Innovations

The implementation of social constructivism teaching methods on upper primary students EFL reading comprehension and teamwork skills, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine the effects of implementing social constructivism teaching methods through integrating PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques to enhance grade 8 students EFL reading comprehension and teamwork skills. The study used quasi-experimental pretest and posttest comparison group design. The participants of the study were 64 (17 M and 15 F) 8th grade students at Shashemane Full Cycle Elementary School in 2021/22 academic year. There were two grade 8 sections in the school in the academic year the research conducted and the participants of the study were categorized into experimental and control group randomly using a lottery system. Independent t-test was run to check significance of difference between mean scores of the control and experimental groups on reading comprehension pretest and posttest. Additionally, Independent t-test was run to identify the difference between pretest and posttest gains of the experimental and control group on reading comprehension. Pre and post reading comprehension tests were administered to compare reading comprehension performance of the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. Class observations, semi-structured interview, formal and post observation discussions, and FGD were used to collect data about students teamwork behavior. The posttest reading comprehension scores revealed that students in the experimental group performed better than the comparison group. The result of paired sample t-tests also indicated that changes on the mean scores was not by chance, rather it was a result of students engagement in English reading sessions which used social constructivism teaching methods. Likewise, the result of the present study revealed that social constructivism teaching methods have effect on enhancing teamwork skills of the students. Based on insight from the study recommendations are stated.

Key words: reading comprehension, teamwork, PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding

1. **Introduction**

Earlier approaches to language education intensively use direct teaching from textbooks and give due emphasis for knowledge aspect rather than the language skills (Mandinach, 2020; Marwan, 2018). But the twenty first century requires beyond this, having mere collection of knowledge is not adequate. Different studies conducted to plot features of 21st century language education focus on producing capable learners to discuss diversified world concepts with native speakers, understand differences and similarities among peoples, and understand others thinking, living and world view (Greenwald, 2013).Davila (2016)described 4Cs (communication, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration) as goals of 21st century English language education.

In literal terms comprehension refers to ability to construct meaning of what is read (Olatunji, 2014). "Knowing and understanding what is being read is the key to comprehension" (Harvey, 2012, p. 2). Pardo (2004) defines comprehension as a process of deliberate interaction with the text using combination of previous knowledge, experience, and information in the text and readers position with a text to construct meaning. Hermosa and Meniado stated that RC requires a series of cognitive activities that include a lot of dimensions like the understanding of words and their meanings, mindful reaction, and integration (cited in Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016, p.180).. Students who are capable of comprehending text are able to monitor their reading, conscious about the structure of the text, they know the reason why they are reading and aware of their level of understanding (Burns & Kidd, 2011). Consequently, having a good EFL RC skills allow students to succeed academically, professionally and socially.

The role of English language in Ethiopian education system is dominant and has long lasting effect for its instructional purpose. The current Ethiopian education policy which is introduced in 1994 made English language to be taught as a subject starting from grade one onwards in all regions (Berhanu, 2009; Heugh et al., 2007). It is used as a media of instruction for other subjects beginning from grade seven to tertiary level education in all regions, except in Oromia and Tigrai regional states which begin using English as media of instruction from grade 9 onwards (Tekeste, 2006). It is also, a compulsory subject to join Ethiopian universities (Wubalem & Sarangi, 2019). In short, to succeed academically and access global resources Ethiopian students need to have good command of English language in general and RC in particular.

However, scholars assert that mastery of EFL RC skill is challenging and difficult than learning L1 because students who learn English as a foreign language has limited exposure to practice the language (Adel & Rajab, 2015). Research findings revealed that EFL teachers' failure in using appropriate teaching methods challenge students' acquisition of RC in EFL context (Adel & Rajab, 2015). Researches in Ethiopian context also confirm this. Even though, Ethiopian 8th graders start learning English language as a subject beginning from grade 1, majority of them do not have reading competency expected at their academic level upon completion of primary level education(ESC, 2018; Jha, 2013; MoE, 2015) and due to ineffective teaching methods in which the teacher took role of teaching EFL reading rather than helping the students to develop effective reading skills (Asrat, 2017; Derebssa, 2006; Gemechis, 2014; Ketema & Abiy, 2018; Mebratu & Woldemariam, 2018; Nigussie, 2011; USAID, 2012; Wendmagegnehu, 2006; Williams, 2011; Wudu et al., 2009). Hence, through implementing appropriate teaching methods Ethiopian teachers are expected to prepare students who can easily comprehend English texts.

Result of study conducted by Adel and Rajab (2015) found that classroom environment which focus on group work and learners' interaction with their peers and the teacher results high success in primary level EFL students RC and high level of learning motivation. Since primary school level EFL students have limited exposure to the language outside, classroom environment that encourage students to practice reading English texts by constantly interacting with other students plays vital role in enhancing students' RC skill and their

reading motivation. Effective EFL RC classes configure with social constructivist EFL reading classroom design as Ebersohn and associates (2004) stated that social constructivists promote EFL reading classes to have a form of social practice and knowledge construction from multiple perspectives.

Social constructivists believe that we can bring change on students learning if we are able to create classroom setting that nurtures independent and reflective thinking (Kapur, 2017; Orey, 2010). The practice of independent learning has feature of enhancing interaction among students and inspiring multi-dimensional discussion between them (Murphy, 1997). Furthermore, in social constructivist EFL RC classroom, the teacher acts as collaborative partner, mentor, facilitator and scaffolder (Shuford et al., 2006). Consequently, in teaching EFL RC skill social constructivists suggest implementation of student centered instructional approaches which highly utilize social practice particularly scaffolding, collaborative learning, CL and PBL methods among others (Daniels, 2007; Shuford et al., 2006).

The researchers the study believe that in order to equip Ethiopian students with the language skills the 21st require, it is important to practically validate and disseminate effective teaching methods that allow learners development of English language skills the time require. Accordingly, the present study aimed to assist Ethiopian English language education from contemporary educational psychology theories, through designing social constructivism theory based English language reading comprehension (EFL RC) classroom to show the effects of its instructional method in improving 8th graders EFL reading comprehension skill.

2. Statement of the Problem

English language RC skill is considered as furthermost vital language skill Ethiopian students need to master upon completion of primary school level education. Except Oromia and Tigray Regional states all Ethiopian regions use English language as a medium of instruction starting from grade 7 (Mulugeta, 2009; Wubalem & Sarangi, 2019). That is why reading lessons are incorporated in Ethiopian English language textbooks begging from elementary grade. Furthermore, except textbooks used to teach some Ethiopian languages like Amharic, Afan Oromo, Sidama, and elementary grade level textbooks, secondary and university level teaching materials, supportive books and other publications predominantly published by English language. Thus, proficiency in English language RC prepares Ethiopian primary school students to be successful in all subject areas. (Kirby, 2007).

Student centered teaching-learning methods based upon constructivism theory of teaching and learning is assumed as a leading paradigm of current Ethiopian education and English for Ethiopians' textbooks are prepared in-line with constructivists' principles. But majority of Ethiopian EFL teachers still use the traditional teacher centered methodologies in primary school EFL reading classes(Asrat, 2017; Derebssa, 2006; Gemechis, 2014; Nigussie, 2011; USAID, 2012; Wendmagegnehu, 2006; Williams, 2011; Wudu et al., 2009). Study conducted by Mebratu (2015) on selected primary and secondary schools in Ethiopia revealed that students lack of attending pre-school, influence of mother tongue, limited opportunity to practice English language outside classroom, perceiving English language as something difficult to learn, shyness to practice the language, lack of motivation and poor teamwork Ethiopian primary school level students acquisition of English language proficiency expected at their academic level, particularly RC skills. Another, study conducted by Jha (2013) also found that Ethiopian EFL teachers failure to use student centered EFL teaching methods and inadequate attention for students' teamwork skills hindered Ethiopian students' overall English language proficiency, their English reading comprehension skills.

Due to practicum in Educational psychology course project work, the researchers had got a chance to observe the teaching-learning process of Full Cycle Elementary Schools The classroom observations conducted in the schools revealed that in teaching RC, English teachers in these schools still use teacher centered approaches and practice student centered reading methods superficially. The practices in EFL reading classes do not allow students' development of effective RC and teamwork skills. This incident of a sudden classroom

observation instigated the researchers and to overcome such a problem creating social constructivism EFL classroom design will enhance RC skills students through student engagement, making students responsible for their own learning, promoting positive interdependence among students. Additionally, a review made by the researchers to see if English for Ethiopia grade 8 student textbook and the teacher guide have structure of social constructivism revealed that the instructional approaches in these materials have critical gaps. English for Ethiopia grade 8 teacher guides suggest the teacher to play role of facilitator and use student centered interactive teaching and learning methods such as guided discovery, discussion, presentation, demonstration, question and answer, brainstorming, recitation and dramatization. However, except providing general description about these methods the teacher guide did not provide specific direction or example for the teacher on how implement these methods in EFL classes.

The present study also aimed to fill the research and practice gap in the area. As far the researchers reading concerned, except study conducted by Alemayehu and Yosef (2013) to compare traditional and constructivist teaching approaches in using English language learning strategies among grade eleven students; Abiy (2005) on the effects of teacher mediation on grade 9 students' conceptions and approaches to reading; Chanyalew and Abiy (2015) on the effects of teacher's scaffolding on grade 9 students' RC; Aragaw (2015) on the effect of CL on grade 9 students' EFL RC; and Seid (2017) on the effects of CL on general secondary school student's CL achievement, there is no local research that is conducted to see effect of social constructivism instructional approaches on upper primary level EFL students' RC. Even though the knowledge obtained from the previous studies provide considerable insight and evidence about effect of social constructivism instructional approaches on RC, vocabulary acquisition, social values of students', students' conception and approaches to EFL reading, and English language learning strategies, they cannot be grantee about the effects of these approaches on Ethiopian upper primary grade level students' English language RC. Hence, the present study aimed to investigate the practice-based evidence in designing and implementing social constructivism teaching methods in grade 8EFL RC classroom. Hence, this study attempted to answer the research questions: To what extent PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques enhance RC skill of 8th grade students? To explain how PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques enhance learners' teamwork in EFL RC classes?

3. Significance of the Study

It is believed that the knowledge gained from the results of the study will have the following significances: intervention could help participants of the study to understand that teamwork skills and interaction results greater mastery of EFL RC than the individualized reading activities by introducing, designing and implementing social constructivist based EFL reading classroom environment. This could help the students to understand mastery of RC skill is no more individual task, rather working in team with other students or the teacher could easy the acquisition EFL RC skills. Students' teamwork skills help to develop habit of jointly working with others, take central role in learning interactive and authentic, and stimulating RC skills through arousing students' engagement, teamwork, collaboration and responsibility in learning process and provides practical evidences of implementing social constructivism instructional methods at appropriate level of the language teaching materials.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1 Research design

The present study aimed at examining effects of social constructivism instructional methods in enhancing EFL RC and teamwork skills of 8th grade students. Social constructivist research focuses on discovering meaning through situating the researcher in student interaction. In this study ,quasi-experimental design(pretest and posttest) comparison group was applied. Comparison of reading comprehension skill of experimental group with the control group before and after the treatment made using two reading

comprehension tests, to determine students' EFL RC skills. Observations used in assessing and explaining changes because it requires illustration of a change processes on students teamwork skills.

4.2 Participants of the study

The participants of the study were Shashemane full cycle elementary school grade 8 students. As stated in the introduction section, students in the school have problems in reading comprehension and teamwork. In the school there were a total of 73 grade 8 students in two sections (A and B)in 2022 academic year. From 73 students in the two sections 64 students, 32 in each group participated on the study. The groups categorized into experimental and control group randomly using simple random sampling lottery method. Section A assigned as a control group and section B as an experimental group randomly. In the control group three students were absent during the pretest and another two students were absent in the post test. In the experimental group, two students didn't participate in the study because of their guardians' refusal for signing the consent form and the other two students withdraw the study at the middle of the intervention. Thus, the participants of the study were 64 (17 M and 15 F).

4.3 Teachers election

There was only one English teacher in the school who was teaching English language in grade 7 and 8. The teacher was selected after discussing with the school administration, having post observation discussions with the students, and consulting other English language teachers who were teaching English in another school at Shashemane about his teaching skill and discussing with the teacher himself about his readiness and interest to participate in the study.

4.4 Instruments of data collection

4.4.1 Reading comprehension tests

Pre and post reading comprehension tests were administered to measure reading comprehension skills of both the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. The reading comprehension tests were developed by two English language teachers who teach grade 8 at ODA special boarding – Adama. The teachers who prepared the tests have MA in TEFL and experience in teaching English for more than ten years. Both the pretest and posttest comprised 30 questions incorporating multiple choice, matching, supply type and true – false items. The tests incorporated questions five types of reading comprehension skills. The specific reading comprehension skills are identifying main ideas, detailed facts, understanding contextual meaning of words, locating references and making inference.

The face and content validities of both the pre and post reading comprehension tests were checked. The experts who reviewed the tests were three English language teachers who teaches TEFL at Hawasa University. The reviewers were lecturers and experts in teaching and researching about assessment of English for Ethiopia. Based on the comments from the review ersimprovements were made on few items which lack clarity and some distractors modified.

The reliability of the tests was checked using for a pilot study. Both the pre and post reading comprehension tests were piloted with 74 grade 8 students at Melka Oda Full Cycle Elementary School, who were similar with the participants of the study. The reliability (r_{xx}) of the pretest and posttests were 0.67 and 0.69 respectively. Thus, the reliability of both tests was satisfactory to administer with the participants of the main study. The reliability of both the pretest and posttest were again calculated. The reliability (r_{xx}) of the pretest was 0.74 and for the posttest 0.77. Thus, it was accepted that both tests had good reliability and discrimination power.

4.4.2 Classroom observations

The present researcher conducted class observations throughout the treatment sessions using semi-structured observation checklist. The observation checklist was adapted from a student interaction observation checklist developed by Abdullah and associates (2012) and Berube (2001). The purpose of class observation was to record and analyze engagement of the students in teamwork and the processes involved to improve students teamwork skill. The data collected through the observation checklist used for supporting students' development of teamwork skill. The content of the checklist mainly focused on capturing students joint work, taking individual accountability, explaining their ideas to each other, supporting each other to explain their ideas, giving feedback to each other, freely explain their ideas to teacher and ask him when they have questions or need clarifications. The observations were conducted by the researcher. All the treatment sessions were video recorded and transcribed when needed.

4.4.3 Teacher reflection

Semi-structured interview and post observation discussion were used with the teacher at the end of each session because it provided the researcher better insight about students' behavior, preference, teamwork, reading comprehension skills and any exceptional remark the teacher noticed. The reflection of the teacher was supportive to identify the types of support students need and design remedial actions based on the identified needs of a student and groups. The results obtained from interview and post observation discussion used to triangulate the data collected through teacher reflection.

4.4.4 Students reflection

Reflection of the students were collected in multiple ways using class discussions, self-reflection reports (writing on sticky notes), FGD and interview to get detailed information about students' satisfaction in learning English reading comprehension sessions using social constructivism teaching methods and their perception about the processes involved. Class discussions were used to collect reflection of the students on the processes involved in general focusing on what they learn from the session, what went well, what to improve for the next sessions. On the other hand, students were allowed to write ideas or/and questions that they didn't want to speak out in front of their classmates, the teacher or researcher on sticky notes and then the researcher collected the sticky notes using snow ball method. Snowball is interactive technique that allows students exchange information without exposing oneself for the class.

Semi-structured FGD and interview guides were developed by the researcher to collect students' reflection. The researched conducted all the FGDs and interviews within the school compound. The FDGs were arranged at the beginning, in the middle and at the intervention. The purpose of FGD to get detailed information about the students' satisfaction, learning style preference and perceived learning, and then take remedial actions when needed. To this end, the FGD guide incorporated five major questions that facilitate students' reflection about reading sessions, reading passage and the exercises, approach of the teacher, most important thing they found and teaching approaches.

4.5 Data analysis

The used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. Independent t-test was run to check significance of difference between mean scores of the control and experimental groups on reading comprehension pretest and posttest scores. Again, independent t-test was run to identify the gain differences between pretest and posttest scores of both the experimental group on reading comprehension. Effect size also calculated as to elaborate the actual means difference between reading comprehension scores of the experimental and

control groups on both the pretest and posttest, and the actual mean difference of each group between the pretest and posttest.

The analysis of qualitative data that collected through class observations, teacher reflections, class discussions, self-reflections, FGD and interview analyzed focusing teamwork behavior of the students. The interpretation is structured around master themes based on processes involved during the treatment to enhancing teamwork among the students. Its various manifestations discussed. Quotations from participants used to make the interpretation of findings sounder and to show comments and interpretations explicitly.

Procedures
The study started after providing training for the English teacher on proper implementation of social constructivism teaching methods in EFL RC class designed for the intervention. The researcher provided the training for the teacher in order to update him about the basic concepts social constructivism teaching methods and application of PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques in grade 8 EFL reading class. Second, in collaboration with the teacher the researcher administered a pretest of reading comprehension on both groups, the experimental and control. Forth, the study started by introducing the nature of the intervention for the experimental group. During the intervention reading comprehension lessons in English for Ethiopia grade 8 textbook was used to teach experimental group using social constructivism based teaching methods, whereas the control group taught the same lessons continuing the conventional type of teaching process in the school. Both groups were taught by the same English language teacher from the beginning to end. The researcher kept the record of each intervention session through class observation and analyzed changes on students' teamwork behavior. Additionally, self-reflection reports, formal and post observation discussions, and interview was conducted with the experimental group to assess their perception about the treatment process and their perceived learning. Finally, posttest was administered to evaluate the effects of social constructivism teaching methods on the experimental group and to compare if the treatment brought statistically significant difference between English reading comprehension achievement of the experimental and control group.

5. Results and Discussion
The primary purpose of this study was to determine effects of implementing social constructivism teaching methods through integrating PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques to enhance primary school students EFL reading comprehension and teamwork skills.

5.1 Students' EFL reading comprehension skills
The first purpose of the study was to determine the extent of PBL, collaborative learning, and scaffolding techniques enhance students reading comprehension skills. To achieve this, independent t-test was computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pretest results of experimental and control groups on reading comprehension

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-test	Sig
Experimental Group	32	15.81	4.490	62	.164	.870
Control Group	32	15.63	4.640			

p< .001

The results of pretest shows that there is no statistically significant mean score difference in the experimental and control groups reading comprehension skill (t = 0.164, df = 62, p = 0.7) with small effect size (*0.041*). This

reveals that the experimental and control groups are similar in reading comprehension in the actual pretest mean score performance (M =15.81 and M =15.63) respectively. On the other hand, after the experimental group has taken reading comprehension skills, the experimental and control groups posttest comparison was made and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Experimental and control groups posttest results on reading comprehension

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig
Experimental Group	32	18.53	4.536	62	2.01	.049
Control Group	32	16.19	4.789			

p< .001

The results of independent t-test in table 2 indicates that there was statistically significant mean score difference in the posttest reading comprehension performance (M=18.53, and M=16.19, t = 2.01, df = 62, p = .049) between experimental and control groups. The results reveal that the experimental group significantly performed better than the control group in the posttest reading comprehension performance test. The effect size was (*d = 0.502*) which is medium.

Table 3: Comparison of experimental and control groups gains results on pretest and posttest

	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	Sig
p< .001	Experimental Group	32	2.72	0.851	62	7.773	.001
	Control Group	32	0.56	1.318			

The independent samples t-test results in table 3showsthere exist gains difference between the pretest and posttest in reading comprehension test scores for experimental and control groups. The table reveals that there is statistically significance mean score difference in gains for experimental group (M = 2.72, SD = 0.851) and control group (M = 0.56, SD = 1.318; t = 7.773, df = 62, p = 0.01).This implied that the difference in gains between pretest and posttest scores of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group at statistically significant level. The magnitude of the differences in the gains was medium(d = 061).

5.3 Results of students teamwork
The second purpose of the study was to explain how PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques enhance learners' teamwork in EFL RC classes. How integration of PBL, collaborative learning, CL and scaffolding techniques enhanced teamwork of students in the experimental group presented using quotations, class observation results and reflections. Selected quotations are incorporated in this section to provide clear picture of the intervention process for the readers.

5.3.1 Positive aspects and challenges related to students' teamwork during the initial sessions
Students' teamwork skills during group reading activities were collected using semi-structured observation checklist. The content of the checklist focused on students' joint work, taking individual accountability, explaining their ideas to each other, supporting each other to explain their ideas, and giving feedback to each other. Students' and the teacher' reflection collected using two cards with different colors for a positive and

negative feedback. Additionally, the researchers arranged interview and FGD schedule to collect detailed information from the students about the first session.

5.3.2.Positive aspects of the initial sessions
Reflection of the students on the initial reading comprehension sessions provided the researcher general insight about the learners feeling towards reading activities based on social constructivism teaching methods. The students indicated that they were happy with the strategy the teacher used them to involve in team reading comprehension activities. Students stated that the session helped them to get understanding of how to collaborate with others to answer reading comprehension questions.

Students mentioned that the type of support and follow up of the teacher during the group discussions was new experience for them. They implied that giving clear role and describing the specific role expected from each group member made carless students to participate in group discussions. Additionally, the students reflected that the reward for the champion group increased their interest and motivation. From the analysis of observation result it was possible to infer that the group facilitators during the first session were confident to freely interacting with the teacher. In the first session, during group reading activities the group facilitators asked the teacher about tasks for clarification and support more than ten times. The analysis of students' and teacher' reflection and FGD result implies that the students were open for change and showed interest to attend the all intervention sessions to improve their English RC and teamwork skills. In general, the researcher, the teacher and students were positive about the overall teaching and learning activities of session one except some challenges.

5.4 Challenges of the initial sessions and actions taken

5.4.1 Lack of individual accountability and tendency of some students to dominate group and class discussions

During the first two intervention sessions the researcher observed that the students have gaps on working reading comprehension tasks as a team. As to promote positive interdependence between group members, the teacher guides the students to share the activity among the group members. Specifically, the teacher supported the students to have complementary roles for members in each group as facilitator, scriber and reporter. He reinforces individual accountability using proactive questions and poses to the students during group discussion. While the teacher tried to assess students participation based on the role assigned for him/her in the group, majority of the students do not respond. Instead they wait for the group leader to respond for the teacher's question. In almost all groups, the group leaders insist on working the reading comprehension tasks alone and the others simply sit and observe the leader until task ended.

During the group reading tasks the teacher supported the students to work the tasks with team spirit. The teacher keep facilitating group works and collaboration among students by providing support when needed, encouraging quieter students to involve in the task, and checking individual contribution of each group member through asking different follow up questions related to the reading task.

From the eight collaborative reading groups, six groups needed the group facilitators to present their work. But based on request by the teacher from the six groups two groups changed their presenters. Reporters in the rest four groups shrink from presenting their group work. Only, the reporters of two groups presented their work for the class based on the role they assigned in the group. This confirm with the result of class observation that during the group discussions there was domination of group facilitators. As it is the first glance for the students they were trying to continue the conventional type of group work that they were practicing, in which the group leader do everything. In order to, improve this situation the researcher and the teacher agreed to provide consistent support until they develop good teamwork skills.

5.4.2   Weak collaboration among students in supporting each other to explain their ideas

It is obvious that group members questioning each other to explain their ideas have the potential to affect the way group members interact with each other. In the first session the researcher noticed that the students challenged to accustom the practice of supporting each other to explain their ideas. Majority of the group leaders the tendency of doing the group tasks by themselves without letting others explain their ideas or supporting others involvement. Particularly, the group leaders need to facilitate involvement of all the group members and let them explain their ideas. In group discussion, though the role of making all group members to explain their ideas is assigned for facilitators more than half of them showed tendency of slacking off. About fifty present of the group leaders insist on answering the while reading and post reading questions without letting other team members explain their ideas. But as an advantage majority of the students were ready to follow the advice of the teacher

 Based on the follow up of the teacher, majority of the students who were working tasks individually or in pair [group leaders and one another member in some groups] started supporting each other. The teacher made consistent follow up and support the students to work in team according to the group norm established during the introduction session. During the group work the teacher facilitates discussions by encouraging all students participation within the teams, remembering them to treat each other with respect, considering all members suggestion as valuable, allowing team members to justify their assumptions/opinions, and equal participation in decision-making.

The teacher kept encouraging passive and shy students to involve in group and class discussions using positive words that their idea could contribute for success of their idea and it is valuable. In the meantime, he supports the facilitators to involve all members and participating all group members is a key for success of each group. Based on the level of group members active participation and completion of complementary roles, joint reward provided for one outstanding collaborative group at the end of each session. The researcher let the students to compare performance of students across groups by themselves and provide reward for outperforming group and for the group who bring change on passive and shy students' participation.

5.4.3   Presence of shy students

In the first session, the researcher noticed that there are shy students who fear to explain their ideas. During group and class discussions it is observed that majority of the students have tendency of freely expressing their opinions. Saying majority of the students showed tendency of freely expressing their opinion is not meant that all students were freely speaking out. There were students who scarcely discuss with their team members and tend to be shy when the teacher asks them to explain their opinion/idea. From these students some of them involved in group discussions based on the follow up and encouragement from the teacher, except few. From the students who feared speaking out while the teacher asked them to explain their ideas five students repeatedly avoid eye contact, and three students tried to respond for the question of the teacher with a very low sound which was difficult to identify their idea and feeling of frustration observed on their face. Based on the classroom observation in session one, the researcher identified shy students who abstained from actively participating in group and class discussions. Then, asked them why they fear and encouraged them to avoid their fear for the next section by telling them that the study is designed to support them.

The result of the focus group discussions implied that the students refrain themselves from explaining their idea for their teammates and for the class due to factors related to poor English language reading

comprehension skills they have, fear of saying wrong answer and judgment of their classmates, feeling that they don't have valuable idea to contribute, and fear of speaking in front of others. The researcher noticed that one student avoid speaking up even during FGD due to fear of speaking in front of others. This student gets worried and avoids eye contact not to speak and fear to reflect her idea in the FGD. Due to this, the researcher interviewed her individually after the FGD to make her feel good and secure. Then, encourage her to freely explain her idea.

5.4.4 Lack of interest in giving feedback to each other

During presentation of the group tasks the teacher requested students to provide feedback to each other. Majority of the students were reluctant to give feedback for their classmates and for the presenters group. They just need to hear feedback from the teacher and take answer keys he provides. During post observation discussions students reflected that they refrain from providing feedback for their fellows to avoid conflicts. In the next session, the teacher explained for the students about importance of peer feedback and how to provide positive feedback for each other. The students were also interested to start providing feedback for each other following the explanation.

5.4.5 Some students disturbance

In the first session, fewer participants and out of task that disturb teamwork and class discussions were observed. Few students challenged the teacher by forming sub-groups and talking none academic issues. When the teacher tried to make them focus on learning activities some of them react positively and started working with their teammates. However, two students continued disturbing the class. When the teacher encourages the students to involve on group discussions these two students carelessly responded for the teacher and began babbling as soon as the teacher moves to other group. In order to, shape the behavior of these students the researcher provided them advice and encouraged their teammates to involve them in group and class discussions in the next sessions.

5.4.6 Background of students' English reading comprehension skills

Though the researcher explained for the students about the need of individual students participation in explaining their ideas in each groups during the introduction session and the teacher encourage all students to involve in group discussions there were students who refrained themselves from explaining their ideas in group and class discussions. From the analysis of observation checklist result, about fifty percent of the students participate in group discussions and explain their ideas to others about the reading tasks. Particularly, most of the students participated on pre-reading tasks actively and share their experience for others. But some students who were actively participating on pre-reading activities decreased their level of engagement on while reading and post reading tasks.

In this regard, during discussion with the teacher he indicated that students' level of participation in the while and post reading activities had implication about their reading comprehension skills. As while reading and post reading tasks require students understanding of the written material, those students who have low comprehension skills show reluctance to explain their ideas. The teacher mentioned that the students who showed low involvement during the while and post reading activities were trying to share their experiences using their mother tongue. In this regard, majority of the students inclined to use Afaan Omomo during the first session, which could affect their English language skill. Congruent to the teacher's idea, during FGD students indicated that they avoid explaining their idea in group and class discussions due to fear of saying wrong answers.

To reverse this situation the researcher and the teacher explained for the students to freely explain their idea without fear of others' judgment and the teacher is there to support them. Meanwhile, the teacher encourages the students to communicate with each other and with him using English language English language.

5.4.7 In ability to complete group reading activities within a given time

Based on the time students took to complete reading comprehension activities of session one the teacher and the researcher noticed that extra time was needed for the session. Accordingly, after discussing with the students twenty minutes added for each sessions of the intervention.

5.4.8   Teamwork behavior of the students during the last reading comprehension sessions

During the group discussions, it was observed that students tendency of working reading comprehension tasks in team improved across the intervention sessions. Based on the observation the researcher noticed students' interest and motivation in working reading comprehension tasks for a common goal increased gradually. The number of students who actively participate in group discussions showed significant increment while comparing the first intervention sessions with the sessions at the end of the intervention. At the initial phase majority of students were not active in group discussions and fulfilling their assigned role in their group as facilitator, scriber and reporter. Nevertheless, as they practice social constructivism learning methods, they started working reading comprehension tasks in team.

At the beginning, majority of the students were reluctant to held individual accountability during group task. However, as the teacher teaches them teamwork skills, provide reward and consistently encouragement, monitor individual student contributions and requesting each group member to explain the work of the group, majority of the students started actively participating in team works. Throughout the final reading comprehension sessions almost all students in the experimental group showed readiness and interest in taking accountability for their role in the group. While the teacher tried to assess individual contributions in teamwork each students started freely explaining what he/she doing in the group. Based on the follow up, advice/support and encouragement from the teacher students who have discipline problem and quieter students started participating in group tasks.

Throughout the intervention sessions students showed progress in accustoming the practice of supporting each other to explain their ideas to each other. Initially, some students inclined for dominating team works and tried to do reading comprehension tasks without letting and supporting others to explain their ideas. But, the support from the teacher in developing peer scaffolding skills and his encouragement helped them to learn skill of supporting each other to explain their ideas.

Students demonstrated progressive change in explaining their ideas to one another during teamwork and class discussions. Even though many students were reluctant to explain their idea to another group member or the group as a whole in the first sessions, the researcher noticed that the intervention brought significant change. The record of each session's observation, FGD and interview results helped the teacher and the researcher to get clear insight about the each student's behavior and the type of support needed. The major challenges were that students background (low English reading comprehension), shyness, lack of confidence, low interest and motivation and discipline problems. The researcher in consultation with the teacher took remedial actions based on the specific needs of the students to learn skill of sharing ideas to one other, like scaffolding their RC skills; encouraging them to support each other in developing their comprehension skills; supporting shy and unconfident students to avoid feeling of frustration; teach them purpose of reading

lessons to enhance their interest and motivation; and advised students with discipline problems as to focus on learning tasks. These actions made the students actively engage in sessions and majority of them showed good improvement in sharing their ideas during group and class discussions. From this it is possible to infer that peer scaffolding has positive effect on improving students' engagement on teamwork.

At the beginning sessions students showed lack of willingness in providing feedback for each other. However they showed gradual improvement in this regard. The researcher observed that during the last intervention sessions students acquainted with skills of providing positive feedback for each other, for their group members and for other groups as well.

Meanwhile, the researcher noticed that shyness of two students and discipline problem of one student who was in the experimental group needs further intervention which is beyond the scope of the present study. Though the researcher and the teacher made strong effort to help the two students in avoiding free they have in speaking out they couldn't showed significant change. Additionally, one student insisted in disturbing the class despite repeated and consecutive efforts made by the researcher and the teacher to treat him and shape his behavior.

5.4.9 Students' reflection about effects of social constructivism teaching methods on Team work

Students reported that the practice of giving complementary role, comparing achievement of students across groups and providing reward for students at group level made them to actively engage in team reading activities. Students reported that during the first sessions, though the teacher gave them complementary role for members in each group as facilitator, scriber and reporter they were not happy to practice it for few sessions. During discussions I asked the students to elaborate why they were not happy. One student indicated that at the beginning some of we were afraid to present our group works, or act as scriber because we were not familiar with such kind of learning activities. But through time the encouraging class environment help us to develop confidence of working in team with others.

The students appreciated consistency of the teacher in monitoring individual contribution of students during teamwork for letting them to learn from each other and develop good reading comprehension skill. One of the participants elaborated that,

> I was carelessly participating in teamwork at the begging of the intervention, but the follow up and support of the teacher helped me to enjoy teamwork and improve my English reading comprehension skills.

> ...previously in our regular class while a teacher gave us group tasks I spent most of my time chatting with friends, I was not aware of collaborating with my teammates. After this intervention class, I and my friends started having good discussions during group reading comprehension activities and while learning other subjects in our regular class as we.

This paragraph implied that regular monitoring of individual members contribution in teamwork could enhance students' teamwork skills.

The present researcher asked the students to reflect about the formation of groups in the treatment session. In their responses, during FGD the participants of the study mentioned that at the beginning they were not happy about the group formation because in their groups they started working with their classmates which

were not their friend previously. One student indicated that in their traditional classroom learning groups are formed based on the interest of the students and they fail to have meaningful interactions because academically weak students selected their group just to be in one group with their friend or a member of a group with student who perform good academically, then they simply rely on others to get group work marks. They also stated that in their traditional class they rarely practice role rotation. Once, they assigned facilitator for a group that student remains facilitator of the group for the whole year unless s/he leave the school. The responsibility of facilitating and doing group tasks shouldered in one student only. In this regard, students reported that the role rotations within the groups during the treatment sessions engaged all students in group tasks in a similar fashion, regardless of their background. This helped them to develop self-confidence and good communication skills

The analysis of students' reflection demonstrated that the social constructivism teaching methods applied during the treatment sessions supported them to develop their communication skill in explaining their idea for their peers and the teacher, and also, confidence in freely asking questions and clarifications. Again they confirmed that the development of these predispositions supported them to improve their reading comprehension skills. Students substantiated that during the treatment allocating enough time for question and answer gave them a chance to practice effective communication and confidence on how to ask support and provide support.

On discussions, the students mentioned that the practices of collaborating, cooperating and scaffolding let them to develop leadership, decision making, trust-building, and conflict management skills. They explained by comparing with their traditional English classes. Students indicated that in their traditional classes group leaders do all group activities, majority of group leaders do not listen others idea, and take their own decisions only and academically weak students fear judgment of their classmates to involve in team and class discussions during English reading sessions. The students underscore the importance of trust building among students to freely explain their idea, asking questions or support. This idea advocates that students need to be supported and guided to develop good collaboration skills.

Additionally, allocating enough time for teamwork during the treatment was among the high points indicated by the students. By comparing with their traditional classroom group work practice students reported that time allocated for team reading activities during the intervention sessions were good. They indicated that their regular teachers did not give them enough time either for teamwork and presentation of group works. Even they did not give enough time for students who participate in class voluntarily, only few students dominate class discussions. Congruent to the students' response, the teacher stated that in his conventional class he couldn't address all reading activities by appropriately implementing student centered approach because the time allocated on the course syllabus is not enough. The syllabus allocated forty minutes uniformly for all lessons in English for Ethiopia grade 8 student textbook. However, allocating 90 minutes for each intervention session allowed all students participation in group and class discussions and let the teacher to know all students that provided him opportunities to scaffold reading process based on the specific needs of groups and individuals.

6   Discussion

As described in previous section, the pretest score of the experimental and control groups showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups reading comprehension performance, Furthermore, the effect size (*0.041*) revealed that the actual means difference between the experimental and control groups on the pretest reading comprehension performance were insignificant.Tabachnick and Fidell

(2013)guides for small (d = 0.20), medium (d = 0.50), and large (d = 0.80) effects. Therefore, the researchers had practical reason for administering posttest on both groups to evaluate the effect of the intervention on the experimental group reading comprehension performance by comparing with the control group.

The posttest score of the experimental and control groups showed statistically significant difference between the two groups reading comprehension performance, The Cohen's effect size (*d = 0.502*) also implied medium actual means difference between the experimental and control groups on posttest reading comprehension scores which signified better performance of the experimental group. In favor of the present study finding of design study conducted by Jubran (2016) showed that implementing social constructivist approach has significant effect on improving reading comprehension skills of students. It is claimed that students who attended reading classes in line with social constructivist approach scored higher than students who attend reading lessons in traditional classes because in social constructivist classroom students interact with each other, get peer feedback, share ideas, generate new ideas, expand their own ideas and help each other to reach their potential level of development. The interaction students had with their teacher also helps them to discover their mistakes and lead them to a better performance in comprehending English texts.

The comparison of scores difference on pretest and posttest reading comprehension of the gains found that the experimental group outperformed than the control. In this regard, study conducted by John (2018)elaborated that; constructivism is more efficient approach than traditional teaching methods to acquaint students with relevant comprehension skills acquisition. Similarly, another research conducted by Alemayehu and Yosef (2013) revealed that constructivist teaching methods improve overall English language skills of students including their reading comprehension skills as it implements various types of learning strategies, such as working cooperatively, getting support from the teacher, reading different types of supportive texts, asking questions freely, readily getting into class, paying attention, and having dialogue using English language. Learners meaningful interaction during group works in solving reading comprehension problems, cooperation, and assisting each other, and the teacher follow up, encouragement and support play vital role for effective development of EFL reading comprehension skills. This finding is congruent with the suggestion of Moreno (2010) about importance of providing joint rewards, shared resources and complementary roles. Therefore, allowing students to practice different group roles, making them conscious about their status and praising for good things they did could involve them in teamwork during EFL reading comprehension sessions.

Individual student's accountability in teamwork activities enhanced when teachers assess performance of each members using different follow up strategies like asking each members contribution, observing their participation and recording the contribution of each member (Johnson et al., 1998). Reflecting the context of this study, monitoring individual contribution of students during group works allowed them to focus on relevant learning tasks, enjoy teamwork and practice reading comprehension skills. This provides ample opportunity for the students to practice collaborative problem solving skills as they jointly find answers for the reading comprehension questions and lead them to greater understanding about the value of collaborative reading.

The result of this study evidenced that students didn't master positive perception towards teamwork reading activities instantly. The fact that students showed gradual improvement on: jointly working with their teammates, appreciating their differences, acting responsibly and supporting each other gradually. Congruent to the present study, findings of study on effects of social constructivism-based reading comprehension teaching design by Ardiansyah and Ujihanti (2018) reveled that participants of their study developed considerably favorable moral values towards group work progressively that manifested by working cooperatively, respecting each other, participating in reading tasks responsibly and helping each other.

Social constructivists believe that students develop effective RC skill when they interact and collaboratively work with the teacher and their peers in finding meaning of texts and that no one should have all the answers (Mchugh, 2016). The finding of the present study supports this theoretical assumption, students reflection demonstrated that the teaching methods applied during the treatment sessions supported them to develop their communication skill in explaining their idea for their peers and the teacher, and confidence in freely asking questions and clarifications. The development of these skills in turn supported them to improve their reading comprehension skills. The results of students reflection in this study signifies that social constructivism teaching methods have substantial effect on improving students' social skills. Obviously, students favored interactive EFL reading sessions than the traditional reading sessions as it provided them ample time and opportunity to improve their communication, collaboration skills, and confidence is supported by previous studies(Gokhale, 1995; Liang, 2002; Momtaz & Garner, 2010; Murda et al., 2015).

The result of the study revealed that students were satisfied regarding time allocated for reading sessions. It was evident that group reading comprehension activities requires relaxed time to have meaningful discussion between members in a team, to present group work and give/get feedbacks. This finding coincides with the result of study conducted by Gettinger (1985) which revealed that allocating sufficient time relative to time needed for learning tasks has significant effect on task accomplishment and academic performance of students.

7   Conclusion

Implementing and integrating PBL, collaborative learning, and scaffolding techniques in English reading classroom has significant effect to enhance reading comprehension skills. Practice of giving complementary role on rotational basis, comparing achievement of students across groups and providing reward for students at group level during the intervention fosters students to experience taking individual accountability, which is a key aspect of teamwork skill. Monitoring individual contribution of students during group work reading activities make them focus on relevant learning tasks, enjoy teamwork and practice reading comprehension skills. Moreover, creating encouraging, supportive, collaborative and safe classroom environment and allocating sufficient time for students during group discussions could enhance teamwork skills.

8. References

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