foci. Likewise, in this study, in addition to the



information' obtained from the respondents with reference to the practice of continuous assessment in reading classes, document analysis was conducted.

This instrument was especially designed to see whether or not English language teachers use different assessment tools to collect assessment information. The aim of developing this instrument was to see the documents used by the teachers such as mark lists, student's notebooks, daily lesson plan and tutorial given formats so as to see the practice of CA. So, the researcher developed criterion which helped to analyze teachers' documents of CA (see Appendix-F).

### **3.5.Data Collection Procedure**

Firstly, the researcher contacted the school directors and explained the purpose of the study before conducting it. This helped the researcher in order to collect the data effectively. Then, before implementing those instruments, pilot test was given for 20 grade nine students of Mettu Secondary School respondents ahead of time in order to check whether the instruments were strong enough to generate the kind of data the study want. As a result, the reliability of the instrument was computed using SPSS version 20 and the obtained reliability index was found out to be  $\alpha = 0.841$ . As to Bryman & Cramer (2005), a coefficient of 0.8 or above is usually taken as indicating a reliable measure for the instruments to gather necessary information. Based on this criterion, the items were found to have good grounds to be employed in collecting the relevant main data for the study. For face validity of the questionnaires, instruments were given to subject experts. Eventually, data gathering instrument was distributed for final study.

Next, interview was held by recording using tape recorder. All grade 9 English language teachers were interviewed based on related theoretical background reviewed for the study. To approve what they replied for questionnaires and interview, using the pre-planned observation checklist and referring to the teachers' teaching schedule, the researcher observed teachers' class three times each at different time.

### **3.6. Methods of Data Analysis**

Data was analyzed through both qualitative and quantitative methods. The responses of close-ended items of the questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed using statistical tools such as percentages and mean values. However, the analysis of the data collected using the interview,

open-ended items of the questionnaires, document analysis and observation checklist were analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis so as to substantiate the close-ended one.

### **3.7.Ethical Considerations**

After receiving official letter of cooperation from Jimma University, the researcher was communicated all institutions and individual participants legally and smoothly. The purpose of the study was made clear and understandable for all respondents. Any communication with the concerned bodies was accomplished at their voluntarily consent without harming and threatening the personal and institutional well being. In addition, all information obtained from individual respondents and the teachers' documents will be kept confidential.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1. Introduction

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the awareness and practices of CA in reading classes among grade 9 English teachers. To achieve this, questionnaires consisting of closed and open-ended items were distributed to all English language teachers and sample grade 9 students at Abdi Bori and Gore High Schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone. Moreover, these were supplemented by both interview and classroom observation results.

Accordingly, 366 grade 9 students and 7 teachers responded to the questionnaires and this was assumed to be adequate for the analysis. The data collected through the questionnaire were first categorized and depicted on various tables so that it could be understandable easily, and then various statistical tools were used for analysis. The data obtained from interview, document analysis and observations were also narrated or quoted so as to substantiate the data obtained from questionnaires.

The analysis was made in terms of the following basic research questions raised in the first chapter of the study.

#### 4.2 Results of the Study

##### 4.2.1 Teachers' Responses Regarding their Understanding of the Principles and Purposes of CA Reading Classes

In this section of the questionnaire, 16 items were presented which focus on teachers' understanding of the principles and purposes of CA (CA). The items particularly focused on general principles of CA. Table 1 shows the teachers' responses to their understanding of the principles and purposes of CA.



Table 1: Summary of Teachers' Responses Regarding their Understanding of the Principles and Purposes of CA

No	Items	Response in	Alternatives			Total
			Agree	Neutral	Disagree	
1	Continuous reading assessment is an integral part of teaching reading skills.	N	7	-	-	7
		%	100	-	-	100
2	Planning in advance is given emphasis in the process of CA of reading skills.	N	6	1	-	7
		%	85.71	14.3	-	100
3	CA should be done before, during and after the instruction.	N	4	3	-	7
		%	57.14	42.85	-	100
4	Teachers should inform their students the objectives and the assessment procedures.	N	7	-	-	7
		%	100	-	-	100
5	The emphasis of CA of reading skills is more on product than process.	N	3	4	-	7
		%	42.85	57.14	-	100
6	I feel the information gathered from continuous reading assessment is needed to help academically weak students.	N	6	1	-	7
		%	85.71	14.3	-	100
7	I know that CA motivates students to be engaged in their learning.	N	7	-	-	7
		%	100	-	-	100
8	I believe that CA addresses students, interest and needs.	N	6	1	-	7
		%	85.71	14.3	-	100
9	CA prevents teachers from being central authority in decision making.	N	2	4	1	7
		%	28.57	57.14	14.3	100
10	Teachers should arrange tutorial classes for less performing students.	N	5	2	-	7
		%	71.42	28.57	-	100
11	CA differentiates students according to their reading ability.	N	7	-	-	7
		%	100	-	-	100
12	It is teachers who are responsible for deciding the marking criteria.	N	6	1	-	7
		%	85.71	14.3	-	100
13	The information obtained from CA helps teachers to identify learners' problems in reading class.	N	7	-	-	7
		%	100	-	-	100
14	I feel that there is no individual accountability in CA. Students depend on work of others.	N	2	4	1	7
		%	28.6	57.1	14.3	100
15	Feedback should mainly consist of reporting wrong and right answers to the learners.	N	4	2	1	7
		%	57.14	28.57	14.3	100
16	I feel CA is used to label students.	N	6	1	-	7
		%	85.71	14.3	-	100

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

As can be seen from Table 1, all teachers reported that CA is an integral part of the teaching learning process (Item 1). This indicates that teachers have good understanding of the principle of



CA. Obviously, CA is a classroom assessment that is conducted on regular and systematic basis. In line with this, Schumm(2006) states that classroom assessment must be integrated with instruction (not just conducted at the end of a unit); and must be used to inform instructional decision making, as well as to provide an evaluation tool for teachers to assess their teaching. Teachers should assess often (daily, weekly or biweekly) to determine student progress in achieving the planned objectives. Consequently, for assessment to support pupils' learning, it should be recognized as an integral part of teaching, an essential part of an effective teacher's repertoire of skills (Harrison & Salinger, 1998).

In item 2, the majority, 85.71% (6 of 7) of the respondents reported that planning in advance is given emphasis in the process of CA (Item 2). In table, 57.14% (4 of 7) of the respondents expressed their agreement on the idea that CA must be done before, during and after the instruction (item 3) where as 42.85 % (3 of 7) of them responded uncertain to the idea.

All of the respondents, for item 4, believed that teachers should inform their students about the objective of assessment and the assessment procedure. In this respect, the teachers seem to have adequate knowledge about one of the important principles of CA. In item 5, 42.85 % (3 of 7) of the respondents agreed that the emphasis of CA in reading is more on product than on process. However, 57.14 % (4 of 7) of them reported that they are not certain about whether the emphasis of CA is more on process or on product. This uncertainty implies that there is a failure to realize the fundamental objective of CA. It seems thus vital to recognize that formative (continuous) assessment is very much concerned with collecting information about the students' progress and finding a way of helping them with their learning difficulties. The focus is, therefore, on the process of learning (Hedge, 2000).

Item 6, 85.71 % (6 of 7) of the respondents reported that the information gathered from CA is needed to help academically weak students whereas 14.3 % (1 of 7) of them are not certain with the idea. Obviously, the result of CA enables the teachers to decide whether re-teaching academically weak students or correcting misunderstandings might be necessary for some or all learners (NIED of Namibia, 1999). In line with the above fact, the uncertainty indicated the gap to be filled.

In item 7, 100% of the respondents indicated that CA motivates students to be engaged in their learning. Similarly, most of them, 85.71 % (6 of 7) of them reported that CA addresses the students' needs and interest more than any other assessment (Item 8). Of course, CA tells teachers if they need to re-teach something which students need to be re-taught and what the students need in order to improve their learning (Plessis.et.al, 2003).

Out of the respondents, 28.57% of them responded that CA prevents teachers from being central authority in decision making (Item 9). On the other hand, more than half, 85.71 % (6 of 7) of them claimed that it is the responsibility of teachers to decide the marking criteria (Item 12). However, NIED of Namibia (1999) stated that involving learners in marking assessment during a lesson, it communicates to the learners the learning expectations and may motivate and focus learner attention and effort. Here, teachers are expected to check the marks given by their learners.

In item 10, 71.42% (5 of 7) of the respondents agreed that teachers must arrange tutorial classes for less performing students whereas 28.57 % (2 of 7) of the respondents reported that they are uncertain to the idea (Item). Hempenstall (1998, as it cited in Westwood ,2001) suggests that one of the purposes for assessment in reading includes screening children for special assistance. Thus, the majority of the teachers are well aware of the importance of arranging tutorial classes for less performing students.

All of the respondents reported that CA differentiates students according to their reading ability. This shows that teachers believed that CA differentiates students' according to their reading ability (Item 11). This imply that teachers can easily get where students' weakness lie in order to apply remedial teaching.

As can be seen in item 15, 57.14 % of the respondents reported that feedback should mainly consist of reporting wrong and right answers to the learners. Contrary to this, 14.3% of the respondents reported their disagreement on the idea that feedback should mainly consist of reporting wrong and right answers to the learners. As to Nitko (2005, as cited in Habtamu, 2009), simply showing the right and wrong answers to students provides little help for their language improvement. Teachers need to use specific feedback to help students to improve their learning.



From this, it can be understood that there is lack of awareness about giving and receiving feedback in the teaching learning process.

Finally, in item 16, 85.71% of the respondents reported that CA is used to label students. However, the main focus of CA is to improve the teaching learning process. This is to mean that one of features of CA is process oriented rather than product.

Even though the overall data obtained from the teachers ( $\bar{x} > 3.0$ , which is 4.22, that is almost strong value) indicated that there is adequate understanding of the principles and purpose of CA in reading classes, certain misunderstandings are revealed within the summary table. Besides, the data obtained using other devices were used for triangulation to confirm the result.

For instance, in Table 1, all teachers indicated that CA is an integral part of the instructional system (Item 1). However, in item 5, 57.14% of the respondents, i.e more than half, were uncertain about whether the emphasis of CA is on product or on process. Also, 3(42.85%) of the respondents showed their agreement for the emphasis of continuous reading assessment is more on product than process. However, the main purpose of CA is to improve learning and to shape the instructional process (Plessis et al., 2003). Hence, the teachers' response to item (5) contradicts with that of item (1). This is one of the indicators that show lack of awareness about the main intention of CA in teaching learning process.

Item 2, 85.71% (6 of 7) of the respondents reported that planning in advance is given emphasis in the CA process. In line with this, NIED of Namibia (1999) also suggests that careful planning of selected CA should be made at the beginning of the school year, and this must be clearly matched with the learning outcomes.

On the other hand, 42.85 % of them were not certain about the fact that CA should be done before, during and after the instruction (Item 3). This result implies that there is misunderstanding of the concept between assessment and instruction, but Schumm(2006) suggested that assessment and instruction need to work in association.

In item 4, 100 % of the respondents reported that teachers should inform their students about the objective of the assessment and the assessment procedure, and 57.14 % of the respondents were uncertain about whether CA prevents teachers from being central authority in decision making

(item 9). Nevertheless, in item 12, 85.71% of teachers claimed that it is teachers who are responsible for deciding the marking criteria. However, scholars indicated that active participation of students in deciding the assessment criteria, assessment purpose, and assessment procedures play a vital role for successful implementation of CA. Regarding this, Plessis et al. (2003) asserted this by saying that:

It is important that learners use criteria for assessing their products or performances rather than assigning arbitrary grades. Just as the teacher will assess student work using criteria for quality work, so should the students. It is also helpful to involve learners in developing the criteria for assessing their own work (p.22).

85.71% of the respondents reported that the information gathered from CA is needed to help academically weak students (Item 6). On the other hand, in item 16, 85.71% of them reported that CA is used to label students. It is clearly seen that the teachers' response to item 6 contradicted with their response to item 16. These contradictory responses show that teachers had confusion or inadequate understanding on the basic principles of CA in reading class. Yet, scholars in the field underlines that CA helps teachers to find out the strength and weakness of the students and assist them to improve their weak side (Puhl, 1997). Moreover, Policy Guide Document of Namibia, (1999) pointed out that the purpose of CA is not to label students, rather to help students succeed in their learning.

In the Table, 71.42% of the respondents replied that tutorial classes should be given for less performing students (Item 10). However, the document analysis of teachers' tutorial class did not show that teachers arrange any tutorial classes for less performing students specially regarding their reading ability (see Appendix G). Obviously, arranging tutorial class for less performing students is one of the purposes of CA in the teaching learning process.

Regarding item 14, 28.6 % of the teachers replied that CA makes individual student not to be accountable for their work. In other words, teachers said that CA encouraged individual students to be dependent on works of others. However, Plessis et al. (2003) ascertains that CA encouraged students to be autonomous and accountable for their learning if it is well planned organized, and implemented.



From the above analysis, it is possible to deduce that there is insufficient understanding of the principles and purposes of continuous reading assessment. Where there is no understanding of the principles and purposes as needed, there might be misled from the intended objectives.

#### 4.2.2 Teachers' Implementation of Continuous Reading Assessment

Table 2: Teachers' Response of Practicing CA in Reading Classes

No	Items	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			Usually	Sometimes	Never	
1	To determine the type of reading material	N	3	3	1	3.57
		%	42.9	42.9	14.3	
2	To screen children for special assistance.	N	3	4	-	3.57
		%	42.9	57.1	-	
3	To help students who are doing well.	N	4	2	1	3.86
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
4	To give feedback to improve comprehension skills	N	4	3	1	3.71
		%	57.1	42.9	14.3	
5	To know the reading ability of students	N	4	3	-	4.00
		%	57.1	42.9	-	
6	To decide what reading assessment tool to use	N	4	2	1	3.57
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
7	To re-plan for effective teaching reading skills	N	4	1	2	3.57
		%	57.1	14.3	28.6	

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

In the above table, the data from teacher respondents determined that more than half of the teachers, 57.1 %( 4 of 7) usually implemented continuous reading assessment to help students who were doing well, to give feedback to improve comprehension skills, to know the reading ability of students, to decide what reading assessment tool to use and to re-plan for effective teaching reading skills. Others, 42.9 %( 3 of 7) of the respondents implement CA for various purposes. As can be seen from the table, they carried out CA in order to determine the type of reading material and screen children for special assistance. For each aspects in which CA can be implemented, their mean scores were above the intermediate value(x=3).

Many scholars state that CA should be used in every stage of the teaching learning process as it is an integral part of the instructional system (Plessis et al., 2003; Puhl, 1997). They also stated

that teachers should include CA in their yearly and daily plans and specify the purposes, the time schedule, the assessor, and the assessment device to be used in their plan. As to Williamson (2004), basically, formative (continuous) assessment supports and informs the teacher in making the next instructional decisions and helps students understand what they need to work on to improve.

Table 3: Students' Response of as to Why their Teachers Implement CA in their Reading Classes

No	Items	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			Usually	Sometimes	Never	
1	To decide on how to improve my reading skills	N	172	108	24	3.42
		%	47	29.5	6.6	
2	To give remedial teaching	N	138	121	49	3.13
		%	37.7	33.1	13.4	
3	To Plan instruction for the next lesson	N	165	105	31	3.33
		%	45.08	28.7	8.5	
4	To evaluate his/her teaching methodology	N	141	102	53	3.05
		%	38.52	27.9	14.5	
5	Monitoring students' learning	N	199	97	22	3.60
		%	54.37	26.5	6	
6	To evaluate the extent to which I can put what I learnt into practice in real world situation	N	148	87	55	3.07
		%	40.4	23.8	15	
Average Mean						3.27

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

As to the students' response, in item 5, 54.37% of them believed that their teachers conducted CA to monitor their learning. And also, 47% of the respondents replied that their teachers used CA to decide on how to improve their reading skills (Item 1). In item 3, 45.08% of the respondents considered that their teachers plan instruction for the next lesson using CA. Furthermore, the overall mean score (x=3.27) as shows that teachers were practicing CA in reading classes properly.

However, the data collected with other instruments like interview were not parallel with the earlier one. For instance, one of the respondents has replied his practice in this way:

*I tried but it takes more time. They read, they should understand vocabulary and reference works but the textbook is bulky. So, I give them simply to read for each*

*other loudly. I read for them and they do some comprehension questions and we pass over that. We prefer more grammar than reading.* (Interviewed on May 5, 2014)

Certainly, effective implementation of CA in reading lesson brings improvement on the reading skills. Moreover, this has its own positive implication on the whole teaching learning process. Alastair(2008) asserts that assessment and feedback are integral to the student learning process and learning experience and as such they are key aspects of learning and teaching. Based on this analysis, regarding the implementation of CA in reading classes one can infer that there were certain gaps which need to be improved.

#### 4.2.3 Teachers' Employment of Continuous Reading Assessment Devices

Table 4: Teachers' Continuous Assessment Devices usage in reading class

No	Items	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			Usually	Sometimes	Never	
1	Reading Strategy Checklist	N	4	3	-	3.71
		%	57.1	42.9	-	
2	Self-assessment	N	4	1	2	3.43
		%	57.1	14.3	28.6	
3	Peer-assessment	N	3	3	1	3.14
		%	42.9	42.9	14.3	
4	Tests & Quizzes	N	2	4	1	3.14
		%	28.6	57.1	14.3	
5	Group assignment/Discussion	N	5	-	2	3.71
		%	71.42	-	28.6	
6	Retelling	N	4	2	1	3.57
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
7	Think aloud	N	2	4	1	3.00
		%	28.6	57.1	14.3	
8	The reading record	N	2	3	2	2.86
		%	28.6	42.9	28.6	
9	Fluency check	N	4	1	2	3.43
		%	57.1	14.3	28.6	
10	Response Journals	N	2	2	3	2.86
		%	28.6	28.6	42.9	
11	Portfolios	N	4	1	2	3.57
		%	57.1	14.3	28.6	
12	Reading Conference	N	4	2	1	3.29
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
13	Reading Logs	N	2	4	1	3.14
		%	28.6	57.1	14.3	
Average Mean						3.30

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)



As can be seen from Table 4, the teachers were using most of the devices frequently with overall mean score ( $x=3.2967$ ). From the above table, only the reading record and response journals are below the average mean which is  $x=2.8571$  for each.

Besides, the result from the students' response below has also verified the above finding that their teachers were not in a position to use different assessment devices.

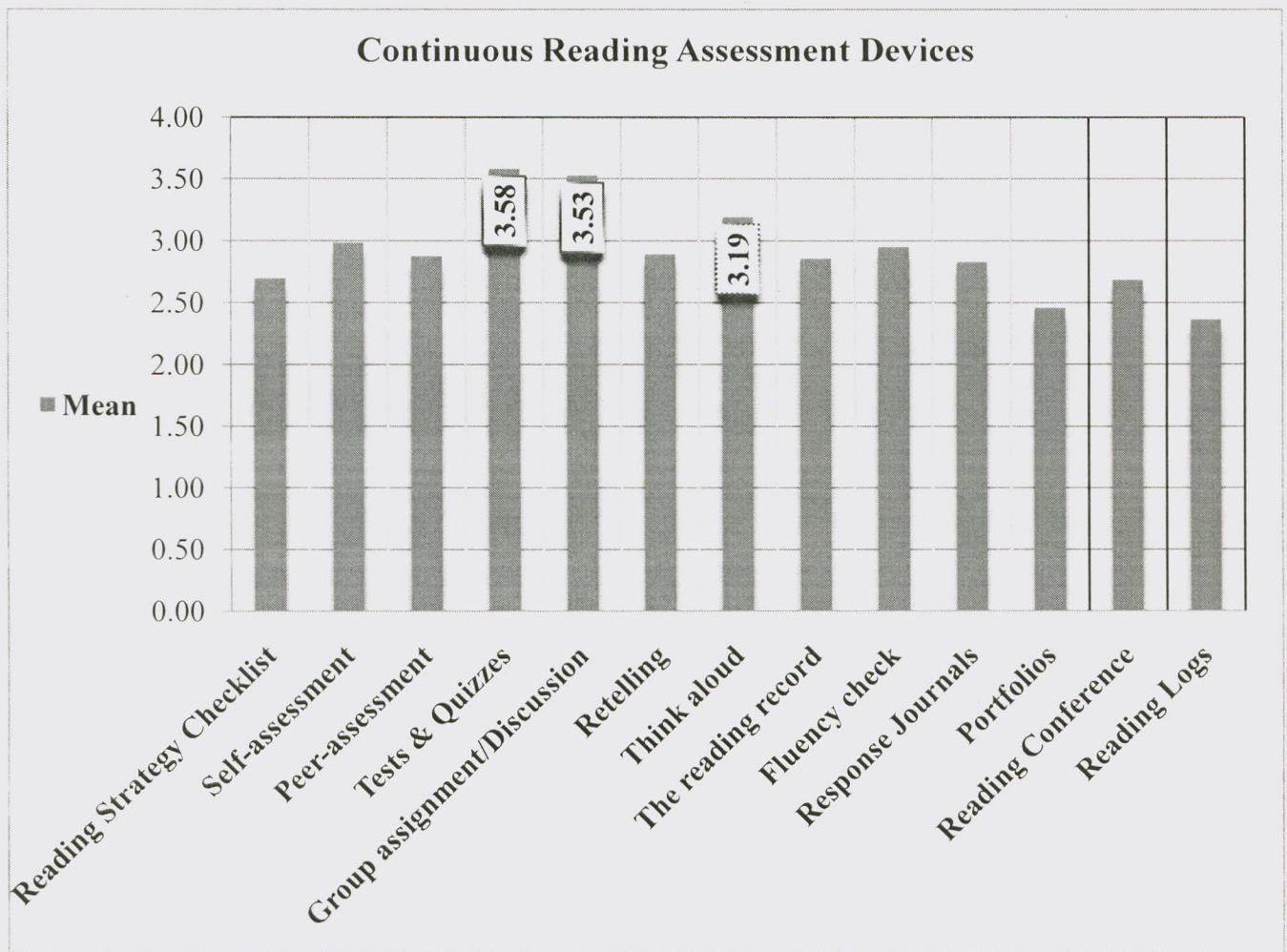


Figure 1: Mean score of Students' Response about CA Devices

The overall mean of students' responses about their teachers' CA devices usage in reading classes was ( $x < 3.0$ , which is 2.92) below the average result of the five point Likert scales. This shows that varied types of reading assessments were not deployed in order to develop their reading ability.

Specifically, in figure 1 only three devices namely tests & quizzes, group assignment and think aloud are above the mean ( $x=3.0$ ), 3.58, 3.53 and 3.19 respectively. As to the respondents (students) revealed that these devices were frequently used by their teachers. Moreover, the result from document analysis has also confirmed that one of the teachers used group work in his reading lesson. (Appendix H)

However, NIED of Namibia (1999) asserts this point by saying, “Continuous assessment creates more assessment opportunities and the use of more assessment methods creates opportunities for a variety of learners to demonstrate their mastery of the objectives” (p.10)

This is to mean that the more different devices used in the reading class, the better students’ mastery of reading skills can exist.

Using various assessment tools in reading assessment is essential to collect evidences that enable teachers to make decisions of modifications in the instruction that help the students improve (Williamson, 2004). However, in the real cassroom teaching practice during different observations revealed that the teachers’ reading classes were limited to group work rarher than implementing varied types of devices. Consequently, this had an impact to make right decision on students’ reading performance. Furthermore, it is true that using various assessment devices enable one to address the objectives of CA. However, the teachers disregarded to practice CA using different devices.

#### 4.2.4 Feedback Provided in Continuous Assessment

Table 5: Teachers' Responses in Feedback Provision

No	Teachers' Feedback Provision	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			Usually	Sometimes	Never	
1	I provide feedback on the students' reading performance timely.	N	4	2	1	3.71
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
2	In my feedback to students, I indicate students' strength and weakness in their reading skills.	N	5	1	1	4.00
		%	71.4	14.3	14.3	
3	My students understand the feedback I provide easily.	N	4	2	1	3.86
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
4	The feedback I provide help students make progress in their reading skills.	N	7	-	-	4.29
		%	100	-	-	
5	I provide constructive feedback.	N	5	2	-	4.00
		%	71.4	28.6	-	
6	I provide feedback based on the result of CA.	N	5	1	1	4.14
		%	71.4	14.3	14.3	
7	When I provide feedback, the students are motivated towards the lesson.	N	5	2	-	4.00
		%	71.4	28.6	-	

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

Obviously, feedback is the basic component of CA. In line with this, it is one of the basic questions of the study to see the establishment of feedback in the continuous reading assessment. As a result, the data collected through the study instrument is analyzed as follows.

In Table 6, 57.1% (4 of 7) the respondents usually provide feedback on the students' reading performance timely (item 1). However, 28.6% (2 of 7) of the respondents sometimes provide feedback timely. In a similar way, below on Table 7, the students revealed that 41% of the respondents usually received feedback on their reading performance timely from their teachers. 23.2% of the students sometimes obtained timely feedback on their reading performance. Likewise, as to the views of scholars, feedback should be timely and specific and include suggestions for ways to improve future performance (Plessis et al., 2003; Schumm, 2006; Alastair, 2008).

In item 2, 71.4% (5 of 7) of the respondents usually provide feedback to indicate students' strength and weakness in their reading skills. As to Alastair (2008), teachers should make every



attempt to provide feedback which students can use to identify strengths and areas for development that allow students to close the gap on their understanding.

The informaton in the above table also indicates that 71.4% (5 of 7) of the English language teachers' respondents usually provided constructive feedback to their students. 28.6% (2 of 7) of the teacher informants pointed out that they sometimes provided constructive feedback to their students. Chambers and Gregory (2006) stated that whatever the task, timely and constructive feedback to students on their performance is vitally important for their learning. Mcardle (2010) strengthens the idea by saying "The feedback principle of learning has two aspects: constructive feedback to learners on their progress, and performance feedback to instructors on their effectiveness" (p.63).

As can be seen in Table 6, the respondents (teachers) seem to have a strong practice in the provision of feedback for improving performance and directing teaching. This is because the mean values for the various features and functions of feedback are still above the overall mean 3. In addition to this, the highest mean values for item 4 and 6 reveal the fact that the respondents (teachers) place more importance of feedback for students reading progress based on the result of CA.

Table 6: Students' Responses Regarding the Feedback they Receive

No	Students Response	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			Usually	Sometimes	Never	
1	My teacher provides me feedback on my reading performance timely.	N	150	85	131	3.04
		%	41	23.2	35.8	
2	The feedbacks provided for me indicate my strength and weakness in reading skills.	N	215	74	77	3.57
		%	58.7	20.2	21.	
3	I understand the feedback provided easily.	N	225	79	62	3.65
		%	61.5	21.6	16.9	
4	The feedback provided enables me to progress in reading skills.	N	226	81	59	3.72
		%	61.7	22.1	16.1	
5	My teacher provides me constructive feedback.	N	174	91	101	3.35
		%	47.5	24.9	27.6	
6	The feedback provided is based on the result of CA.	N	179	100	87	3.36
		%	48.9	27.3	23.8	
7	The feedback provided motivated me towards the lesson.	N	208	76	82	3.57
		%	56.8	20.8	22.4	

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

As shown in table 7, the mean score of every item is above 3, which means there is provision of feedback in average.

Even though the feedback provision of the teachers was fair, from the vital role they play in the teaching learning process it is possible to say that a lot were expected for maximum success of the learners. In a similar way, Cowan (2003, as cited in Alastair, 2008) has suggested that research indicates that feedback needs to be provided 'within minutes' of completing a task in order to be the most effective. Here, as regular feedback can be seen to have a positive impact on students' academic performance, teachers have to exert a great effort for best learning of the students.

#### 4.2.5 Factors Affecting the Implementation of Continuous Reading Assessment

Table 7: Factors Impeding Teachers' Practice of Continuous Reading Assessment

No	Factors	Response in	Alternatives			Mean (X)
			High	I don't know	Low	
1	Work Load	N	7	-	-	4.43
		%	100	-	-	
2	Large Class Size	N	7	-	-	4.86
		%	100	-	-	
3	Lack of awareness	N	4	2	1	3.71
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
4	Lack of interest	N	4	2	1	3.57
		%	57.1	28.6	14.3	
5	Lack of Students textbooks	N	2	1	4	2.57
		%	28.6	14.3	57.1	

N.B (N=numbers, %= Percentage and x=mean)

As depicted in table 8, the main impeding factors identified by the teachers were large number of students per class and teachers' workload. 100% of the English language teacher respondents revealed that large class size and teachers' teaching load blocked the proper practices of CA in the reading class in the schools.

Both the interview result and classroom observation revealed that teachers' workload and large class size had hindered them to use CA in their reading class properly. For example, one of the respondents stated the following points:

*At this time there are many schools in Ethiopia in a gap of a kilometer but they have no rooms in the schools. For example, we have ten English classes for 9<sup>th</sup> grade A,B,C,D and like, but the number of students is very high. If it is about 30-35 students, you can know the ability of each individual students. Then, who is weak, who is medium and who is the active student, you can understand it.*

*(Interviewed on May 5, 2014)*

In addition, during the observation, the researcher observed that maximum numbers (60-70 in average) of students were found in their classes. Likewise, as to Baltchford (2003) "...as class



size increases there is less time for teachers in the classroom to give individual support for reading” (p. 77).

The analysis also indicated that 4(57.1%) of the respondents pointed out that teachers' lack of interest in using CA in their reading class impeded the practices of this assessment highly. However, 2 (28.6%), respondents did not know whether lack of teachers' interest impede the practice of CA in their reading class. Of all the impeding factors, lack of students' textbooks has the least mean value ( $x=2.57$ ). This may mean that there are sufficient textbooks in the schools.

In open-ended questions regarding the challenges, other challenges that faced in using CA in reading classes were also identified. For instance, one of the respondents stated that the students had no interest to read. As to the respondent, the reason the students were not willing to read that they were afraid of making mistakes. On the other hand, other two respondents informed that their students lacked background knowledge. As a result, the students could not read the text as expected from them.

As it was seen in Table 8, in comparing lack of textbooks with other factors, it was the least in its severity. This can be easily noticed that its mean value is below the standard( $x=2.5$ ). However, as one of the respondents expressed that though there were sufficient books, the students came to class without their textbooks. As they were not willing to bring their books, it was so difficult for teachers to teach and assess them continuously in accordance.

From this, one can safely conclude that large class size and teachers' work load were the predominant factors that hindered appropriate implementation of continuous reading assessment. For this reason, for effective implementation of continuous reading assessment, it is essential to find solution and take remedial action.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary

The major objective of the study was to investigate grade 9 English language teachers' knowledge of the principles and purposes of CA, to determine the extent to which teachers were implementing CA in reading class, to identify the CA methods or devices mainly employed by teachers and to find out the problems facing teachers and students in practicing CA in reading class.

In order to address these basic questions, two high Schools Abdi Bori and Gore High Schools which are found in Ilubabor Zone, were selected purposively. From these two high schools, 7 grade 9 English language teachers were selected as samples using availability sampling technique. Regarding students' participation, out of 1461 grade 9 students in both schools in 24 sections 25 % (366) of them were selected using random sampling technique (Lottery method) , as they were in the same class under the same school curriculum.

To gather the necessary data, questionnaires containing 53 and 28 items were administered to the sample teachers and students respectively. Besides, all the teachers were interviewed. Furthermore, apart from the data obtained from the respondents regarding planning assessment, assessment devices, feedback provision and arranged tutorial classes; document analysis was conducted. In addition, observation was carried out to see the availability of expected feedback and the practice of various assessment devices and to cross-check the responses secured from the respondents through the other data collection tools with reference to impeding factors especially class size.

Accordingly, the responses obtained from both the sample teachers and students through the close-ended items of the questionnaire were tabulated and analyzed using SPSS. Furthermore, the data collected through the open-ended items of the questionnaire, interviews, document analysis, and observation were incorporated to substantiate the data obtained using the close-ended items of the questionnaire. At last, after analyzing and interpreting the data, the outcomes were arrived at.

Certainly, CA has an impact on both the students and teachers in different ways. Primarily, it fosters self-improvement of the reading skills or any other aspect of language skills of the students. To do so, immediate feedback plays a vital role in order to sustain visible evidence of progress. As a result of this, motivation towards reading lesson can be enhanced. As to Williamson (2004), formative (continuous) assessment is a continuous monitoring of student learning with the purpose of providing feedback to the learner as to progress and achievement.

Regarding teachers, if they implement properly by employing various assessment devices, they can be felt privileged to obtain clear pictures of their students' reading progress. In line with this, Alastair(2008) states that teachers' using formative assessment approaches and techniques are better prepared to meet diverse students' needs through differentiation and adaptation of teaching to raise levels of student achievement and to achieve a greater equity of student outcomes.

However, in this study what was revealed that the teachers' practices of CA in the reading classes were not based on the fundamental knowledge and principles. Also the feedback provided by the teachers was not as much as intended. In addition, there were certain impeding factors like large class size and workload that hinders proper practice of continuous reading assessment.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

On the basis of the major findings of this study, the following conclusions were made.

1. Even though the teachers had some understanding in some of the principles and purposes of continuous reading assessment, they had inadequate understanding in many aspects of the principles and purposes of CA in reading class.
2. The English language teachers used very limited continuous reading assessment devices to collect assessment information. As the findings indicated, the teachers rarely used a range of assessment devices; rather, they frequently used group work, test and quizzes and think aloud. However, according to scholars using different CA devices helps students show their performance.



3. Even if the feedback was provided in a moderate manner by the teachers, it was not exercised as assumed. According to the scholars, feedback provision has to be consistent for better attainment of the purpose.

4. Regarding the challenge of the practice of CA in reading class, all the teachers had experienced problems with the large number of students per class. As a result of this, it can be concluded that the teachers found it difficult to give individual attention to the learners. Teachers' teaching overload, lack of students' interest in reading class were also identified as the most impeding factors to the effective practices of continuous reading assessment.

5. As it can be seen from the analysis, the involvement of continuous assessment practices in reading classes did not always conform to the expectations. For this reason, generally, it was possible to say that continuous reading assessment was found to be a neglected area of practice.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are forwarded. Moreover, the suggestions presented here are generally based on interviews, open-ended questions and reviews of literature.

1. The research results depicted that it was found that the majority of the teachers had inadequate understanding of the principles and purposes of continuous reading assessment. Therefore, to help the teachers' practice of continuous reading assessment thereby appropriate feedback as intended, training and workshops which will focus on the practical application of CA in the reading class with its theoretical perspective has to be given. The concerned bodies like ZEO, OEB and MOE have to organize training in collaboration so as to create awareness. Also the teachers have to be encouraged to conduct intra-staff and inter-staff training that emphasis on the application of continuous reading assessment in their respective schools in general by their school supervisors and principals.
2. Teachers have to be made aware by the school and other concerned bodies about the fact that CA is not only aimed at giving grade to students and making decision about the students' promotion to the next level. This could enable the teachers to use the results of

CA to improve their own teaching methods and their students' performance in their learning

3. Teachers have to implement continuous assessment in reading classes for its primary purpose i.e. improving the teaching learning process and guiding the instruction.
4. To foster appropriate feedback in the reading classes, teachers have to adapt specific feedback mechanisms that students can use easily.
5. As remedial teaching is one of the core values of continuous assessment, teachers have to arrange tutorial classes for less performing students to boost their reading skills. The Vice principals of the schools have to control its effectiveness with great emphasis.
6. From the results of the investigation, it was realized that grade 9 English language teachers could not practice CA in reading classes most of the time due to the large number of students they teach in their respective schools and their workload. Based on this fact, the large number of students in a class has to be minimized in order that the teachers can implement CA in the reading classes and give timely and specific feedback to their students. Thus, WEO has to plan to construct suitable classrooms and set the number of students based on MOE's classroom students ratio standard and fulfill man power as needed for the successful implementation of CA in the reading classes.
7. In general, reading assessment, therefore, needs to be treated with great care, attention, and respect. Teachers, especially, have a responsibility to understand the uses and the impacts of reading assessment and have to be mindful of the consequences of assessment.

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**Appendix A**  
**Jimma University**  
**College of Social Science and Law**  
**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**  
**Teachers' Questionnaire**

Dear Teachers,

The objective of this questionnaire is to gather information about the practices of CA in your reading classes. The information is needed for the MA thesis which is going to be done on the title *An Investigation of the Practices of CA in Reading classes by Grade 9 English Language Teachers*. Your cooperation in providing the needed information plays a vital role for the success of the research.

Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill in your answers to the questionnaires on the basis of the given instructions.

Thank you in advance!

**Part I:** For each of the following statements please indicate your agreement or disagreement by putting (✓) mark in the space provided according to the following scale:

Strongly agree=5, Agree=4, Uncertain=3, Disagree=2, and Strong disagree=1

No	Items	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Continuous reading assessment is an integral part of teaching reading skills					
2	Planning in advance is given emphasis in the process of CA A of reading skills					
3	CA should be done before during and after the instruction					
4	I believe teacher should inform their students the objectives and the assessment procedures.					
5	The emphasis of CA in reading class is more on product than process					
6	I feel the information gathered from continuous reading assessment is needed to help academically weak students.					
7	I know that CA motivates students to be engaged in their learning					
8	I believe that CA addresses students, interest and needs					
9	CA prevents teachers from being central authority in decision making.					
10	Teachers should arrange tutorial classes for less performing students.					
11	CA does differentiate students according to their reading ability.					
12	It is teachers who are responsible for deciding the marking criteria					
13	The information obtained from CA helps teachers to identify learners' problems in reading class					
14	I feel that there is no individual accountability in CA. Students depend on work of others.					
15	Feedback should mainly consist of reporting wrong and right answers to the learners					
16	I feel CA is used to label students					

**Part II:** For each of the following show how often you apply CA in reading class by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5=Always, 4 =Usually, 3=Sometimes, 2=Rarely, 1=Never

No	Items	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	To determine the type of reading material					
2	To screen children for special assistance.					
3	To help students who are doing well.					
4	To give feedback to improve comprehension skills					
5	To know the reading ability of students					
6	To decide what reading assessment tool to use					
7	To re-plan for effective teaching reading skills					

**Part III:** For each of the following show how often you use them to assess students reading skills by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5= Always 4=Usually 3=Sometimes 2= Rarely 1=Never

No	Continuous Reading Assessment Devices	Frequency Degree				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Reading Strategy Checklist					
2	Self assessment					
3	Peer assessment					
4	Tests & Quizzes					
5	Group assignment/Discussion					
6	Retelling					
7	Think aloud					
8	The reading record					
9	Fluency check					
10	Response Journals					
11	Portfolios					
12	Reading Conference					
13	Reading Logs					



14. Please list other devices your have been using (if any)

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15. If you choose rarely (2) or never (1) for items of Part IV, would you please explain your reasons?

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Part IV: For each of the following Items, show how often you provide feedback to your students by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5= Always 4=Usually 3=Sometimes 2= Rarely 1=Never

No	Item	Frequency Degree				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	I provide feedback on the students reading performance timely					
2	In my feedback to students, I indicate students' strength and weakness in their reading skills					
3	My students understand the feedback I provide easily					
4	The feedback I provide help students make progress in their reading skills					
5	I provide constructive feedback					
6	I provide feedback based on the result of CA					
7	When I provide feedback, the students motivated towards the lesson					

8. If you choose rarely (2) or never (1) for items of Part V, would you please explain your reasons?

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Part V: How often do the following factors impede the practices of CA in your reading classroom? (Use the following scale)

Very high=5, High=4, I don't know=3, Low=2, and very low=1

No	Items	Degree Level				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.1	Workload					
1.2	Large Class size					
1.3	Lack of awareness					
1.4	Lack of interest					
1.5	Lack of students text books					

2. What are the major problems (if any) have you faced in using CA to assess the reading skills of your student?

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3. What do you think should be done for successful implementation of CA in your reading class?

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**Appendix B**  
**Jimma University**

**College of Social Science and Law**

**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**

**Students' Questionnaires**

Dear student,

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect information about the practices of CA in your reading class by your English teacher. The information is needed for the MA thesis which is going to be done on the *An Investigation of the Practices of CA in Reading classes by Grade 9 English Language Teachers*. Your cooperation in providing the needed information plays a vital role for the success of the study.

Therefore, you are kindly requested to fill in the questionnaires based on the given instructions under each part.

Thank you in advance!

**Part I:** For each of the following purposes show how often do your teacher use them to assess students reading skills by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5=Always, 4 =Usually, 3=Sometimes, 2=Rarely, 1=Never

No	Items	Frequency Degree				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.1	To decide on how to improve my reading skills					
1.2	To give remedial teaching					
1.3	To Plan instruction for the next lesson					
1.4	To evaluate his/her teaching methodology					
1.5	Monitoring students learning					
1.6	To evaluate the extent to which I can put what I learnt into practice in real world situation					



2. What major strengths and weaknesses do you observe in your teachers use of CA in your reading class?

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**Part II:** For each of the following continuous reading assessment devices, show how often your teacher uses them to assess your reading skills by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5= Always 4=usually 3=sometimes 2= rarely 1=never

No	Continuous Reading Assessment devices	Frequency Degree				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Reading Strategy Checklist					
2	Self assessment					
3	Peer assessment					
4	Tests & Quizzes					
5	Group assignment/Discussion					
6	Retelling					
7	Think aloud					
8	The reading record					
9	Fluency check					
10	Response Journals					
11	Portfolios					
12	Reading Conference					
13	Reading Logs					

**Part III:** For each of the following Items, show how often your teacher provides you feedback on the result of CA by putting (✓) in one of the boxes according to the scale below.

5= Always 4=Usually 3=Sometimes 2= Rarely 1=Never

No	Item	Frequency Degree				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	My teacher provide me feedback on my reading performance timely					
2	The feedbacks provided for me indicate my strength and weakness in reading skills					
3	I understand the feedback provide easily					
4	The feedback provided enables me to progress in reading skills					
5	My teacher provides me constructive feedback					
6	The feedback provided is based on the result of CA					
7	The feedback provided motivated towards the lesson					

## Appendix C

### Students' Questionnaire into Afan Oromo

Kabajamtoota Barattootaa,

Kaayyoon gaaffilee kanaa barreeffama qo'annoo (Research) barnoota digirii 2ffaa (MA) tiif dhiyaatu ilalchisee odeeffannoo barbaachisaa sassaabuuf. Qo'annoon (Research) kun haalli barsiisonni Afaan Ingilizii M/B keessan barsiisanu itti fufiinsa dandeettii dubbisuu akka itti madaalan maal akka fakkaatu xiinxaluuf fi yaada furmaataa kennuuf gargaaraa. Fiixaan bahiinsa qo'annoo kanaatiif deebiin isin gaaffilee kanaaf kennitanu murteessaadha. Kanaaf, atooma keessaniif dursee isin galateeffachaa deebii keessan haluma qajeelfama kennamaniitiin akka guttanu kabajaan isin gaafadha.

Galatoomaa!

#### KUTAA 1<sup>FFAA</sup>

Kanneen Kanaan gaditti tarreeffaman madaallii walitti fufaa hangam barsiisaan keessan dandeetti dubbisuu keessatti maaliif akka hojiirra oolchan kan haammatedha. Deebii keessan mallattoo (✓) kaa'uun deebisaa. Filannoowwan isaanii lakkoofsaan kan bakka bu'aanii fi hanga irra deebii kan mul'isaniidha.

5= Yeroo hunda 4=Yeroo baay'ee 3=Yeroo tokko tokko 2= Darbee darbee 1=Tasuma

T/L	Gaaffilee	Sadarkaa Irra deebii				
		5	4	3	2	1
2.1	Haalli dandeetti dubbisuu koo itti fooyya'uu qabu murteessuudhaaf					
2.2	Dandeetti dubbisuu koo irratti hanqinan qabu adda baasuun deeggarsa naaf kennuuf					
2.3	Haala barnoota itti aanu karoofachuuf					
2.4	Barsiisaan akkaataa barsiisa isaa madaaluuf					
2.5	Haala barachuu koo hordofuuf					
2.6	Waan dareetti baradhe qabatamaan dareen alatti hangam akkan hojiirra oolchuu madaaluuf					

3. Itti fayyadama madaalli walitti fufaa barsiisaa kee dandeetti dubbisuu kee irratti ciminootaa fi hanqinoota gurguddaa ati argite maal fa'i?

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## KUTAA 2<sup>FFAA</sup>

Gosoota madaallii walitti fufaa kanaan gaditti kennaman barsiisaan kee hangam akka fayyadamu sadarkaa fayyadamaa kennaman jalatti mallattoo (✓) kaa'uun agarsiisaa.

5= Yeroo hunda 4=Yeroo baay'ee 3=Yeroo tokko tokko 2= Darbee darbee 1=Tasuma

T/ L	Gosoota Madaallii	Sadarkaa Fayyadamaa				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Cheekliistii itti fayyadama tooftaalee dubbisaa /Reading Strategy Checklist/					
2	Madaallii dhunfaa/Self-assessment/					
3	Madaallii walii walii/Peer-assessment/					
4	Battalleewwan garaagaraa /Tests & Quizes/					
5	Hojii garee fi mare waliinii /Group assignment/Discussion					
6	Waan dubbisan deebisanii Himuu/Retelling/					
7	Dubbisani hubachuu fi xinxaluu/Think aloud/					
8	Filannoo kitaabaa ofiin dubbisu/The reading record/					
9	Ariifatanii sirritti dubbisuu/Fluency check/					
10	Waliin dubbii barreeffamaa barataa fi barsiisaa giddu godhamu/Response Journals/					
11	Kuusaa barnootaa yeroo yeroon galmaa'e/Portfolio/					
12	Maree barsiisaan barataa/ttoota waliin godhu/Reading Conference/					
13	Gosa fi baay'ina kitaabaa barataan dubbise ittiin hordofan/Reading Logs/					

14. Gosoota madaallii walitti fufaa dandeetti dubbisuu ittiin madaalu kanaan olitti tarreeffaman alatti kan barsiisaan kee fayyadamu jiraa? Yoo jiraate maal fa'i?

\_\_\_\_\_

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### KUTAA 3<sup>FFAA</sup>

Gaaffiwwan kanaan gaditti jiraniif hangam barsiisaan keessan madaalli walitti fufaa dandeetti dubbisuu keessatti duubdeebii akka kennu mallattoo (✓) kaa'uun deebisaa. Filannoowwan isaanii lakkoofsaan kan bakka bu'anii fi hanga irra deebii kan mul'isaniidha.

5= Yeroo hunda 4=Yeroo baay'ee 3=Yeroo tokko tokko 2= Darbee darbee 1=Tasuma

T/ L	Gaaffilee	Sadarkaa irra deebii				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Barsiisaan koo duubdeebii dandeetti dubbisuu koo irratti yerootti naaf kennaa.					
2	Duubdeebiin naaf kennamu ciminaa fi hanqinoota koo dandeettii dubbisuu kan mul'isuudha.					
3	Duubdeebii naaf kennamu salphaatti hubachuu danda'eera					
4	Duubdeebiin naaf kennamu dandeetti dubbisuu koo irratti akkan fooyya'u na dandeesiseera.					
5	Barsiisaan koo duubdeebii na ijaaruu naaf kennaa					
6	Duubdeebiin kennamu bu'aa madaallii walitti fufaa irratti hundaa'eetu					
7	Duubdeebiin kennamu kaka'umsa barnooticha irratti natti uumeera.					

8. Gaaffilee kanaan olii keessatti yoo 1 fi 2 filate ta'e, sababi isaa maaliif akka ta'e osoo ibsitee?

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**Appendix D**  
**Jimma University**  
**College of Social Science and Law**  
**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**

**Interview Guide for Teachers**

1. How do you understand continuous assessment?
2. Have you ever shared experiences with your colleagues regarding the practice continuous assessment in reading classes?
3. Do you feel that you are in a position to practice continuous assessment in reading classes properly?
4. Do you think that continuous assessment helps students reading skills? How?
5. Do you think your students understand what is expected of them in continuous assessment process?
6. What problem do you encounter in practicing continuous assessment in reading class?
7. What do you use the results of continuous assessment for in your reading class?
8. Is it always possible to provide timely feedback to the students?
9. What would you say is the main difference between assessing students through continuous assessment and giving only final exam at the end of a course?
10. What do you generally suggest for improvement of your continuous assessment practices in your reading class?
11. If there are any comments you add?



**Appendix E**  
**Jimma University**

**College of Social Science and Law**

**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**

**Observation Checklist**

Name of the School \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Observation \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of the lesson \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Code \_\_\_\_\_

No	List of activities	Yes	No	Remark
1	The teacher tells the objectives of the lesson properly			
2	Informs which assessment device to be used and explain assessment criteria			
3	Assessment Devices			
	3.1 Reading Strategy Checklist			
	3.2. Self assessment			
	3.3. Peer assessment			
	3.4. Tests and Quizzes			
	3.5. Group assignment/Discussion			
	3.6. Retelling			
	3.7. Think aloud			
	3.8 The reading record			
	3.9 Fluency check			
	3.10 Response Journals			
	3.11 Portfolios			
	3.12 Reading Conference			
	3.13 Reading Logs			
4	Students are being given feedback			
5	Condition of feedback			
	5.1. Immediate/Timely			
	5.2. Delayed			
6	The teacher gives feedback			
	6.1. to correct errors			
	6.2. to give constructive comment			
7	Encourage students to assess themselves			
8	Encourage students to assess their peers/partners			
9	Class Size			
	9.1 Large			
	9.2 Standard			
	9.3 Small			

**Appendix F**  
**Jimma University**

**College of Social Science and Law**

**Department of Foreign Language and Literature**

**Document Analysis Checklist**

Name of the School \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Code \_\_\_\_\_

No	List of documents		Yes	No	Remark
1	Students Mark list				
	1.1	Does the students mark list show the list of tools used to assess students reading ability?			
	1.2	Is the time provided indicated?			
	1.3	Is the assessment given continuously?			
2	Students Note Book				
	2.1	Is there any feedback given for students on their notebook?			
	2.2	Do the students practice to assess each other in their notebook?			
3	Written Assessment Tools				
	3.1	Does the Teacher use different assessment tools?			
4	Teachers' Lesson Plan				
	4.1	Is CA planned in the teacher lesson plan?			
	4.2	Are the objectives clearly stated?			
5	Tutorial Class Format				
	5.1	Is tutorial classes arranged so as to help less performing students in reading skills?			

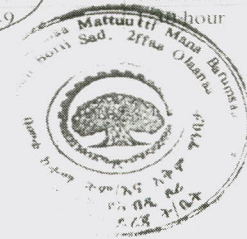
## Appendix G

### Sample document of Tutorial given

Abdi Bori Senior Secondary School

Tutorial given for grade 9 students in the year 2005-2006 (up to April 30/2006 E.C)

Year 2005 E.C			
Teacher's Code	Date	Content	Duration
MD	7/02/2005	Wh-words, present tense	1:00 minutes
MEJ	7/02/2005	Present tense	1:00 hour
MEJ	15/02/2005	Punctuation	1:00 hour
MG	11/03/2005	The Present Perfect	1:00 hour
MD	13/03/2005	Pronunciation Practice	40 minutes
MG	13/03/2005	Pronunciation Practice	40' minutes
MG	03/04/2005	Personal Pronouns	1:30 hour
MEJ	03/04/2005	Preposition and Pronouns	1:30 hour
MD	03/04/2005	Pronouns	1:30 hour
MD	12/08/2005	Reporting what someone has said	Not mentioned
MG	16/08/2005	Review question	Not mentioned
MD	16/08/2005	Telling about the future	Not mentioned
MS	19/08/2005	Adverbs	Not mentioned
Year 2006 E.C			
Teacher's Code	Date	Content	Duration
MS	19/03/2006	If-sentences	1:30 hour
MS	21/04/2006	Passive Voice	1:30 hour
ME	02/08/2006	Summary of Chapter 7-9	1:30 hour
MN	02/08/2006	Summary of Chapter 7-9	1:30 hour





# Appendix H

## Sample Lesson Plan

Grade and section: 4th  
 Unit: 9  
 Topic: people and food  
 Subject: English

At the end of the lesson the students will be able to understand the passage and develop different reading skills

Date	Main content	Time	Teacher's activity	Student's activity	Material used
8/8/16	Reading passage Agriculture in Ghana		<p>1. Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reminds the previous lesson</li> <li>Introduces the days lesson</li> </ul> <p>2. Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will ask some pre-reading questions</li> <li>I will make them to read the passage silently</li> <li>After that I will ask them to read it aloud in the class</li> </ul> <p>3. Stabilization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I will give them group work</li> <li>They discuss on the main idea of the passage</li> </ul> <p>4. Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Class work</li> </ul>	<p>participate in group work</p>	

Teacher's Name: Samuel S. S. S.      Dep./Head Name: \_\_\_\_\_      Vice Director Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sig: \_\_\_\_\_      Date: 3/8/16      Sig: \_\_\_\_\_      Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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