

**TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON TESTING READING
COMPREHENSION AT SECONDARY LEVEL**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education
In Partial fulfilment for the Master of Education in English**

**Submitted by
Anil Bahadur Ghimire**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kritipur, Kathmandu, Nepal**

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RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

This is to certify that **Mr. Anil Bahadur Ghimire** has prepared this thesis entitled **Teachers' Perception on Testing Reading Comprehension at Secondary Level** under my guidance and supervision.

I recommend this thesis for acceptance.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, this thesis is original, and no part of it was submitted earlier for the candidature of research degree to any university.

Date: 2072/12/26

Anil Bahadur Ghimire

DEDICATION

Dedicated

To

*My parents **Mr. Gopal Bahadur Ghimere** and **Mrs. Satyabati Ghimire** who
spent their life and money for my study.*

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Anil Bahadur Ghimire

ABSTRACT

The present study entitled **“Teachers' Perception on Testing Reading Comprehension at Secondary Level”** is an attempt to identify the test items used in testing reading comprehension. I used a survey design to complete the research work. Forty English teachers teaching at secondary level in Sindhuli district were selected as informants through purposive non – random sampling procedure. The main tools for data collection were the questionnaire. The raw data obtained from them were analyzed and interpreted descriptively as well as using simple statistical tools. It was found that majority of teachers used objective questions to test a reading comprehension. They held tests regular in the classroom. Moreover, all the students participated in the tests. Furthermore, students perceived testing reading and writing equally.

The present study consists of five chapters. The first chapter deals with general background, statement of the problem, rational of the study, objectives of the study research questions, significance, delimitations and operational definitions of the key terms. Chapter two deals with the review of the literature and implications and conceptual framework. Similarly, chapter three include design of the study, population and sample, sampling procedure, data collection tools and procedure and data analysis procedure. Chapter four consists of analysis and interpretation of the data and summary of the finding. Finally, Chapter five deals with conclusions and recommendations. This chapter is followed by references and appendices used for the study.

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HAPTER-ONE

INTRODUCTION

The present study on entitled ‘Test Items in Testing Reading Compression at Secondary Level’ consists of general background, statement of problem, objectives, significance of the study.

1.1 General Background

Language is the most commonly used means of communication through which we can exchange our ideas, feelings, desires and expressions with one another. To be specific, language is a species specific to human beings. In other words, it is language that makes human beings unique in the world. It is extremely difficult and highly versatile code which cannot be used by other creatures. Language is ‘an arbitrary system of vocal symbols by means of which human beings, as members of social group and participants in a culture interact and communicate’ (Encyclopedia Britannica; vol.13, 696).

Language is the social phenomenon which is affected by culture, society, ethnicity and geographical boundaries.

Richards et al. (1999) define language as ‘A system of communication which consists of structured arrangement of sounds or their written representation into larger units’ (p.96).

Thus, we can say that language is a system of human communication which consists of the structured arrangement of sounds into morphemes, words, sentences and utterances. No one can imagine the existence of human civilization without language.

There are unlimited languages available in the world. Among them, English is the most commonly used language spoken by one in every seven people. It is rich in its literature, vocabulary and grammar. So, it has gained the status of international standard to maintain communication among different linguistic communities. English language is used as a lingua franca. Almost all areas in the world such as politics, technology, science and medicine are highly dominated by English language. It has significant impression on Nepali education, too. As English is taught as compulsory subject from class one to bachelor level, most of the books are prescribed in English medium.

Language consists of four skills i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. They all have their own features and importance. However, in this study I will only focus on the reading skill and the test item used to test it. Reading is a receptive skill which primarily involves receiving message or information from the written text.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The history of evaluation is as old as the history of human existence. From the very beginning of human development, people used to be evaluated by different ways. It is obvious that, evaluation in the past used to be very informal and random. But nowadays, the concept and goal are the same whereas the method and techniques are quite difficult. It is due to the modern technology & infrastructure. Evaluation, the very term, is more popular in academy area though, it is necessary in every human affair. During teaching and learning not only, delivery of subject matter is done but also students are evaluated.

Especially, in language classes students are evaluated by using different testing items. Basically, four skills of language are tested in such classes. Different test items can be used to test different language skills because they are all important. However, teachers do not take the reading skill as important as the other three

skills. That's why, it should be tested. Regarding the use of test items teachers have their own views. Some prefer one type of test item and others prefer others. There are not any absolute ways and items which we can use exclusively to test students' reading comprehension. Thus, it is always an issue that what sort of testing items are better and what types of items are being used by the teacher. Therefore, my concern here is to focus on the test items the teachers use to test their students' reading comprehension.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study were as follows:

- To identify activities practiced in testing reading comprehension.
- To suggest some pedagogical implications.

1.4 Research Questions

The present research is supposed to address the following question:

- How do the teachers students' reading comprehension?
- What are the strategy that the teachers follow while testing students' reading comprehension?
- What are the problems that teachers face while testing reading comprehension?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study on "Teachers' perception on testing reading compression at secondary level" is supposed to be fruitful to the language teachers, test designers, policy makers, students and the examiners. More specifically, the test designers and examiners will fairly be benefitted by this study. They will develop a proper insight into designing test appropriate to the level and need of the students. Similarly, the test book writers and teachers will also get benefit

from this study. They can design teaching materials and reading test that basically cater the needs of the students. Moreover, the person who is interested in the field of research also gets ideas to design tools and research methodology

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

Since it is a small scale study, the delimitations of the study were as follow-

- The area of the study was confined to Sindhuli district only.
- Thirty secondary level English teachers were used as informants for the collection of primary data.
- The sample size of the study was limited to thirty teachers.
- The tools and techniques of data collection included a set of questionnaires.
- The study was limited to reading skills only

1.7 Operational Definition of the Key Terms

Some related terms have been defined as follows:

Comprehension: Ability to understand a text.

Proficiency: Ability of someone to do some task.

Contemporary: matters of current affairs.

Critical: things which are in danger.

CHAPTER-TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Review of the Related Theoretical Literature

Here, I have made an attempt to explore on the theoretical areas of my research work. Some relevant theories that are contributory to my research work are discussed below:

2.1.1 Language Testing

In testing literature, the terms testing and examination are often used synonymously though they are not exactly the same in terms of their meanings. They are different from the point of view of the way their test items are selected and the purpose behind them. However, I have used the terms interchangeably in this study.

Testing is the most important part of teaching and learning process because it is the process by which all elements of teaching and learning are affected. It is the integral part of educational activities. Thus, testing in language teaching, refers to the process of majoring the effectiveness of teaching and students' progress. Without testing, education system is like a boat without radar. Existence of testing can be observed in every field of teaching and learning process of language education. To quote Heaton (1998,p. 5) "Testing and teaching are so closely interrelated that it is virtually impossible to work in either field without being constantly concerned with other."

In a Layman's term, testing refers to the act of examining one's ability. In other words, testing is one of the ways in which information about people's language ability can be gathered, i.e. it is one form of assessment. A language test samples a tester's language behavior and, on the other hand, infers general

ability in language. Therefore, a test is a device of measuring one's quality, one's ability and one's level of knowledge. Similarly, Harmer (2007) writes:

Teachers and other educational professionals spend a lot of time testing, evaluating and assessing their students. Sometimes this is to measure the ability of the students to see if they can enter a course or institution. Sometimes it is because students themselves want a qualification. Sometimes this assessment is formal and public and sometimes it is informal and takes place in day to day lessons. (p. 379)

The aim of testing language is to provide guidelines for measuring the linguistic ability of someone which will be practical in use and give helpful information to both teachers and students about their success and failure. Undoubtedly saying, the starting point of test is always teaching and learning in which the teachers' aim is to equip his or her learners with a particular language skill that they will be needed. Davies (1968, 16) takes the test as "the process of scrutinizing how far learner has learned what the teacher wishes them to learn". Similarly, (Carroll; 1968,p 46) defines testing as "A procedure designed to elucidate certain behavior from which one can make inference about the characteristics of an individual". In the same way, (Douglas; 2010, p 2) defines language test as "An instrument for measuring language ability" His definition limits the test within standardized condition but it is not the case always. Testing can be done in the informal setting as well.

2.1.2 The Relationship between Teaching and Testing

Test is defined as the tools of assessment and evaluation in language teaching and learning. Generally, a test refers to the device to evaluate the learners. Similarly, teaching build up their capacity, boost up knowledge and increase the existing situation of an ability to do the task. Davies (1968, p 5) says "The good test is an obedient servant since it follows and apes the teaching". However,

Hughes (2003, p. 2) opposes this view and argues that the proper relationship between teaching and testing is surely that of partnership. To be specific, language teaching and testing are two sides of a single coin. Language testing provides the teachers and students with their level of proficiency in respective skill and aspect. It is language that gives proper information to the concerned people about their success or failure. If language testing is not conducted in a proper way, it does not reveal the actual result of language teaching.

In addition, it is widely accepted that testing offers useful input to the teachers to be aware of the effects of teaching, and also some insights on whether he should continue the way he teaches or change it in order to make his teaching more effective. According to Douglas; (2010, p 2) language testers in their societal roles shall strive to improve the quality of language testing , assessment and teaching services, promote the just allocation of those services and contribute the education of the society regarding language and language proficiency. So, test could be used to display the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and helps the teachers to improve it. They can demonstrate what should be paid more attention to, should be worked on and practiced. What is important to note, therefore, is that how a teacher makes a query in the classroom or evaluates academic achievement of the students depends largely on his understanding of the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of language testing. Thus, it can be argued that teaching and testing are two sides of a coin and one will be meaningless in absence of other in a sense that teaching without testing does not guarantee learning on the part of learners. That is to say, the better understanding of testing techniques no doubt will lead the teachers to perform effectively in the classroom. Thus, teaching and testing are regarded as an integral part of education.

2.1.3 Testing Reading

Reading receives especial focus in much second or foreign language teaching situations, there are many reasons for this. Reading test provides learners with grammatical, lexical as well as discourse resources that may help them to process and produce the well- formed L2 utterances and texts. Though reading is regarded as receptive skill, it is highly active, creative, interactive, and critical in the sense that it engages people in thinking, responding, understanding, following, doing and so on. The readers as well as the listeners are actively engaged in the inner processing of the information that they read or listen. Harmer (2007, p. 283) writes: It is not enough to tell students to read a lot. We need to offer them a program which includes appropriate materials, guidance, task and facilities such as permanent or portable libraries of books.

From the above mentioned statements, what can be understood is that reading should be facilitated by the appropriate materials, guidance and so on. The testing of reading ability seems deceptively straightforward when it is compared to, say, the testing of reading ability. You take a passage, ask some questions about it, and there you are. But while it is true that you can very quickly construct a reading test, it may not be a very good test, it may not measure what you want to measure (Hughes; 2010).

Reading is such a critical process which should be dominated by the eyes and brain at the same time. Critical in the sense that discourse is processed or text is read not only literally but also critically. Teaching reading is highly affected by the contemporary ideologies, power and socio-cultural context.

Thus reading can be viewed as the critical process that requires the readers to look at the text critically with the help of various factors such as context, ideologies, power, education, business, politics, etc. Reading often operates in making the sense of the text. Though we sometime read for pronunciation or

vocalization purpose, we mostly read for comprehension of the text. The comprehension may be concerned with extracting specific information, or getting the general picture or gist of the text. So, reading should not be limited only to receiving literal meaning of the text. It should be practiced along with an exploration of its contextual and intended meaning.

2.1.4 Testing Reading Comprehension

There are four kinds of reading comprehension viz. literal, referential, critical and appreciative comprehension (Richards et al;1999). Although reading comprehension takes place at several levels, mastery at anyone level is not a prerequisite to comprehension at another level. EFL/ ESL teachers need to keep in mind that the four levels are not distinct. Dividing comprehension into four different levels is only intended as a guide for teachers when preparing reading tests. They need to be aware that there is more to reading than just the basic skills of reading and recalling information.

Reading comprehension tests are the common types of published tests that is available. The most common reading comprehension tests involve asking a child to read a passage of text that is leveled appropriately for child, and then asking some explicit, detail question about the content of the text. However, there are some variation on reading comprehension tests. For example, instead of asking explicit questions about facts directly presented in the text, a child could be asked to answer inferential question about information which was implied by the text, or the child's comprehension might be tested by his or her ability to retell the story in the child's own words or to summarize the main idea or the moral of the study.

Reading comprehension is an active and complex process that involves understanding written text, developing and interpreting meaning, and using meaning as appropriate to the type of text, purpose and situation. To construct

meaning, readers must decode words fluently, understand vocabulary, make inference, and relate the idea in the text to their prior knowledge and experiences, these skills vary with age, experience, instruction, context and motivation. So, both processes and the products of reading comprehension are constructive, multidimensional, developmental, and variable. Thus, reading comprehension is difficult to define and measure neatly.

2.1.5 Test Items

Test items generally refer to the components that are used to test the learners' language skills. There is no uniformity among the scholars about the test items. In other words, various scholars have suggested various test items to be adopted to test reading skill. They comprise of fairly subjective to objective items such as multiple choice to short answer items. Having considered the views of different people engaged in the field of language testing, the following are the major test items:

2.1.5.1 Multiple Choice Items

These are the choice items widely used by teachers in their teaching practice and moreover they are liked by students. Obviously, multiple choice items are objective type and adopted to test vocabulary, grammar as well as to test listening or reading skill. The students are given a number of sentences with a right variant and a set of distracters which are normally introduced to deceive the students.

2.1.5.2 Short Answer Items

Weir (1990) suggests that if the questions are well formulated, there is high chance that that the students will supply short, well formulated answers. Therefore variety of questions could be included in the test to cover a broader field of knowledge and certainly it will require a great work for the teacher. Short answer test will contribute to the students' result for they will be able to

support their answers and clarify why they responded in that way not the other. It could be explained that the students will have an opportunity to prove their answer and support them if necessary.

2.1.5.3 The Cloze Test and Gap Filling Test Items

The term cloze coined by (Taylor,p 1953) from the word closure means the individual ability to complete a model. (Alderson;1996,p 224) assumes that there are two close test techniques: pseudo-random and rational cloze technique. In the pseudo-random tests, the test designer deletes words at definite rate, for example, every seventh word should be deleted occasionally with the initial letter of the deleted word left as a prompt.

Gap filling test is more material based because it checks students' knowledge of a particular topic. One of the advantages of it is that the learners will know exactly what they should insert. Moreover the relatively deleted items allow focusing exactly on them and do not confuse the students. This technique limits us to check only certain language skills, i.e. a vocabulary on different topics.

2.1.5.4 True False Items

This test format is familiar to all the teachers and students. It intends to check the students' comprehension of text. The students will be offered a set of statements, some of which are true and some are false. According to Weir (ibid), the advantage of such test is found in its applicability and suitability. Moreover, it is easy to answer for students and check for teachers.

2.1.5.5 C- Test

It is an alternative to cloze test introduced by German School in 1980s. Weir (ibid) mentions that in this type of test, every deleted word is partially preserved. Thus the students possessing fairly good knowledge background

knowledge of the topic can easily complete the test. One of the advantages of such a test is that there is a great possibility to include more tested items in the test. Similarly, this test is economical and can be very useful for the students' guessing of the missing part.

2.1.5.6 Rearrangement Tests

Here some of the statements related to the text are provided in a jumbled order. The students are required to read the text intensively and put the jumbled statements in a logical order. The advantage of this test is that the students go through the text very intensively and try their best to locate the required information.

2.1.6 English Teaching Situation in Nepal

Today out of the total approximately 31 thousands primary to higher secondary schools (that is, grade 1-12) almost half the numbers are English mediums ones. In such schools, all subjects except the national language Nepali are taught in English whereas, in government- aided public schools, all subjects except English are taught in the national language Nepali. However, both these streams meet finally at the same point; compete for the same end when students sit for school leaving certificate examination at the end of the tenth grade or higher secondary board at the end of twelfth grade. Altogether about 5 hundred thousand students appear in each of these national examinations every year, and half of those go to the university level examinations. And alarming number of students from the Nepali medium schools fail because they cannot secure pass mark in English (the failure rate of the students in English at school level is 55%, at the university level it is about (65%). This result is huge wastage in resources. This is the situation of the total education system from the primary to university level in Nepal (Bhattarai; 2006,p 10)

Despite this, people have always given higher importance to the teaching and learning of English. The reason behind this is that on the one hand it is helping them to grow and grab different opportunities available within and beyond the borders, it stands synonymously with quality of education and knowledge about wider world, it offers attractive career for those who can afford it whereas for those who remain behind, the world is narrow, opportunities limited.

The bitter truth Nepal has experienced regarding the use of English is that even today large mass of population are living a destitute life in extreme poverty, ignorance and marginal condition can not send their children to school.

2.2 Review of Related Empirical Literature

A number of researches have been carried out on reading comprehension at different times. I will review some of the researches related to my study as follows:

Basnet (2002) carried out a survey research on “A Study of the Reading Text and Exercise of Grade Nine in English Textbook”. The major objective of his study was to find out to what extent the objectives set in the curriculum for developing reading skill are fulfilled by the English textbook of grade nine. The sample size of his study consisted of 180 students of ten secondary schools of Kathmandu district selected randomly. Thirty English teachers and ten subject experts were also included in the study. Tools for data collection were two sets of questionnaire to the teachers and the experts and a semi-structured interview which was administered to the students in the group. The obtained data were tabulated and analyzed using simple statistical tools of percentage. The findings of the study were that there is good connection between the text and the exercises were related to different sub-skills of reading like scanning, skimming,. etc. Rubrics are clear and easy to understand.

Shah (2003) carried out an experimental research on “Effectiveness of Objective and Subjective types of Tests for Grade Ten.” The objective of the study was to find out and compare the effectiveness of subjective and objective tests. The population of the study was 150 students of grade ten from five different public schools of Rautahat district. Questionnaire was the tool for data collection which included twenty five subjective and fifty objective questions set from three seen and two unseen passages. The major finding of the study were summarized as, the performance of the students was better in objective test than in subjective test, the total difference of the students performance in the subjective test and objective test was that of 16.42%, the performance of the

students in both the tests was better in seen passages than in unseen passages, etc.

Basnet (2007) carried out a survey research entitled “Testing Reading Comprehension: A Place of Subjective and Objective Tests.” The objective of the study were to find out the place of subjective and objective tests in testing reading comprehension and to compare between the performance of reading comprehension of seen and unseen reading tests of students of public and private schools in terms of subjective and objectives tests. The major tools of data collations were the test items. He used the stratified random sampling procedures and sampled fifteen students from each eight schools i.e. four public and four private secondary schools on the basis of fishbowl drawing for the application of research tool in order to elicit the primary data for the study. The finding of the study have shown that the average performance of the students in objective tests in both types of reading tests viz. seen as well as unseen test was better than that of subjective test as a whole. Similarly, the students of private school have shown better performance in both tests, in both kinds of reading texts than the performance of public school.

Gautam (2009) carried out a survey research on “Activities used by Teachers while Teaching Reading.” The objectives were to find out the activities used by teachers while teaching reading skill and to identify the reactions of the students towards the activities used by the teachers while teaching reading skills. He used both primary and secondary sources for data collection. The tools for data collection were an observation check list and opionnaire. The total sample population of the study was five teachers and fifty students of PCL campuses and he sampled the population purposively. He found that guessing the topic and providing reason for reading are good pre-reading activities. Fill in the blanks, true/false statements and comprehension questions are good while reading activities and summarizing the text is good post-reading activities.

Similarly, he also identified that presenting unfamiliar vocabularies and writing sign-post questions are tolerable pre-reading activities, scanning, skimming and gig-saw reading are tolerable while reading activities and role, discussion and debate are tolerable post-reading activities.

Bhandari (2010) carried out a survey research study on Reading comprehension ability of SLC graduates. The objective of the study were to find out reading comprehension ability of distinction holders SLC graduates from within and outside Kathmandu valley, and to compare the reading compression abilities on gender basis .He used observation, interview and questionnaires as data collection tolls. Samples of eighty students of grade eleven from four private colleges of the valley were sampled using judgmental non random sample procedure. It was found that the students who were from outside valley were found poor on their performance in extensive reading, scanning, reading aloud, and recognizing writers' style and strategies, anticipating the main idea, meaning in interpretation and an overall evaluation.

The studies reviewed so far have researched into the reading comprehension skills through text comprehension tests and have analyzed data descriptively. This study is different from the studies carried earlier because it is concerned with finding out the test items adopted for testing reading comprehension.

2.3 Implications of the Review of the study

Related literature is reviewed for various purpose such as to bring clarity; focus on the research problem, improve methodology and contextualization the finding. Regarding the implication of the related literature, Kumar(2009, p.30) states the followings:

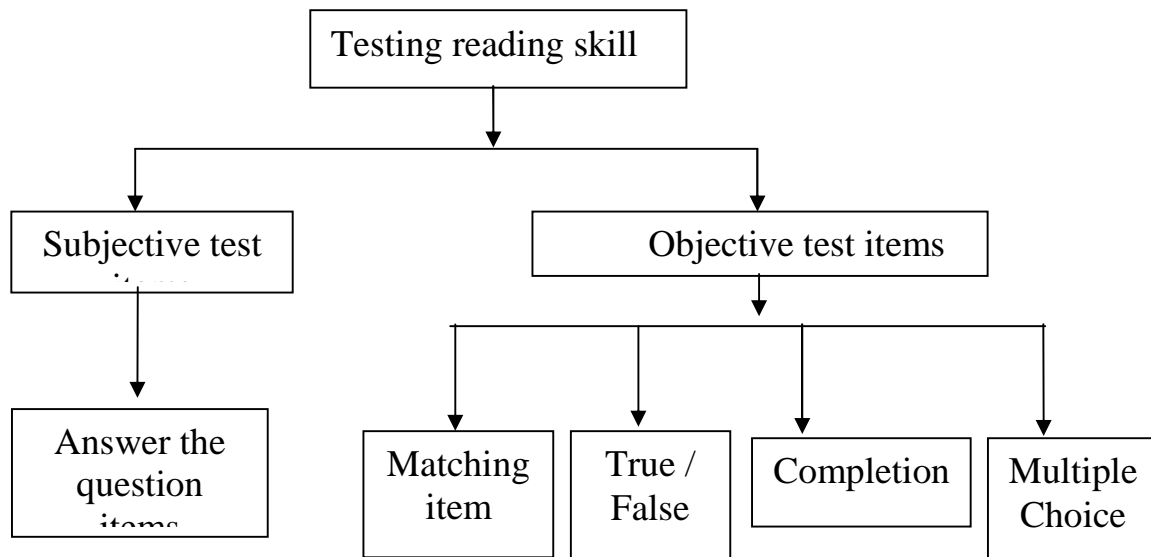
- It provides a theoretical background to your study.
- It helps you to refine your research methodology.

- Through the literature review you are able to show your findings have contributed to the existing body of knowledge in your profession.
- It enables you to contextualize your findings.

As a researcher, I also consulted many available literature which helped me in many ways such as, provided theoretical background to my study, refined research methodology and helped to derive findings of the study. Specially, the research carried out by Basnet (2007) helped me to design the research tools and research design. Similarly, Bhandari's (2010) research work widen the horizon of my knowledge on theoretical background. Thus, all the research works directly or indirectly helped to shape this research work.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

I had followed the following conceptual framework to complete this research work.



CHAPTER-THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following methodologies were adopted:

3.1 Research Design

This study is based on survey design. Survey is a research design that is widely used in social and educational researchers. Primarily it is carried out in the large numbers of population to find out an attitude, belief or behavior of particular group of people or an individual. It is mostly useful to generalize the finding in a large number of populations. In this research data are gathered from relatively large numbers of population using certain sampling procedure where, the whole population for data collection is not feasible it is more realistic in nature.

Similarly, it deals with clearly defined problems and objectives. According to Cohan and Manion, (1985, as cited in Nunan 1992, p. 140) “survey in scope from large scale government investigations through to small – scale studies carried out by a single researcher.” They further state that, “The conditions, attitudes and/e purpose of survey is generally to obtain a snap not of conditions, attitudes and / or events at a single point in time.” In this sense survey research is different from other types of researches. There is a single time data collection in survey research. In case of educational survey research, Cohan et al. (2010, p. 207) state it often makes use of test results, self completion questionnaire and attitude scales. Surveys are useful to gathered factual information both present and past. In survey research, data are gathered from relatively large numbers of populations using certain sampling procedure where, the whole population for data populations is not feasible. It is more realistic in nature. Similarly, it deals with clearly define problems and objectives. Some of the characteristics of survey research studies by Cohan et al. (2010, p. 206) are as follows:

-) Represents a wide target population
-) Generates numerical data
-) Gathers standardized information.

So, I have conducted a survey research to find out the practice test items used to test reading skills in which I followed the same procedure that is preferred by survey research.

3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population of the study was the secondary level English teachers of Sindhuli district. From the total, forty teachers were selected sample. The sample was selected through purposive non – random sampling procedure from twenty different schools, two English teachers from each schools.

3.3 Area / Field of Study

The area of the study was concerned with Sindhuli district. It was concerned with the test items adopted to test reading comprehension.

3.4 Data Collection tools

The main tool of data collection consisted of a set of questionnaires consisting of both close- ended and open-ended questions to be administered to the English language teachers to elicit responses from them.

3.5 Process of Data Collection

In order to collect the data, I visited twenty secondary schools of Sindhuli district and established rapport with the principals. I then clarified the purpose of the study to them. After requesting them for their cooperation and getting approval, I visited the English language teachers and told them the purpose of the study and set the time for data collection. Then the questionnaires were handed to the informants pleading them to complete it within a week. At last, collected them and thanked the teachers for providing information to collect the research.

3.6 Data analysis and Interpretation Procedure

The systematically collected data were transcribed, coded, presented, analyzed and interpreted descriptively as well as analytically using appropriate statistical tools like tables, charts and graphs.

CHAPTER-FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULT

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

After collecting the data from the teachers of Sindhuli district, I came to the data analysis in interpretation session. The main objective of this study was to examine the application of test items in testing reading comprehension at secondary level. The data collected from the informants were based on the set of questionnaires prepared for the secondary level English teachers from Sindhuli district. Open ended and closed ended questions were provided to the sampled teachers in order to collect the practice of application of test items to test reading comprehension. Responses obtained by the informants are have been presented, analyzed and interpreted under two sub – headings:

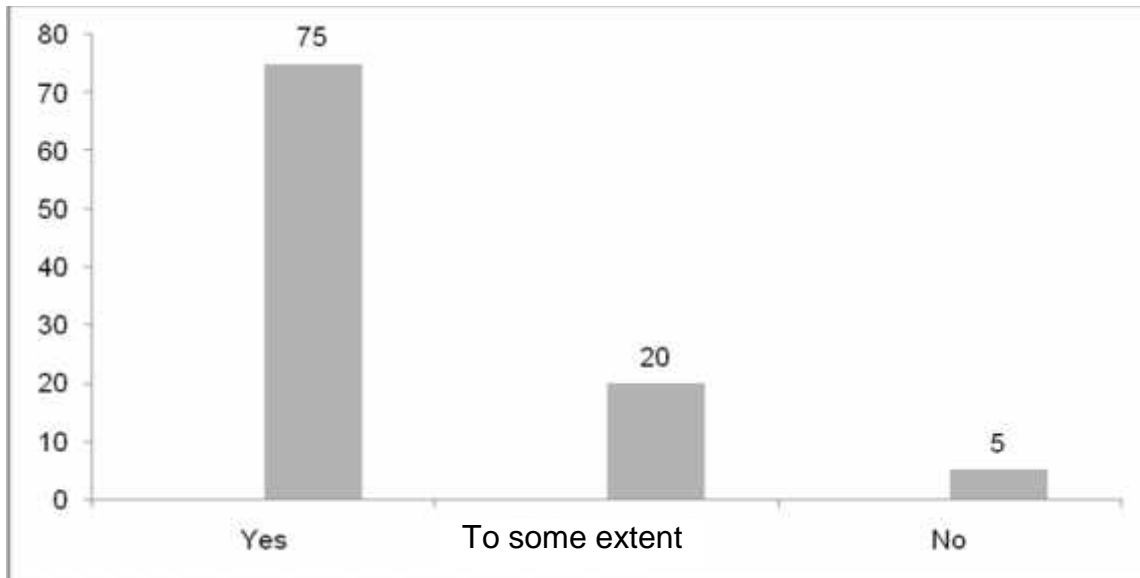
4.2.1 Analysis of Close-ended Questions

Here, the close- ended questions have been analyzed to find out the practice of the test items in testing reading.

A. Comparing testing reading with testing writing

Generally, the teachers take testing reading less seriously in comparison to that of writing. In this scenario to find out how they perceive testing reading comprehension, they were asked to respond to the question “Can we compare testing reading with testing writing?” The responses obtained are presented below:

Figure 4.1
Comparing testing reading with testing writing



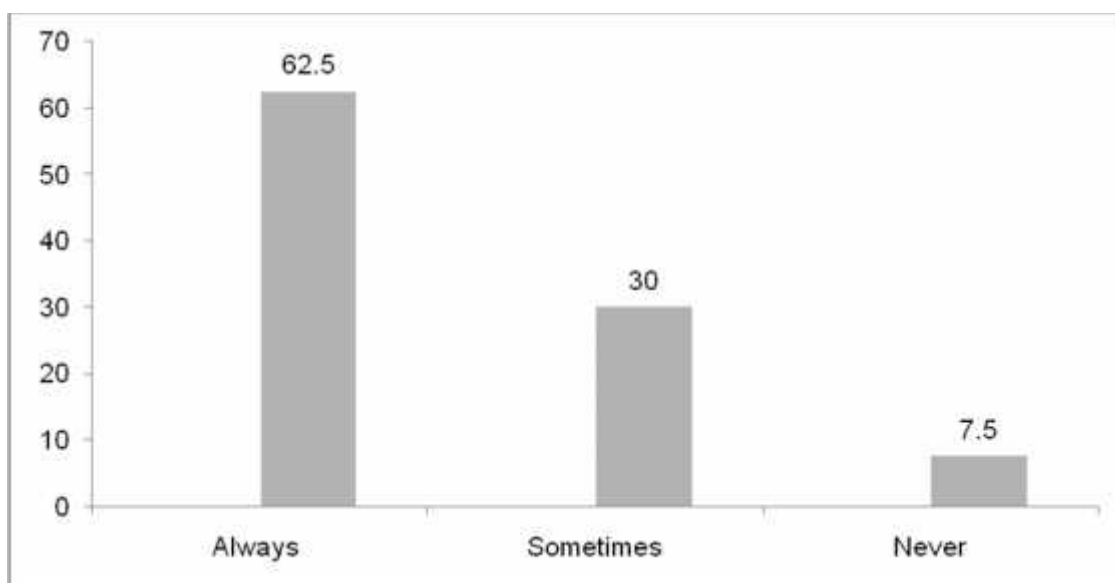
The above figure shows that 75% of the respondents responded that the testing of reading was the same as the testing of writing. Similarly, 8 respondents (20%) responded these two phenomena were similar to some extent. However, 2 respondent (5%) responded that these two were different from each other.

Thus, we can conclude that most of the secondary level English teachers took testing reading and writing in the same way.

B. Applying Subjective tests

To find out what types of test items are used in testing reading comprehension, the respondents were asked to respond the question “Do you apply subjective test in testing reading comprehension?” The responses obtained from them are presented in fig. 4.2:

Figure 4.2
Applying Subjective tests



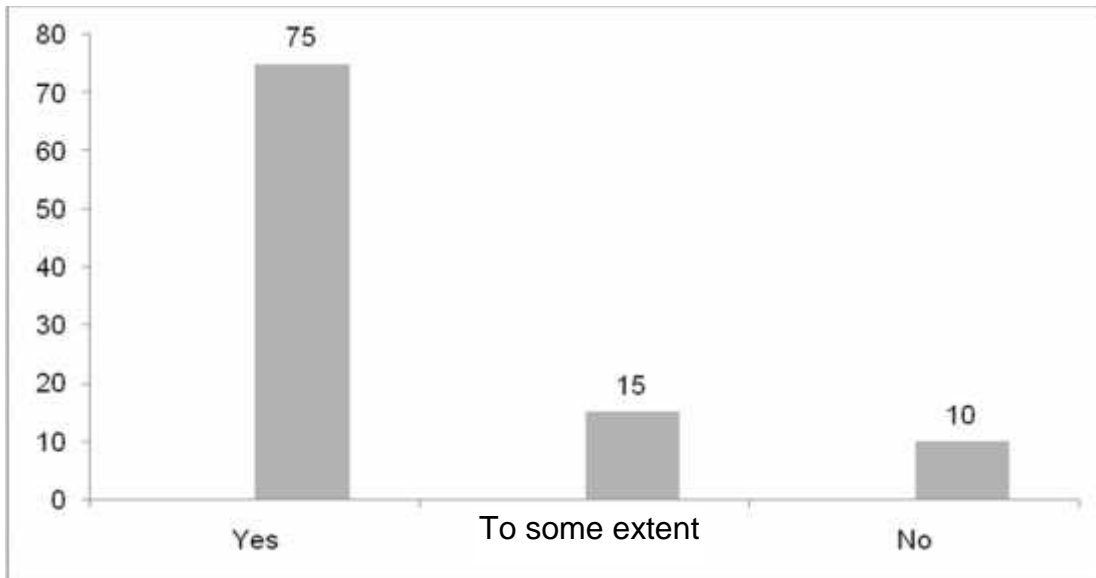
The above figure shows that 40 teachers (i.e.62.5%) respondents (25) responded that they always used subjective tests to test reading comprehension. Similarly, 30% respondents (12) responded that they sometimes use those test items. However, 7.5% of the respondents answered that they never used these test items in testing reading comprehension.

Here, we can conclude that teachers used subjective test items in testing reading comprehension.

C. Suitability of objective questions

To find out what types of test items are more suitable to test reading comprehension the respondents were asked to respond to the question “Do you find objective questions more suitable to test reading comprehension?” The responses obtained from them are given below:-

Figure 4.3
Suitability of objective questions



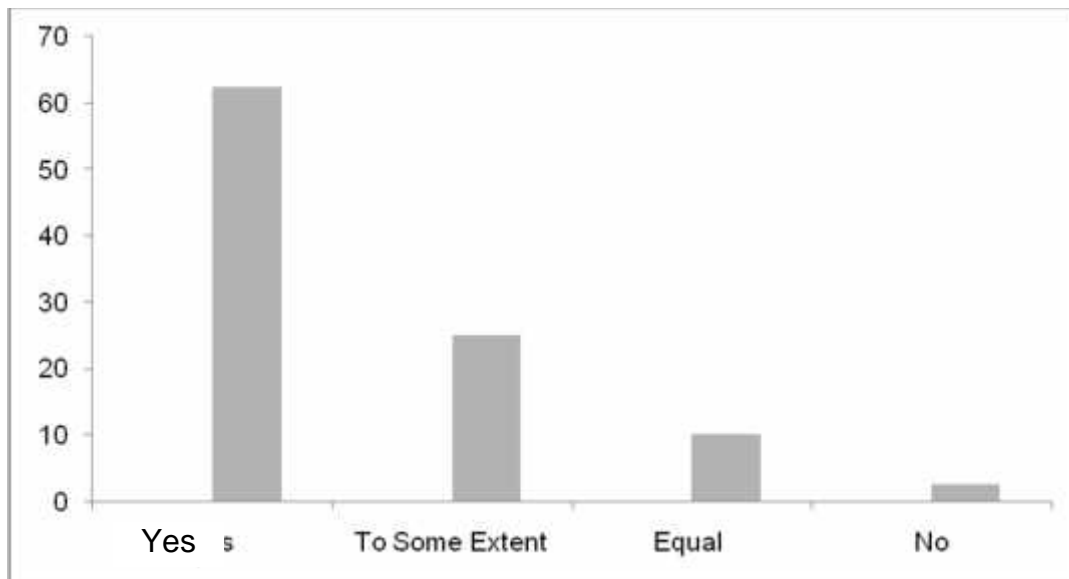
The above figure shows that 30 respondents out of 40 i.e. (75%) responded that they found objective questions more suitable in comparison to subjective questions to test reading comprehension. Similarly, 8 respondents (20%) responded that they to some extent found objective questions more suitable in comparison to subjective questions. However, 2 respondents (10%) answered that they didn't find it more suitable to test reading comprehensions.

From the above discussion we can conclude that objective test items are more suitable to test reading comprehension.

D. Performing well in close – ended items

To find out whether students perform well in close ended or and open ended items, the respondents were asked to respond to the question 'Do students perform well in closed ended test items in comparison to open ended?' The responses obtained from them are given below:

Figure 4.4
Performing well in close – ended items



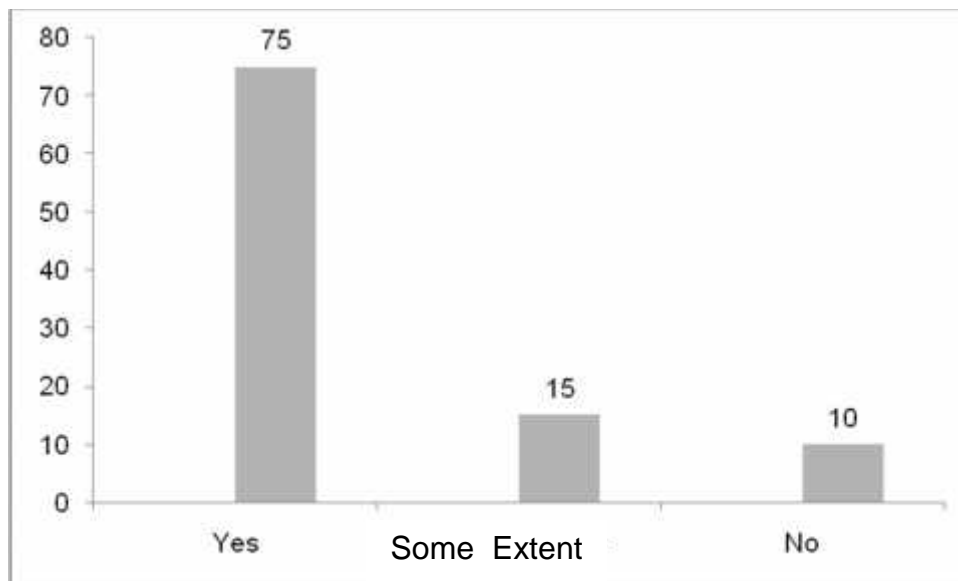
Above figure shows that the majority of the teachers responded that students performed well in closed ended items. 25 respondents (62.5%) said so. Similarly, 25% (10 teacher) responded to some extent. Moreover, 10% (4 teachers) responded that students performed equally in both types of items. However, only one respondent responded that they performed well in subjective items.

From the above discussion we can derive that students performed well in closed ended test items.

E. Regular testing of reading comprehension

To find out the frequency of testing of reading comprehension and how often teachers test reading they were asked to respond the question “Do you test your students’ reading comprehension regularly?” The responses taken from them are given below:

Figure 4.5
Regular Testing of Reading Comprehension

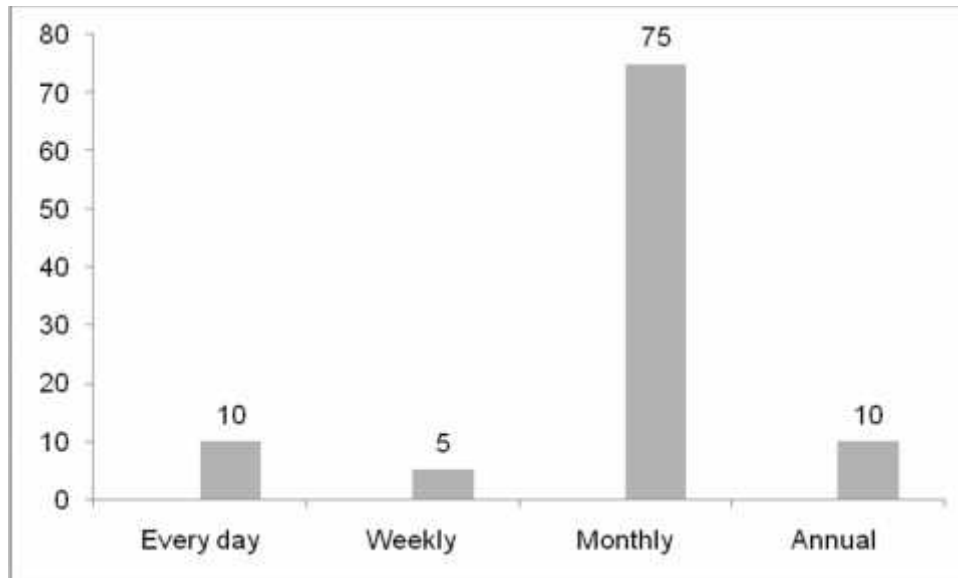


From the above mentioned figure, we can state, most of the respondents responded that they regularly their students' reading comprehension. They were 30 in number out of 40. Similarly, 15% of the respondents answered that they sometimes tested their students reading comprehension. However, 10% of the respondents responded that they didn't test reading comprehension at all.

F. Frequency of Testing

To find out how often the teachers make students attain such test, they were asked to respond the question "How often do you test your students reading comprehension?" The responses obtained from them are given below:

Figure 4.6
Frequency of Testing



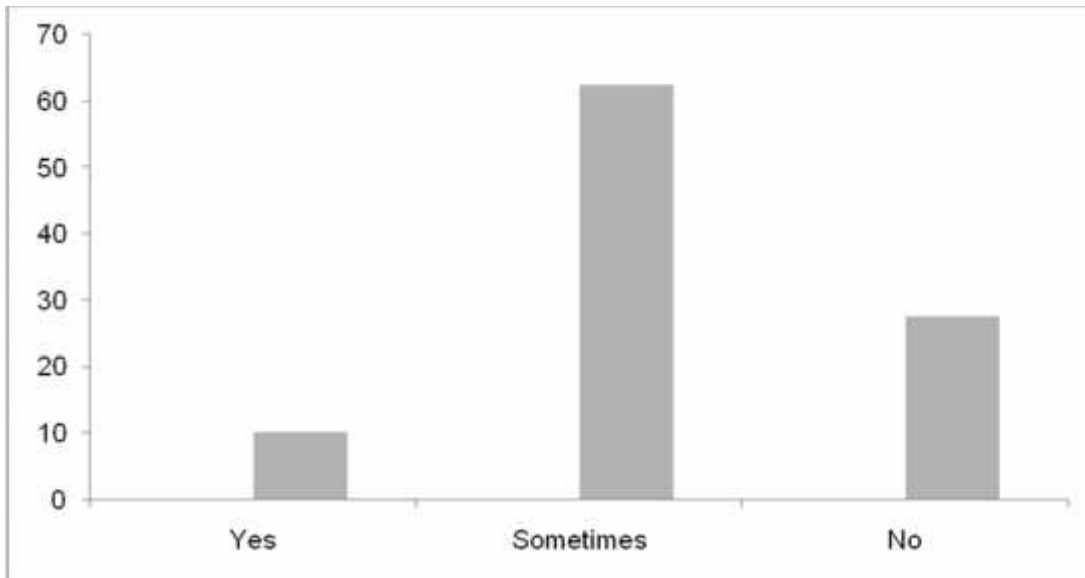
Above figure shows that 30 teacher (75%) responded that they held test once a month. Similarly, the teachers who tested everyday and once a year was equal in number e.i.10%. However, a very negligible number of teachers were found to conduct reading comprehension test per week.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that except some teachers most of the teachers tested their students reading comprehension once a month.

G. Students' Want

To find out weather the students want to be tested, the respondents were asked to response the question “Do the students want to be tested?”The responses obtained from them are presented below:

Figure 4.7
Students' Want



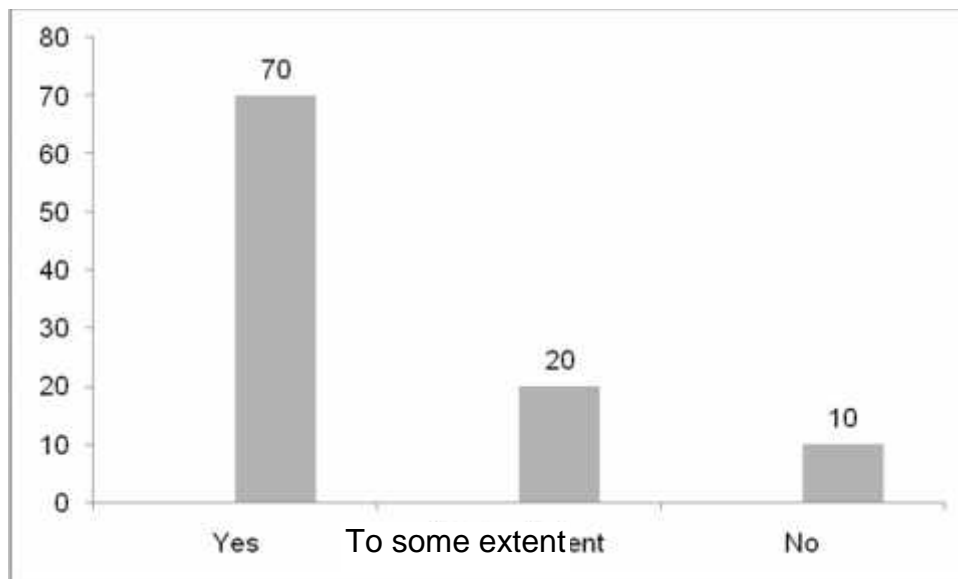
Above figure shows that not all the students wanted to be tested. It is a general nature of the students. But, here the trend was found a bit difficult. A majority of the students were found to be tested sometimes i.e. 62.5%. 11 teachers responded accordingly that their students didn't wanted to be tested. However, 4 teachers responded that their students want to be tested regularly.

From the above interpretation, it can be concluded that students sometimes wanted to be tested.

H. Students' Participation

It is said that, generally the students do not like to be tested and they want to escape from it. So, To find out whether the students equally participated in testing, the respondents were asked to respond the question "Do all the students take participation in such testing? The responses obtained from them are presented as follows.

Figure 4.8
Students' Participation



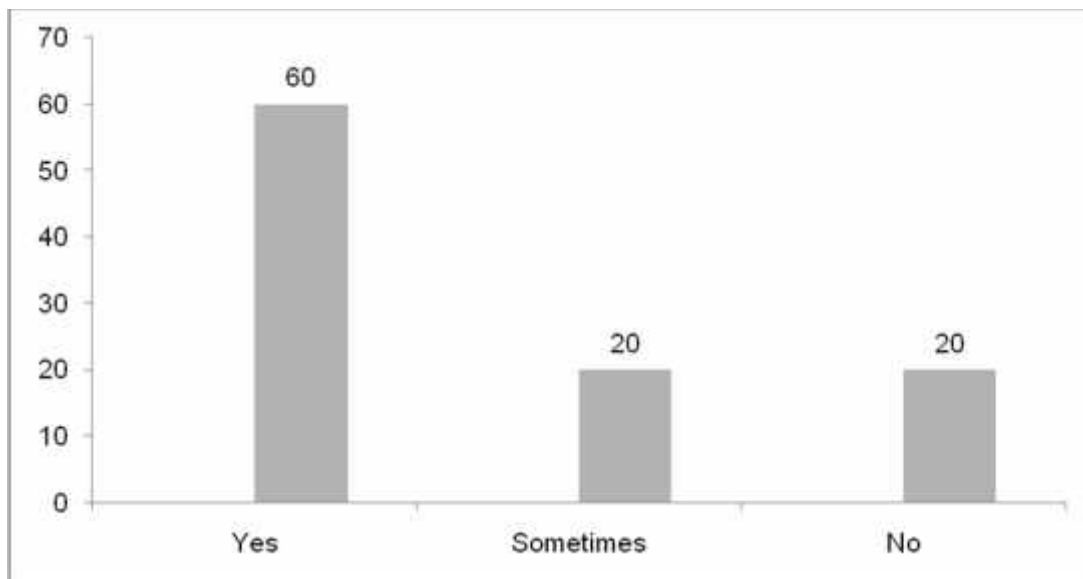
Above figure shows that, 28 respondents (70%) that all the students participated in testing. Similarly, some teachers were found to answer that all the students sometimes participated in testing. However, a very few numbers of teachers responded that all the students did not participate in such testing equally.

From the above interpretation, we can conclude that all the students equally take participation in testing reading comprehension.

I. Testing Pronunciation

It is said that pronunciation does not have so importance in reading because the words give meaning. But, To know the situation of testing pronunciation, the respondents were asked to respond the question “do you test your students’ pronunciation ability during testing reading comprehension?”The responses obtained from the respondents are presented below.

Figure 4.9
Testing Pronunciation



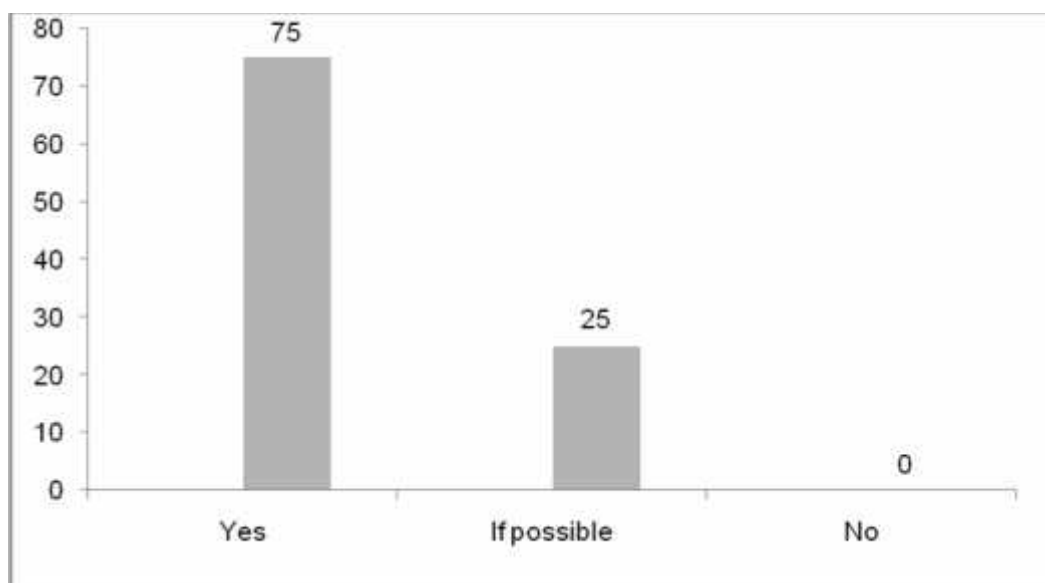
The above figure shows that majority of the respondents responded that they always test their students' pronunciation ability during testing their reading comprehension. It was 60% of the total. Similarly, it was found interesting that the numbers of teachers who responded as sometimes and never were equal. There were 8 teachers who responded sometimes and no.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that, teachers tested pronunciation ability of their students during testing reading comprehension.

J. Letting students know scores

Generally, the students are eager for their score in the test. So, to find out whether the teachers let their students know their scores or not the respondents were asked to respond the question "Do you let your students know their scores immediately after testing?" The responses obtained from are as follows:

Figure 4.10
Students' Score



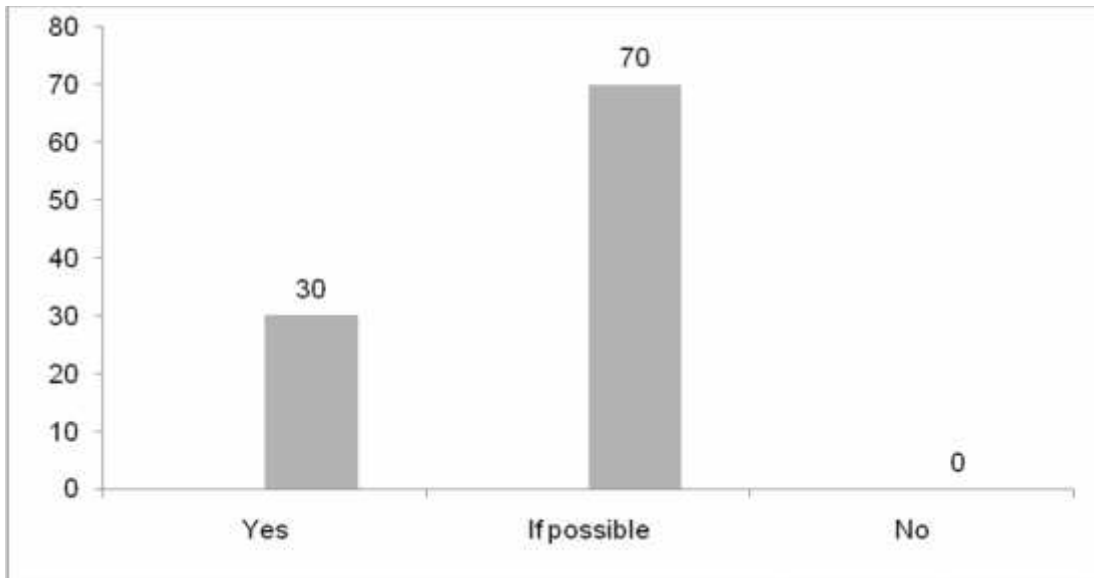
Above figure shows that, the teachers who let their students' scores immediately after they are tested outnumbered the others. A vast majority was found responding as "yes". The percentage was 75%. Another 25% of the respondents responded that if possible they let their students know their marks. However, none of the respondents were found to respond as "no".

From the above discussion, it is concluded that the teachers used to let their students know their scores after testing.

K. Immediate Feedback

It is important to provide feedback immediately after testing the students. To find out whether teachers provided immediate feedback or not. They were asked to respond to the question, "Do you provide immediate feedback to the students?" The responses obtained from them are as follows

Figure 4.11
Immediate Feedback



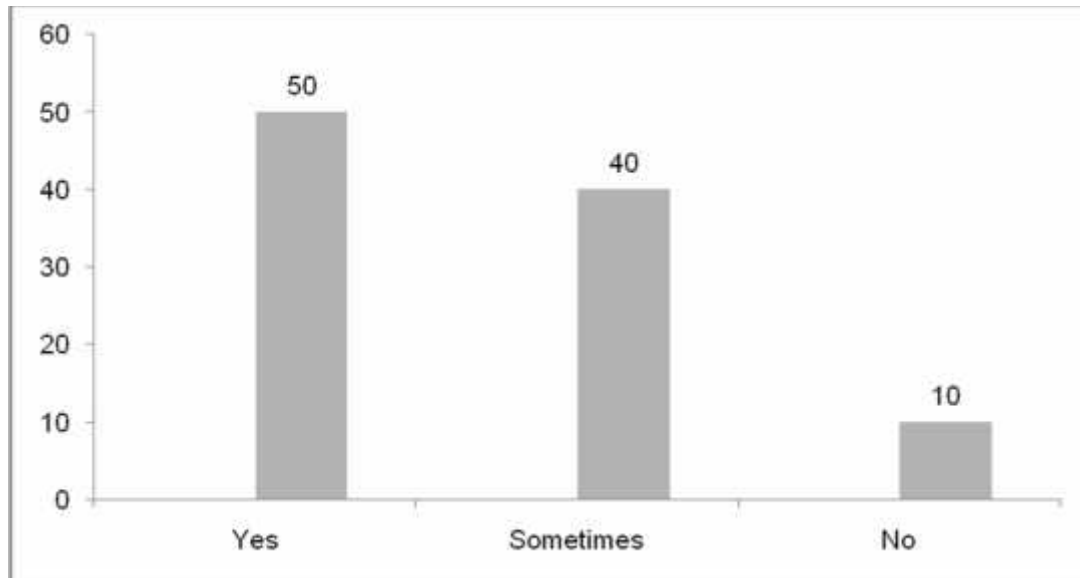
Above figure shows that, 70% of the teachers responded that they provided feedback immediately if possible. Secondly, rest 30% teachers responded that, they always provided feedback immediately after testing their students' reading comprehension. None of the respondents were found to provide delayed feedback.

From the above discussion, it is concluded that teachers provide feedback to the students immediately if it is possible.

L. Demo for Reading

Sometimes demonstration helps students to learn proper reading skill. So, to find out whether the teachers used demo to make their students read well, they were asked to respond the question "Do you use demonstration to make your students learn reading?" The responses obtained from them are as follows:

Figure 4.12
Demo for Reading



Above figure shows that fifty (50%) percents of the teachers responded that they used demonstration during teaching reading to make students understand. Similarly, the respondents who sometimes demonstrated in the reading classes were nearly equal in number. Teachers responding sometimes were 16 in number. It was 40% of the total. However, a very few teachers (10%) responded that they did not use demo in reading classes.

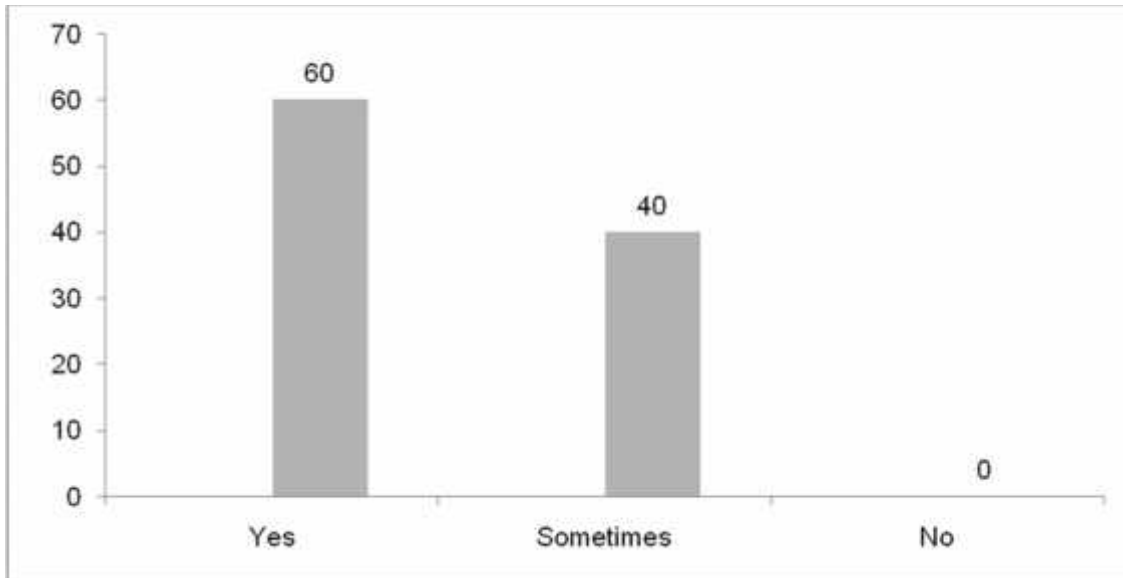
From the above discussion, it is concluded that most of the teachers used demo in the reading classes.

M. Testing Scanning and Skimming

Reading is the skill. So sometimes we need to scan the text and sometimes skim the texts. It depends upon the purpose of reading. To find out whether teachers test scanning and skimming ability of the students during testing reading comprehension or not, they were asked to respond the question “Do you test

your students' scanning and skimming ability?" The responses obtained are as follows:

Figure 4.13
Testing Scanning and Skimming



Above figure shows that most of the teachers tested their students 'scanning and skipping ability. 24 teachers (60%) responded that they tested scanning and skimming capacity of the students. Similarly, 40% of the respondents responded that they sometimes test their students such reading abilities. However, none of the respondents were found responding as "no".

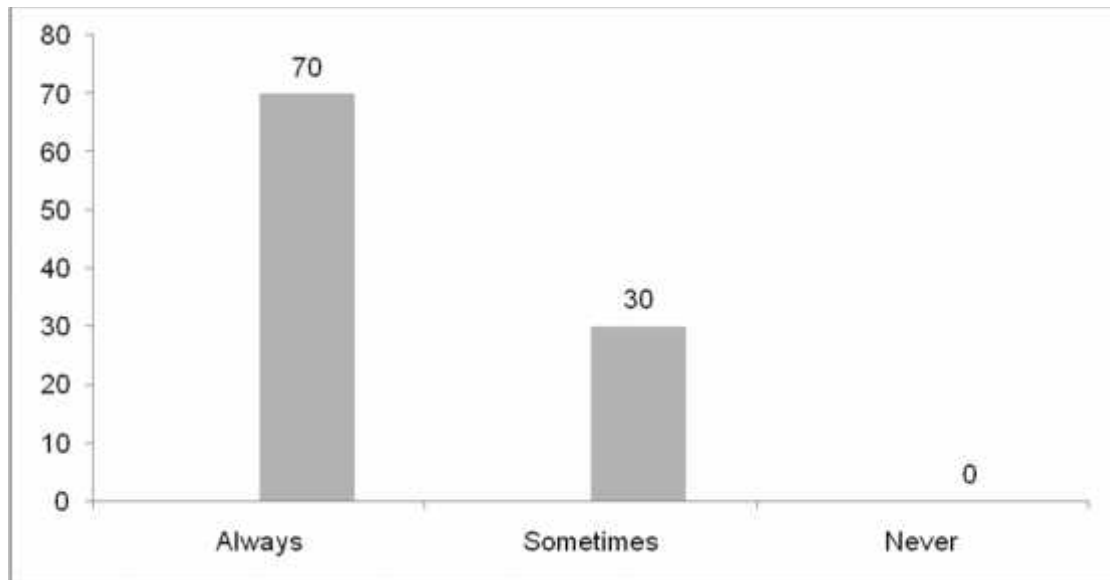
From the above mentioned discussion, it can be concluded that the teachers use to test scanning and skimming abilities of their students during testing reading comprehension.

N. Reading for Specific Purpose

One of the purpose of reading is to find out the facts in the texts. To find out how often the teachers test their students' ability to find out specific facts, they

were asked to respond the question “Do you provide the students with texts to read and find out the facts?” The responses obtained from them are as follows:

Figure 4.14
Reading for Specific Purpose



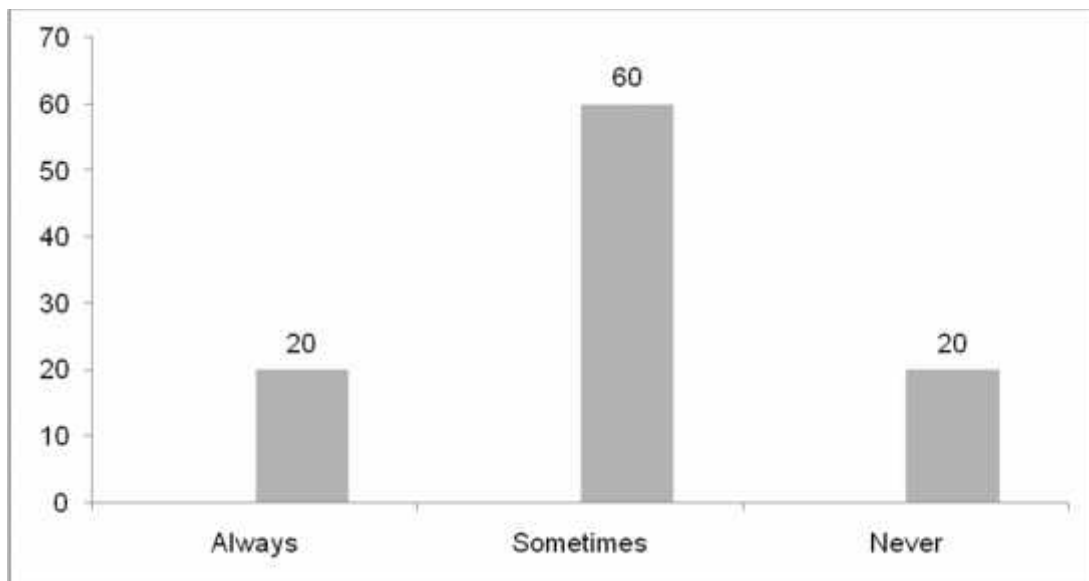
The Above figure shows that the majority of the respondents that they always made their students read the texts to find the facts. 70% of the respondents responded accordingly. And rest 30% respondents answered that they sometimes did so. However, the respondents responding as “never” were not found at all.

From the above discussion, it is concluded that teachers provide the students with texts to read and made them find out the facts.

O. Reading for General Purpose

Reading only for the specific purpose is not sufficient. To find out whether the teachers provided students with the texts and made them summarize, they were asked to respond the question “How often do you ask the students to summarize the texts?” The responses obtained from them are presented as follows:

Figure 4.15
Reading for General Purpose



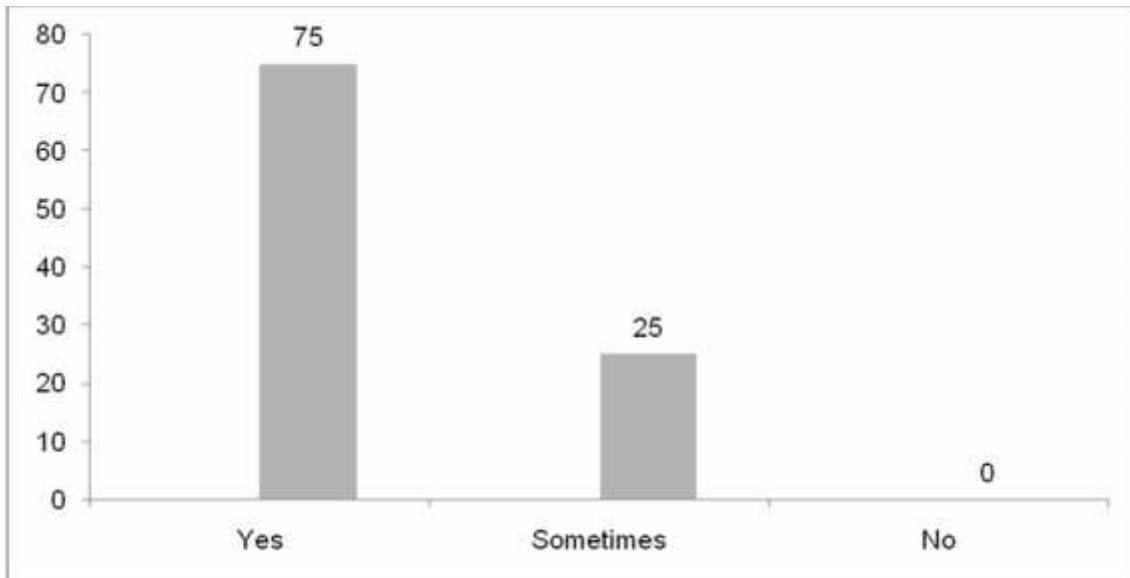
The above figure shows that , Majority of the teachers responded that they sometimes asked their students to summarize the reading texts. They were 24 in numbers. Similarly, those who responded as ‘always’ were 8 and those who responded as never’ were 8 respectively.

From the above discussion, it is concluded that teachers sometimes made their students summarize the reading texts provided.

P. Reading and Analyzing

To find out whether the teachers employed their students to reveal their critical thinking, the respondents were asked to respond the question “Do you make your students analyze the text critically?” The responses obtained from them are presented as follows:

Figure No.4.16
Reading and Analyzing



The above figure shows that three fourth of the respondents responded that they made their students involve in critical analysis after reading the given text. Such respondents were 30 in number. It was 75% of the total. Similarly, rest 25% responded that they sometimes asked their students to analyze reading texts critically. However, none of the respondents were found responding as “no”.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that teachers involved their students in text analysis during testing their reading comprehension.

4.1.2 Analysis of open-ended Questions

To capture the practice of secondary level English teachers of Sindhuli district, they were asked some open ended questions so that they could response freely. They have been presented in this session with their own response. The responses mentioned here are the representative ones.

A. Testing Reading Comprehension Appropriately

The respondents were asked to answer the following questions:

- Do you think that reading comprehension of the students can be tested appropriately?

Response : I think it depends upon the competence of the tester and the circumstance. To a great extent, it can be tested appropriately if the tester prepares beforehand he/she designs the test and makes the environment fear free.

Yes of course ! it can be tested appropriately. Reading comprehension can be tested using appropriate testing tools. It includes passage, writing summary, Para-phrasing and soon.

Yes, it can be tested through different sort of questions like, fill in the blanks, true false and answering question.

From the above mentioned responses, it can be concluded that reading comprehension can be tested appropriately. For this, tester should be competent and environment should be fear- free.

B. The Types of Test Used in Testing Reading Comprehension

To find out the sort of test items that are frequently practiced in our context for testing reading comprehension of the students they were asked what types of tests are used to test reading comprehension.

The responses are as follows:

- Different sorts of objectives practical & research based questions are frequently practised in our context for testing reading comprehension.

- The common test items that are frequently used in our context in my knowledge are: passage (question – answer), completion, true – false items and matching.
- Comprehension questions, writing synonyms, antonyms, fill in the blanks (completion items) and ordering test items are frequently practised in our context for testing reading comprehension of the students.
- They are (i) True false (ii) answer the question (iii) Read the passage and writing the summary of it (iv) write the sentences in the correct order and so on.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that, completion items, matching, summarizing, true –false, synonyms / antonyms, ordering the sentences are frequently used in our context.

C. The Use of Test – items Hierarchically

Though there are a number of test items which can be used to test reading comprehension of the students, they do not have equal applicability. Some are more useful to test reading comprehension and others are not. To find out which are more applicable the respondents were asked to respond the question “Would you please put the test items hierarchically, from the most appropriate to the least difficult?” The Responses obtained from are discussed below:-

- Goal based test – mode based test – medium based test – approach based test.
- To me, cloze test, summary writing, translating, matching, true false.
- (i) comprehension questions (ii) completion items (iii) writing synonyms/ antonyms (iv) matching items (v) multiple choice items (vi) ordering (vii) true false items
- Read and write the summary

- Write in the correct order
- Read and answer the questions
- True or false

From the above discussion and presentation of the data, it can be concluded that most of the teachers put objective type of questions in the first position mostly. Thus, the closed ended questions (items) were used to test reading comprehension of the students. Subjective (open ended) questions were not found to be effective to test reading comprehension.

D. Practicability of the Test in Nepal

There are numerous test items which can be used in testing reading comprehension. Among them, some are not being used in our daily teaching – learning process. Depending upon the context and the availability of the resources, the test items are used. In order to find out the sort of test items which can be applied / adopted for testing reading comprehension in the context of Nepal, the respondents were asked to respond the question “What do you suggest to others about the test items that can be adopted for the reading comprehension in the context of Nepal?” The Responses obtained are discussed as below:

- Skill based test – aspect best test – reference based test- approach bases test
- Test items should be designed and adopted considering students level, availability of resources materials, students interest, individual difference and linguistic diversity of the classroom.
- I would like to suggest to others (teachers and concerned authority) to use comprehension questions, questions for writing synonyms/ antonyms , completion items, matching, ordering items, true false and multiple choice, items etc for testing reading comprehension in the context of Nepal.

- I would like to suggest to all concerned persons or authorities to consider the linguistic background, age, level of the students, time allotment, facilities available while designing test items for testing reading comprehension.
- We should select the test items appropriately while testing reading comprehension those which are able to meet its purpose and context.

From the above discussion, it can be concluded that, there is not any absolute test items which can be solely used for select and used as test items for testing reading comprehensions. Rather it depends upon the context and resources available. Moreover, students' interest and other environmental circumstances play vital role in it. Test items can also be selected according to the purposes and objectives of the test as well.

4.3 Summary of Findings

After the analysis and interpretation of the data's. I have come to the following findings:

- Secondary level English teachers treated testing reading and writing in the same way
- Teachers used both subjective and objective test items during testing reading comprehension
- Objective test items were found to be more suitable to test reading comprehension than subjective test items.
- Students performed well in test items.
- Teachers tested their students reading comprehension regularly.
- Except some teachers, most of the teachers tested their students' reading comprehension per month.
- All the students equally took participation in testing reading comprehension.
- Students perceived testing reading and writing equally.

- Teachers did not test their students 'reading speed during testing reading comprehension.
- The teachers used to let their students know the score after testing.
- Teachers provide feedback to the students immediately.
- Teachers used demo in the reading classroom.
- Scanning and skimming abilities of their students during testing reading comprehension were also tested.
- The teachers sometimes made their students summarize the provided reading text.
- Teachers involved their students in text analysis during testing reading comprehension.
- Reading comprehension was tested appropriately.
- Completion items, matching, summarizing true false ,synonyms, antonyms, ordering the sentences were found to be used in our context.
- Teachers were found using gap filling, re-writing ,synonyms, antonyms, writing the gist and translating into mother tongue to test their students reading compression.
- Most of the teachers put objective types of questions in the first position. Mostly, the close ended question were found to be used.
- The teachers were found using answering the question, true false, gap filling, summary writing to test reading comprehension.
- No any absolute test item which could be used solely to test reading comprehension was found.

CHAPTER-FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This research work entitled “Test items in testing reading comprehension” was carried out to find out the test items that are used to test reading comprehension ability of the students . Forty teachers of the secondary level were used as the sample of the study. The data were collected through close – ended and open – ended questions and analyzed and interpreted to come to the conclusion. It was found that ,

the secondary level English teachers took testing reading and writing in the same way. They used subjective & objective test items during testing reading comprehension. However, students performed well in closed ended test items. The teachers tested their students’ reading comprehension regularly. All the students were found taking part equally in reading comprehension test. They did not test the speed of reading. Most of the teachers were found using objective types of questions to test reading comprehension and found them more reliable.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations of the study have been suggested on three different levels such as, policy level, practice level and further research level.

5.2.1 Policy Level

The recommendations of the research at policy level are as follows:

- a. The curriculum designers and textbook writers should design the syllabus and books that give more emphasis on reading skill.

- b. The subject experts and trainers should provide training on how to test reading comprehension.
- c. The schools should make the provision of testing reading comprehension of the learners.

5.2.2 Practice Level

The recommendations at the practice level are as follows:

- a. The teacher should make the learners practice reading comprehension text regularly so as to build up the students' reading ability
- b. The teachers should use both subjective and objective test items.

However, they should focus more on objective test.

5.2.3 Further Research

The researcher who wants to carry out research in the same area can use this research to carry out large scale research and to explore the areas related to this topic for further research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

This questionnaire is a research tool for getting information for my research entitled '**Teachers' Perception on Testing reading Comprehension at Secondary Level**' under the supervision of **Mr. Raj Narayan Yadav**, Associate Professor, University Campus, Kirtipur. Your co-operation in responding the questionnaire and your responses will have a great value in accomplishing my research. I appreciate your perception and assure you that your response will be completely anonymous. Please feel free to put your responses as required by the questionnaire. I honestly assure you that the responses made by you will be used only for the present study and remain confidential.

Researcher

Anil Bdr. Ghimire

Personal Details:

Name:

Name of Institution:

Qualification:

Experience:

Training (if any):

Group - A

Please go through the questionnaire and feel free to answer the following questions.

1. Can we compare testing reading with testing writing?
 - a. Yes
 - b. To some extent
 - c. No

2. Do you apply subjective questions testing system during testing reading comprehension?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

3. Do you find objective questions more suitable to test reading comprehension?
 - a. Yes
 - b. To some extent
 - c. No

4. Do students perform well in closed ended test items in comparison to open ended?
 - a. Yes
 - b. To some extent
 - c. Equal
 - d. No

5. Do you test your students reading comprehension regularly?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes

- c. No
6. How often do you test your students reading comprehension?
 - a. Everyday
 - b. Weekly
 - c. Monthly
 - d. Annually
 7. Do the students want to be tested?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No
 8. Do all the students take participation in such testing?
 - a. Yes
 - b. To sometimes
 - c. No
 9. Do you test yours students' pronunciation ability during testing reading comprehension?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Some times
 - c. Never
 10. Do you let your students know scores immediatly after testing?
 - a. Yes
 - b. If possible
 - c. No
 11. Do you provide immediate feedback to the students?
 - a. Yes
 - b. If possible
 - c. No

12. Do you use demonstration to make your students learn reading?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

13. Do you test your students' scanning & Skimming ability?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

14. Do you provide the students with texts to read & find out the facts?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

15. How often do you ask the students to summarize the texts?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

16. Do you make your students analyze the text critically?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

Group – B

1. Do you think that reading comprehension of the students can be tested appropriately?

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2. What are the test items that are frequently practiced in our context for testing reading comprehension?

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3. Would you please put the test items hierarchically from the most difficult the least difficult?

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4. What are the test items that you usually adopt for using testing reading comprehension?

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5. What do you suggest to others about the test items that can be adopted for testing reading comprehension in the context of Nepal?

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Thank You for Your Kind Co-Operation