



# Exploring the Link: A Study of Secondary School English Language Teachers' Perceived and Actual Reading Skills Proficiency

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## Abstract

This study aims at identifying secondary school English language teachers' perceived and actual reading proficiency level and the correlation between these variables. The researchers employed mixed design and used questionnaire, proficiency test and interview to collect data from the participants. There were 112 secondary school teachers who take part in this study and among them four teachers were interviewed. The data gathered from the instruments were analyzed using SPSS version 24 and NVivo version 10 for the quantitative and qualitative data. The results of this study revealed that secondary school English language teachers perceived proficiency level of reading skill was high and that the levels their actual reading skills was medium. It was also found that there was a positive ( $r=.329$ ) but not significant correlation between the teachers' perceived and actual proficiency level of reading skills. This implies that there should be professional and skill development trainings given for the teachers. Besides, teachers should make themselves familiar with reading materials apart from the text book they are using in the classroom. The findings of this study could have contribution for other researchers replicate, educators to consider teachers' proficiency and policy makers to give attention in formulating policy.

**Keywords:** Actual Proficiency, English Language Teachers, Perceived Proficiency, Reading Skills, Secondary School.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the most important skills in language teaching and learning (Fitri E. et al., 2019; Ginting, 2018; Kung, 2019; Oda & Abdul-Kadhim, 2017; Reza Ahmadi et al., 2013; Wibowo et al., 2020 ). According to Grabe (1988), reading is more than just the application of skills; it is a complex and active process of constructing meaning. He argues that the construction of meaning is interactive, involving not only the reader but also the text and the context in which reading takes place. It's strategic - readers have a reading goal and use different strategies to achieve it. Readers are adaptive because they read different types of texts and change their strategies to suit different purposes. Therefore, reading requires not only a certain level of comprehension but also a diverse background.

It is essential for academic success as "early reading success is critical because reading is required for practically all academic work" (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, & Wigfield, 2012 cited in Adelson et al., 2019). Besides, it appears that excellent general reading skills in English imply that one can cope pretty well with a wide range of reading material. As we all know, teachers and students spend a significant amount of time reading various academic and non-academic subjects. Teaching these talents, on the other hand, is not an easy undertaking. Kavaliauskienė, (2009) noted that "reading is a known to be a complicated cognitive activity, and teaching reading skills can be challenging at times" (p.172). The ultimate purpose of language instruction is to help students improve their language skills and communicate effectively in English. Teachers play an important role in helping students achieve better (Guo, 2012; Van Canh & Renandya, 2017). In this regard, teachers are supposed to have the expected proficiency level for the specific grade level in all the skills of the language.

According to Butler (2004), one of the most significant barriers to successful English teaching and learning is the teacher element, specifically their lack of English proficiency. It is often considered in the literature on the issue that instructors' lack of English proficiency is causally related to their lack of confidence in teaching English. Teachers' lack of English competence has been linked to a lack of confidence in teaching English and, as a result, inefficient instruction (Butler, 2004; Eslami & Harper, 2018; Nunan, 2003; Sabokrouh & Barimani-Varandi, 2013). Nunan, (2003) remarked that "...a big challenge is that many English teachers just do not have the skill, and thus the confidence, to teach in English" (p. 601).

Teachers play an important role for the success of their students, particularly English language teachers' efforts and proficiency could have an impact on the students' performance. Therefore, teachers should have good proficiency level so as to help their students perform better. In this regard, Lie et al. (2019) stated "teachers of English are compelled to improve their English proficiency and enhance their professional development" (p. 87). Besides, Sharif (2013) hypothesized that students' understanding of the content was impeded by teachers' poor command of the English language. Furthermore, in her study, Tsang (2017) came to the conclusion that while achieving a certain level of English proficiency was necessary for English teachers, other criteria, like pedagogical methods, were more relevant in terms of overall teaching effectiveness. A study in the local context by Bogale et al. (2019) showed that teachers' proficiency has an impact on students' achievement.

According to second language acquisition theorists (e.g., Ellis, 2005; Krashen, 1985), learners should be exposed to intelligible input, also known as input +1, or input that falls inside their zone of proximal development, to use the concept coined by Vygostky (1978). The language used in this kind of input is considered to be at the next developmental stage for the students. Teachers are frequently the primary source of input when teaching English as a foreign language (Kim & Elder, 2008). In order to carry out this role, teachers must possess an advanced degree of proficiency in the target language. Furthermore, less proficient teachers may find it challenging to identify and fix mistakes made by students (Farrell & Richards, 2007).

In this regard, Ellis (2005) cited in Van Canh and Renandya (2017) mentioned that teachers with high target language proficiency are seen to be better at providing students a lot of input, which is an essential aspect of successful taught language learning). Thus, the English language skills of the teachers have caught the interest of researchers, especially in nations where English is not the primary language.

As a result, the purpose of this study was to look into secondary school English language teachers' actual and perceived reading skills proficiency. It is known that English language reading skills are very essential in any academic career as the medium of instruction in our curriculum is in English. Some scholars argued that "because the ability to read is essential for nearly all academic work, success in reading is crucial (Schiefele et al., 2012).

This study was, therefore, focusing on teachers' perceived and actual English language reading skills proficiency of secondary school English language teachers in North Shoa Zone, Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia. It would address their levels of perceived and actual reading proficiency and how these concepts relate each other. The research addressed research questions related to the two mentioned variables of this study. Hence, the study explored secondary school teachers' self-reported level of English language reading skills proficiency that they think they could and their current level of English language reading skills proficiency.

Therefore, this study intended to answers the following research questions.

- \*What are secondary school English language teachers' perceived proficiency levels of reading skills?
- \*What are the actual reading proficiency levels of secondary school English language teachers'?
- \*Is there a match or mismatch between the teachers' perceived and actual reading proficiency levels of secondary school English language teachers?

## METHODOLOGY

This research employed mixed methods design. This study was designed to investigate teachers' perceived and actual reading proficiency of selected secondary school English language teachers of North Shoa Zone of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia. English language teachers from selected schools were asked to respond to the questionnaire and were given the proficiency test in the quantitative phase. Then in order to triangulate the data semi structured interview was conducted with selected English language teachers in the qualitative phase following the first phase of the data collection.

### Participants of the Study and Study Site

The participants of this study were selected from secondary school English language teachers in Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone. Secondary school English language teachers teach English from grades 9 to 12. All English teachers in the selected secondary schools participated to fill the questionnaires and took the proficiency test whereas some teachers among them were asked their willingness to take part in the interview.

### Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The researchers had taken a preliminary data about the number of secondary schools from North Shoa Zone Education office. Based on the data from the office, there were about sixty secondary schools in North Shoa Zone and among them eleven of the schools were selected based on the abovementioned sampling technique; then all English language teachers in the selected schools participated in the study.

According to the information from education office, there are twenty two woredas and two city administrations in North Shoa Zone Administration, Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia (North Shoa Zone Education Office, Amhara Regional State, 2022). To select the secondary schools for this study, cluster sampling was used. Cohen et al. (2007) state that cluster sampling is a kind of sampling which is employed in situations where the population is large and dispersed. When using cluster sampling, the population is split up into a number of clusters. These clusters are then further split up and sorted into different subgroups according to different criteria, including strata or geographic area.

Hence, in this study, the geographical location was considered to cluster the schools. Then the woredas were clustered into the high lands and lowland woreda clusters. This was applied to include proportional number of participants and schools from different settings. Eventually, a total of twelve secondary schools were selected randomly from both clusters. To make it more clear, seven schools were selected from the highland clusters and five secondary schools were randomly selected from the lowland clusters.

Both the survey data for quantitative and the interview for qualitative part were collected from secondary schools in Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone. To select the teachers from each school which were selected by cluster sampling, the researchers applied availability sampling. The researcher asked all the teachers about their permission to fill the questionnaires and take the test for the sake of getting enough data for this study. There were 114 teachers who were working in eleven secondary schools in the area, so all the teachers in the selected schools participated in the study. However, only 112 of them gave responses for this study because based on health issues, one of the participants was unable to fill the questionnaires and take the proficiency test and the other one was not willing to participate in the study.

### Data Collection Instruments

This study employed a mixed method research where quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments were used to gather numerical and descriptive data. These instruments were questionnaire, interview and proficiency test. The combination of more instruments was for the reasons of triangulation, emergence of different overlapping facets of a phenomenon, supplementing the quantitative data with the qualitative data and to add depth to the study.

### Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of secondary school English language teachers' perceived reading skills proficiency. This instrument was developed by the researchers by referring different literatures and empirical works (Richards, 2001, pp. 84-85; Chacon, 2002; Shim, 2001). The researcher discussed with colleagues to look at the questionnaire and give them some comments. After their comments and feedbacks, the researchers revised it and avoided repeated ideas and difficult vocabularies. Finally, this questionnaire contained ten statements for the teachers to rate their perceived reading proficiency by choosing the given Likert scales from strongly disagree (which was labeled by number 1) to strongly agree (which was labeled by number 6).

### Reading Proficiency Test

The reading proficiency test for this study was adapted from the competency exam prepared by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with language experts. The test, which originally contained seventy five questions, was prepared to measure secondary school English language teachers reading skills proficiency. The Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (2011) used this proficiency test to measure the reading skill performance levels of secondary school English language teachers. The Ministry which manages the education system of the entire schools in the country had approved the test's validity before using it for the actual teachers' proficiency level assessment (Ministry of Education, FDRE, 2011).

In addition to what the Ministry had done to assure the validation of the test, the researchers then discussed with the colleagues of two English language instructors at Debre Berhan University and two PhD candidates in English Language Teaching of Addis Ababa University to evaluate and commented on the number of questions and their appropriateness for secondary school English language teachers. Then, it was decided that these number of questions might have been difficult to administer for the teachers and should be minimized to fifty. Hence, based on the discussions with the abovementioned colleagues, about twenty five questions, which were similar to other questions, were cancelled.

The test contained 50 questions; hence, teachers were asked to choose an appropriate answer they thought for each questions. It contained two reading passages and three cloze questions to ask about their comprehension, references, inferences, language use and vocabularies. Hence, the questions included reading sub skills such as skimming, scanning, summarizing, predicting, and inferring. Among the total number of questions, 22 of them were multiple choice questions, and participants were supposed to choose one of the best answers for each question from the four alternatives given. The remaining 13 of them were filling the blank spaces and finding the right answer from the reading passages, and 9 of them were matching questions. Finally, the remaining 6 questions were about completing a short passage using an appropriate words or phrases from the lists given.

### Interviews

The purpose of the interview was to get information about their perceived proficiency in reading skills. The interview was a semi-structured, open-ended type in which respondents could easily express their views about the points that were raised in the process. Thus, this interview method was highly useful in gaining deeper insights and additional information about the teachers' insights concerning their perceived English language reading skills proficiency.

The researchers developed the semi structured interview questions which were intended to help answer the research questions of the study. This form was used during the face-to-face interviews in the qualitative part of the study. The semi structured questions consisted of five main questions and some sub-questions which happened at the time of interview in order to get comprehensive answer from the interviewees. The one time interview lasted for about 15 up to 20 minutes, and each of the interviews was audio taped and transcribed so as to analyze the data in relation to the data obtained from the questionnaires.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Before carrying out the data collection task, the researchers asked information from North Shoa Zone education office. They found the number of secondary schools and English language teachers in each Woredas. There are twenty two Woredas and two City Administrations in the zone. There are also about sixty secondary schools in the Zone. Then the researchers had orientation sessions with the school principals and research participants in the selected schools for the study regarding the purpose and benefits as well as their roles in the research process. In addition, the researchers took contact information from the participants.

The survey data were collected from secondary schools in Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone. The researchers selected eleven secondary schools from the zone using the cluster sampling and the teachers in the school by using availability sampling then distributed the questionnaires for all the teachers in the selected secondary schools. The proficiency test was also be given to the participants immediately after distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

The participants were supposed to fill one questionnaire and took one reading skills proficiency test. The researchers gave them an orientation about the nature and how they could complete the questionnaires first, and then they arranged time for the proficiency test. They asked them their willingness to participate in the data collection process and all of them were willing to take part in the research process. Administration of the questionnaire took about 15 minutes and the proficiency test up to an hour.

The questionnaire, their perceived reading proficiency, was completed at the break time of their daily schedule. That means teachers in the morning shift completed the questionnaires in their morning break time and the afternoon shift teachers used their afternoon break time. However, the proficiency test was administered in their opposite shifts. The morning shift teachers took the test in the afternoon and the afternoon shift teachers took in the morning just before they began their afternoon classes.

The semi-structured, open-ended interview was applied after the survey data were collected. The qualitative data were a complementary data source that are to be used for a “follow up” of the survey data and thus for refining, extending, explaining, and/or contextualizing the survey results.

During the time of survey data collection, the researchers asked some volunteers if they were willing to participate in the interview. Hence, volunteer teachers for an interview were selected and interviewed. There were about six teachers who were willing to participate in the interview process, but after the researchers interviewed four teachers as they thought that the ideas were saturated and no need of interviewing the remaining teachers. The interviews were taken place in the informants' convenient places and took 15 up to 20 minutes.

### **Data Analysis and Procedures**

To analyze the data for both quantitative (questionnaires and test) and qualitative (interview), the researchers applied different methods. For the analysis of quantitative data, Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS Version 24 was applied and for the qualitative data NVivo version 10 was utilized.

Descriptive statistics of means, frequencies, standard deviations, and percentages were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants and their responses to the questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was also used to describe the relationships being investigated.

The procedures used in the analysis of the quantitative data were described. First, the quantitative data were converted into a form useful for data analysis using the SPSS version 24. The descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation, variance of responses to each item) were conducted so as to determine the general trends of the data. Correlation statistics were used to identify the relationships between secondary school English language teachers' sense of efficacy with their perceived and actual reading proficiency.

Appropriate inferential statistics were selected based on the research questions and the number of variables and their distributions. They were analyzed using the SPSS version 24 software to calculate effect sizes and confidence levels. Then, the statistical results, which are statistics and p-values, were summarized in the tables following the American Psychological Association style of reporting results. To determine how the questions were answered in this study, the major results were summarized and compared in terms of the research questions.

The face-to-face semi-structured interview data were audio-recorded and transcribed. They were checked for the accuracy of the transcriptions. These transcribed data were analyzed based on the grounded theory, and recording of the initial thoughts were included by writing memos in the margins of the transcripts. These transcribed data were analyzed using the Nvivo version 10. After the data were coded, the researchers developed descriptions and themes by grouping the codes which were already prepared.

The data were coded according to the emergent themes. These themes were then be investigated separately from the survey data and later examined in conjunction with the research questions of the present study for the purpose of refining, extending, and/or contextualizing the survey data.

The coding ranged from open code to axial coding and to selective coding. In doing this, the researchers reduced the data until credible answers were developed to the research questions. Then, the major findings of the qualitative data were summarized and interpreted how these findings answered the research questions. The researchers were also relating findings with the past literatures and researches done on this issue.

## FINDINGS

### Quantitative Data Analysis and Findings

#### Secondary School English Language Teachers' Perceived Proficiency Level of Reading Skills

This research question was about secondary school English language teachers' perceived proficiency level of their reading skills. To identify self-reported level of reading proficiency among North Shoa Zone secondary school English language teachers, they were asked to rate their perceived reading proficiency level based on the given items. The questionnaire had a 6 point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (6) to Strongly Disagree (1). Hence, the mean and standard deviation of the ten items are presented below.

Table 1: Means and standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceived Reading Proficiency  
Perceived Reading Proficiency

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.I can understand the main points of any reading text.	112	4.84	1.081
2.I can read a text quickly in order to establish a general idea of the context (skimming).	112	4.91	1.088
3.I can read a text slowly and carefully in order to understand the details of the text.	112	5.38	.751
4.I can look through a text quickly in order to locate specific information (Scanning).	112	5.13	.833
5.I can guess the meanings of unknown words in English from the context.	112	5.25	.508
6.I can draw inferences/conclusions from what I read in English.	112	4.84	.767
7.I can figure out the meaning of unknown words in English from the context.	112	4.90	.700
8.I can read and understand what the pronouns refer to in the reading text.	112	4.50	.950



9.I can read and understand popular English novels without using a dictionary.	112	4.06	1.243
10.I can read highly technical material in a particular academic or professional field with no use or only very rarely use of a dictionary.	112	4.06	1.045
Overall mean	112	4.78	.599
Valid N (listwise)	112		

Based on the above table, items 9 and 10 got the lowest mean score of 4.06 for each. On the other hand, item 3 with the mean score of 5.38 is the highest mean compared with the others. The overall mean score of secondary school English language teachers' perceived reading skill proficiency level was 4.78.

The above table also show that items "I can read and understand popular English novels without using a dictionary" and "I can read highly technical material in a particular academic or professional field with no use or only very rarely use of a dictionary" got the lowest mean (4.06). This indicated that most of the teachers had the problem of understanding texts beyond the text books as they reported they should use dictionaries to understand novels and other technical materials.

According to the findings from the above table, the average perceived reading skills level of secondary school English language teachers was 4.78. This result implied that the teachers' had high perceptions towards their levels of reading skills.

Items 1, 3, 9 and 10, in the above table indicated the comprehension and understanding levels of the teachers whom they would decide their levels based on their perceptions. Item 1 has got the mean score of more than the overall mean of the questionnaire. This showed that teachers could understand the main idea of any text. In the contrary, item 3, which is stated as "I can read a text slowly and carefully in order to understand the details of the text", has the highest mean when compared with the remaining items. The man score of this item is not only greater than the total mean scores, but also greater than each items in the questionnaire. This showed that teachers hardly get the main idea of the reading text when they are reading quickly. They would be reading a text slowly so as to get the main idea of the text. On the other hand, items 9 and 10 got the lowest mean (4.06 each) even when compared with the overall mean score (4.78) of the questionnaire. This indicated that secondary school English language teachers had a problem of understanding novels and technical materials. These challenges could be related to the capacity of the teachers to understand technical words and some literary vocabularies.

Items 5 and 7 asked teachers' about their vocabulary levels and capacities in reading skills. Their mean score for these two items were 5.25 and 4.90 respectively. These results indicated that teachers understand reading texts by guessing the meanings of some vocabularies and getting their meanings from the context in which the words appear. When we compare the two items, guessing the meanings of words has got a mean score more that getting the contextual meanings. This showed that teachers usually guess the meanings of some words by themselves when they get strange words in the reading text they would read.

Items 2 and 4 asked the teachers' capability they perceived minor skills reading which are skimming and scanning. The scanning skills has got more mean score (5.13) than the skimming one (4.91). Though the difference was not much, but it could be possible to say that secondary school English language teachers got finding specific information from a reading text easily than establishing a general idea of the text.

The remaining two items, 6 and 8, were about inference and reference levels of teachers' perceptions. According to the results from the above table, the mean score of inference (4.84) for secondary school English language teachers' perceived proficiency was almost equal to the overall mean score of the total items. This indicated that teachers' perceived proficiency level of inference is as high as the overall perceptions of teachers' reading skills proficiency. The other item which was about referencing, item 8, has a mean score of 4.50 which is just below the overall mean score. This

implied that the teachers' perceived skill of referencing is also nearly as high as the overall perceived levels of proficiency of reading skills.

### Secondary School English Language Teachers' Actual Proficiency level of Reading Skill

The other research question of this study was about secondary school English language teachers actual level of reading skills proficiency. To get the answer for this research question, the researchers used a reading competency exam which was prepared by the Ministry of Education. The proficiency test was used so as to get the actual reading proficiency level of secondary school English language teachers.

Table 2: Means and standard Deviation of Teachers' Actual Reading Proficiency Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers' reading proficiency score	112	64.81	14.566
Valid N (listwise)	112		

As it can be seen in the above table, the mean score of reading proficiency test for secondary school teachers was 64.81. This indicated that North Shoa Zone secondary school English language teachers have a medium proficiency level of reading skill based on the Ministry of Education proficiency test score result analysis. In the report, it was shown that scores below 50 were low, scores between 51 and 69 was considered medium and scores above 70 was considered as high proficiency level.

The researchers then gave teachers proficiency test. According to the results from the above table the overall mean of the test was 64.81. This finding indicated that North Shoa Zone secondary school English language teachers have a medium level of actual reading skills proficiency level.

### Secondary School English Language Teachers' Perceived and Actual Reading Proficiency levels

The third research question was about if there was a match or mismatch between the teachers' perceived and actual reading proficiency levels of secondary school English language teachers. Hence, a correlation statistics was conducted to identify the relationship between what teachers' perceived about their reading proficiency and their English reading skills proficiency test results.

Table 3: A correlations between Teachers' Perceived and Actual Reading Proficiency

	Teachers' reading proficiency score	Perceived RP
Teachers' reading proficiency score	1	
Perceived RP	.329	1

As the table 12 shows above, English language teachers reading skills proficiency and their perceived reading skills proficiency had a positive and moderate correlation ( $r=.329$ ). Though their correlation was not significant, the result showed there was a moderate indication that when their perceived reading skills proficiency increases, their actual reading skills proficiency increases.

According to the information given above and to analyze this, a correlation coefficient was calculated using SPSS software. Then the findings showed that there was a positive but moderate relationship between what the teachers' perceived their reading skills proficiency and their actual reading skills proficiency.



### **Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings**

To triangulate the data which was gathered and analyzed through questionnaires and test, the researchers conducted an interview with four secondary school English language teachers, who participated in filling the questionnaires and taking the proficiency test, concerning their self-report reading skills proficiency. The researchers also believed that those key informants were interested in giving their opinions and sharing experiences concerning the issue.

#### **Levels of Reading Skills Perceived Proficiency**

One of the questions was about their perceptions of level of reading skills proficiency. Teachers said that they were good at reading, and they replied that they could read and understand different texts. However, most of the interviewee replied that they were not very familiar with reading texts apart from academic contexts. When they read different texts in which there were unfamiliar and with difficult words, they tried to guess the meanings based on the context where the words or expressions appear. In some cases, they claimed that they use dictionaries for some unfamiliar and strange vocabularies to understand the idea of a text.

One of the respondents said:

\*I think I am good at reading. I can read different texts and can easily understand them. In my opinion, though there are some reading texts which are difficult to understand because they are jargons and when their ideas are in complex scientific issues, I may not understand them. However, most of the time, I can read and understand many reading materials even when there are some vocabularies which are not familiar for me. (Interviewee)

As it was mentioned, most of the teachers read academic texts and they sometimes use supplementary materials in order to support their teaching with additional materials. They also believed that the texts they usually read and could easily understand were academic books and some supplementary materials. In this case, they were not challenged in understanding and getting the main idea of the texts.

I usually read academic texts. When I think of the materials, I read beyond the academic area, I don't think they are that much considered. As a teacher, I am supposed to read my teaching materials like the text book, the teacher guide and in addition to them, I sometimes read supplementary materials in order to make myself ready for teaching. If you ask me my understanding level, I don't think I have a problem of understanding academic materials. (Interviewee).

#### **The Proficiency Test**

The other question was about the reading skill proficiency test they had taken in the time of quantitative data collection. The researchers asked them how they got the test and their feelings towards the proficiency test. They found the test interesting and appropriate for evaluating the current reading proficiency levels of secondary school teachers. They also replied that the reading passages and the contents of the questions were related to the sub-skills of reading. One of the interviewee expressed his perceptions by saying:

\*That was very interesting test though I am not sure how much I get. Even the structures and the kind of questions available in the test are very interesting and appropriate for us.

I find it interesting and it is appealing even I was reading it with some interest. I really like the text. When I come to the questions, the questions are common that we ask our students in text books or in final exams, so this is how I see it. (Interviewee).

The last question was about their perceptions concerning their self-report proficiency levels of their reading skills and their actual reading proficiencies based on the test they had taken. They believed that what they thought about their proficiency and their performance in the test was the same. Their perception was that what they believed they have about their reading proficiency and what they actually took in the test were the same.

We completed a questionnaire about our perceived reading proficiency levels. I found all the sentences very appropriate and I was not challenged to rate myself based on the points. When I come to the reading proficiency test, as I told you earlier, it was interesting and found it appropriate. So I think my personal self-report reading proficiency and the test score match. That is what I believe. (Interviewee).

However, the researcher found in the quantitative phase of the results and findings that though their perceived reading proficiency and their actual reading proficiency were positively correlate, their relationship was not significant.

## DISCUSSIONS

In this section, the discussions of the findings were presented in relation to the research questions as a framework. The findings were discussed using the data collected through questionnaires, proficiency test and an interview. Then, the research findings of this study were presented her under by comparing them with the findings of the previous studies.

Research Question 1: What are secondary school English language teachers' perceived proficiency levels of reading skills?

Based on the descriptive statistics of secondary school teachers' perceived reading proficiency levels was analyzed and found as a mean score 4.78. According to the data gathered and analyzed, the findings indicated that most teachers read texts slowly and carefully so as to get the details of the text. Besides, most of the teachers had the problem of understanding texts beyond the text books as they reported they should use dictionaries to understand novels and other technical materials.

The overall results revealed that secondary school English language teachers in Amhara Region, North Shoa Zone had high levels of perceptions concerning their levels of reading skill proficiency. This findings of this study was consistent with other researchers like Chacon (2002), Ghasemboland and Hashim (2013).and Zhang (2019). The findings of the research conducted by Chacon (2002) showed that reading had the higher mean than the remaining skills of English language. The research conducted by Ghasemboland and Hashim (2013) also revealed that the mean score of reading was found 5.03, and this showed that the variety of scores is lower and most of the teachers are relatively at the high level of their reading skill.

According to Lee's (2009) study, teachers tended to rank their present receptive skill proficiency levels that is, reading and listening higher than their productive skill proficiency levels—that is, speaking and writing. Using a different tool, Park (2006) also discovered that the Korean secondary English teachers gave their productive skills a lower rating than their receptive abilities. Lee (2009) stated that “unlike with Listening and Speaking, more than 10% of the respondents rated their proficiency Level 5 or higher, indicating that they possessed a highly advanced level of proficiency in reading” (p. 169). In another study by Nugroho (2018), it was found that the teachers did not consider themselves to have low proficiency levels in all the skills of English including reading. In this regard, the findings of the present study about teachers' perceived reading skills proficiency is very similar to what has been found in Lee (2009) study but the results is inconsistent with Nugroho (2018).

The results of the qualitative data also revealed that English language teachers had high perceptions concerning their level of reading skill proficiency. Hence, the result of the quantitative data and the qualitative data were found the consistent.

Research Question 2: What are the actual reading proficiency levels of secondary school English language teachers'?

Based on the descriptive statistics concerning secondary school English language teachers' reading skill proficiency, the mean score was 64.81. This result revealed that North Shoa Zone secondary school English language teachers have a medium proficiency level of reading skill based on the Ministry of Education proficiency test score result analysis report (2011). In the report, it was shown that scores below 50 were low, scores between 51 and 69 was considered medium proficiency level and scores above 70 was considered as high proficiency level. In this study, as it was

seen, the mean score was between 51 and 69; therefore, it would be possible to conclude that they had a medium level of reading skills proficiency. This result was consistent with the findings of the Ministry of Education competency test which was given in 2011.

Research Question 3: Is there match or mismatch between the teachers' perceived and actual reading proficiency levels of secondary school English language teachers?

Based on the correlation coefficient analysis, the relationship between secondary school English language teachers' perceived reading skill proficiency and their actual reading skill proficiency was computed and analyzed. The findings of the Pearson correlation coefficient revealed that there was a positive correlation ( $r=.329$ ). Though the result showed a positive correlation, their relationship was not significant and the level of relationship based on the finding was moderate.

As far as the literature review of the researchers was concerned, there was no research which studied the relationship between teachers' perceived reading skill proficiency with their actual reading proficiency. However, in different studies self-report proficiency level was analyzed in relation with self-efficacy and other variables.

## CONCLUSION

The results and the major findings of the study concerning North Shoa Zone secondary school English language teachers' perceived and actual reading skill. Based on the analysis of the descriptive statistics, it was concluded that secondary school English language teachers had high level of perceptions concerning their level of reading skill proficiency. On the other hand, the results of the descriptive statistics revealed that the actual reading skill proficiency of the teachers was not as they considered they could. That means based on the finding their level of reading skill proficiency was medium. This implied that teachers need to get trainings that could help them develop their actual reading skills proficiency.

Concerning the correlations between teachers' perceived and their actual reading skill proficiency, the result showed that there was a positive relationship with the correlation ( $r=.329$ ) but not significant. This indicated that there was a moderate relationship between perceived and actual reading skill proficiency of secondary school English language teachers. Hence, secondary school English language teachers need supplementary trainings that could enhance them develop their reading skills. Besides, teachers should make themselves familiar with reading materials apart from the text book they are using in the classroom.

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended policy makers and other researchers the following points:

- \*We recommended that policy makers should give attention for the improvement of teachers reading skills proficiency levels.

- \*Other researchers could also replicate the study by using longitudinal design in secondary school English language teachers.

- \*In addition to this, other researchers could also conduct study in relation to teachers', who teach in different school levels apart from secondary school, perceived and actual reading skills proficiency levels and they could also conduct study even in relation to secondary school teachers in different contexts.

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