AETIOLOGY OF INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR READING IN ENGLISH IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KISII CENTRAL DISTRICT, KISII COUNTY KENYA

BY

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September, 2014
Declaration

I confirm that this research is my original work and has not been presented in any other University/Institution. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works including the internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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We confirm that the work presented in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as University supervisors.

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Dedication

To my children, Gertrude, Gabriel and Genevieve, may you, my little angels grow to become great and renowned scholars of your time.
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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>EGRA</td>
<td>Early Grade Reading Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learners</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>English Literacy Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRA</td>
<td>International Reading Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCPE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCSE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNEC</td>
<td>Kenya National Examinations Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L₁</td>
<td>A speaker’s first language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L₂</td>
<td>A speaker’s second language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCES</td>
<td>National Centre for Educational Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIPCOS</td>
<td>Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation Schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACMEQ</td>
<td>Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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ABSTRACT

Learning to read in a second language is a complex challenge for every child. Children require a range of skills and abilities to learn to read. The ability to read with understanding is one of the most important skills for learners, not only in English language but also in other school subjects. Kenyan primary school pupils’ reading performance as indicated in the sources cited in this thesis has for a long time been generally poor. Perhaps, this may be due to the inappropriate instructional practices used by teachers during reading lessons. This study aimed at examining the aetiology of the instructional practices prevalent in the teaching of reading in standard 4 in selected rural primary schools in Kisii central district, Kisii County, Kenya. The study was guided by the following objectives: Explore the nature of instructional practices that characterize the teaching of reading in standard 4, investigate the factors that influence a teachers’ choice of instructional practices in teaching reading, establish the level of parental involvement in promoting children’s reading development, explore the instructional resources used in the teaching of reading, establish the challenges teachers face in the teaching of reading and find out how teachers cope with the challenges encountered. The researcher used a descriptive survey research design to establish the standard 4 reading instructional situation in rural primary schools in Kisii central district. Three sampling techniques were used to draw the samples for the study namely: proportional stratified sampling technique, criterion purposive sampling technique and simple random sampling technique. The study sample consisted of: 20 headteachers and 20 teachers teaching standard 4 English Language from the sampled schools. The research instruments used for data collection included: classroom observation schedule, interview schedule, questionnaires and instructional resource checklist. The instruments were pilot tested to ensure validity and reliability. Both qualitative as well as quantitative data were generated. Qualitative data were organized according to the study themes and presented descriptively on the basis of the study objectives and research questions. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse quantitative data, Chi square was used to test for association between independent and dependent variables. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 was used to process the data. The key findings of this study point to the fact that the reading instructional situation in the study location is wanting. The reading instructional environment in the classrooms lacked key literacy support materials, most teachers’ instructional activities were course-book driven. If teachers are to make reasonable progress in reading instruction then, appropriate reading activities must be selected and applied in classroom instruction. The findings are to help Kenyan primary school teachers evaluate their instructional practices in the teaching of reading, help the curriculum developers in: selecting and sequencing appropriate content for primary English language education and English language education for teacher trainees and also aid in carrying out in-service training courses among others.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study. The key areas discussed here are: the importance of English language in education, language of instruction policy in Kenya, reading instruction in Kenya, the importance of reading in education and the reading situation in Kenya. The chapter also covers the statement of the problem, purpose of the proposed study, objectives of the study, research questions of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and the operational definition of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

This section of the thesis covers the following sub themes: importance of English language in education, language of instruction policy in Kenya, reading instruction in Kenya, importance of reading in education and the status of learners’ reading abilities in Kenya.

1.2.1 Importance of English Language in Education

Language is without doubt the most important factor in determining success in the learning process, the transfer of knowledge and skills is mediated through the spoken or written word (Bamgbose, 1992 cited in Moyo, 2009). In the Kenyan Education system for instance, English language occupies a central
position in the school curriculum, it is the medium of instruction from standard 4 onwards in all subjects except in Kiswahili.

Lisanza (2011) observes that to acquire English language in Kenya is like going through some linguistic rebirth. English language is viewed as a symbol of power, authority and elitism. Thus, English language acquisition is often associated with upward mobility and advancement in education and in the job market.

The supremacy of English language is based on its wide usage in government circles—judiciary, legislature, executive and education among others areas. This high value has seen parents and adults demand that teachers make English the language of instruction for their children as early as in grade 1, even in non English homogenous linguistic communities where the language of instruction policy requires that the learners L₁ be used as a medium of instruction. This is despite the fact that it is the medium of instruction from standard 4 onwards in all subjects except in Kiswahili. Parents feel that delayed introduction of English language will make their children to lag behind in academic scholarship.

Namachi et al. (2011) argue that learners who gain acceptable proficiency in English language are likely to reap many academic, social and professional benefits. Kimemia (2002) agrees with this position by saying that a child who is fluent and competent in English language for instance is socially seen as a well educated individual. In fact a child who does better in English language
examinations stands a better chance to be considered for further education or employment. Thiong’o (1986) cited in Lisanza (2011) illustrates this by the example of a primary school boy who received distinctions in all subjects and failed in English and was subsequently denied promotion to high school during the colonial period in Kenya. Those who failed to read or speak English during the colonial times in Kenya were always subjected to one form of punishment or another. This then basically means that English language’s supremacy and influence in educational success in Kenya dates back to the colonial period.

English language has continued to play a key role in Kenya’s educational system, not only as an important subject but also as the medium of instruction. As the medium of instruction, it has a direct bearing on the learning of other school subjects examined by the Kenya National Examinations Council (Kimani, 2013). It should be realised that English language in Kenya, as in all non-native contexts, is largely a taught language, conveyed through formal education. The teaching of English language skills—listening, speaking, reading and writing—should therefore aim at producing learners who have the ability to communicate fluently and confidently in all situations in which they find themselves in. This study sought to understand the reasons for teachers’ choice of instructional practices in the teaching of reading—a significant skill in English language—in a transitional primary school grade.
1.2.2 Language of Instruction Policy in Kenya

Language of instruction in education is an important factor in the teaching and learning process. In the Kenyan education system, the issue regarding which language should be used as the language of instruction dates back to the colonial period. Events between 1945 and 1962 for instance saw the spread of the use of English language as a medium of instruction in teacher training colleges and in primary schools (Kioko & Muthwii, 2001). According to Gorman (1974) cited in Kioko & Muthwii (2001) the number of English language medium classes rose from 14 in 1962 to 290 in 1963. The main challenge facing language in education then was providing an adequate supply of trained teachers for schools in all areas to ensure that the learners were exposed to enough English for use in other subject areas.

Immediately after independence in 1963, the then Minister for Education appointed a commission of inquiry – Kenya Education Commission-under the chairmanship of Simion Ominde, to survey among others, the influence of Language on education and on the unity of Kenya. The commission then recommended the use of English language as the medium of instruction from primary 1. The commission’s argument was that:

The English language medium makes possible a systematic development of language study and literacy which would be difficult to achieve in the vernaculars....Quicker progress is possible in learning other school subjects through the use of English language....the difficult transition from a vernacular to an English language medium is avoided. The resulting linguistic equipment is expected to be much more satisfactory, an advantage that cannot fail to expedite and improve the quality of post-primary education of all kinds (Whiteley, 1974, P. 34).
The commission further supported the inclusion of a daily period of storytelling in vernaculars or similar activities in the curriculum of primary I, II and III. It did not see it necessary to assign the vernacular languages/ First languages (L1) the role of educational instructional medium in the critical early years of schooling a role to which they were ill-adapted (Whiteley, 1974).

The 1963 Ominde commission was however, opposed by the second post-independence education commission of 1976 (Gachathi Commission). The Gachathi Commission then recommended that English and Kiswahili languages should be taught as subjects in all schools right from standard one, indigenous Kenyan languages be taught and used as languages of instruction for the first three years of primary schooling in linguistically homogeneous areas while in linguistically heterogeneous areas, English or Kiswahili language be used as a language of instruction. In the homogeneous and heterogeneous language environments English was to be used as the language of instruction from standard 4 onwards, in addition to being taught as a subject.

According to this policy, indigenous languages were perceived to play a bridging role between the language of the home and English-the language of education. The vernaculars were also believed to facilitate children’s development of concepts that enable them to easily acquire knowledge in a second or third language and in helping children acquire cultures of their community. (Sifuna, 1980; Parry, 2000 & Milton, 1992 cited in Muthwii,
This is the policy that the Kenyan Education system is currently following.

1.2.3 Reading Instruction in Kenya

The aim of teaching English language in Kenyan primary schools is to enable pupils to: acquire a sufficient command of English language in spoken and written forms, communicate fluently, follow subject courses and textbooks, and read for pleasure and information (Kenya Institute of Education syllabus, 2006). The primary English language course is meant to address itself to the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Of the four language skills, reading is the most important skill any child can leave primary school with in terms of the ability to read independently and effectively for meaning (Mynard, 2007).

The Primary English language syllabus posits that the specific objective of teaching reading in lower and upper primary schools is to enable learners acquire reading skills to be able to read and understand instructions, read for information and for pleasure. Specific to teaching reading in lower primary is the objective of enabling learners to develop vocabulary, sentence structure and comprehension skills. It is worth noting that reading is a complex process. It involves use of the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and social domains, each of which influences a reader’s reading success. Thus, reading efficiency is a matter of how effective a discourse, the reader can create from the text, either in
terms of rapport with the writer or in terms of his/her purpose in engaging in the reading in the first place.

Fundamentally, this view looks at reading as an act of interaction between a reader and the author mediated through the written text (Ajideh, 2003). To participate fully in reading, the reader must be active. Learning to read then means one’s ability to identify, pronounce words and decode their meanings using prior experiences in an interactive environment (Weaver, 1994, cited in Foertsch, 2003). It is often thought of as a hierarchy of skills, from processing of individual letters and their associated sounds, word recognition to text-processing competencies. The term reading and literacy will be used synonymously in this research thesis. Effective reading requires the use of many strategies and sources of information in order to understand written texts. Effective reading lessons require that the teacher carefully chooses instructional reading activities/practices that make learners active in reading strategies and skills development.

Young children bring a variety of information to the task of learning to read long before they join formal schooling. By the time they enter standard one, most of them have attained a high degree of phonological awareness of their first language. That is, they should have developed the conscious ability to identify and manipulate units of speech. In the Kenyan primary school education, especially in monolingual communities, the learners’ L₁ (depending
on their language community) is used as the language of instruction from standard 1-3, where many of the language activities are orally enacted.

The awareness of the sound structure of the oral language, provides a foundation upon which reading, writing and spelling can be taught. This too, serves as a foundation for learning the many conventions and features of printed language such as directionality, spacing and punctuation that are strange and new to beginning readers. Children whose first language is not English language should develop language systems at the lower primary school levels that can be used as a basis for reading instruction in the upper primary school.

The primary school English syllabus in Kenya points out the objectives and content to be taught for each class level. It does not however, exhaustively indicate the teaching methodology to be used in each, so as to enhance the achievement of the instructional objectives for each class level. This perhaps has led to teachers’ use of instructional practices that do not enable learners to attain appropriate reading grade levels. Gathumbi in Groenewegen (Ed). (2008) argues that spelling the objectives and content without the teaching methodology is a problem for language teachers whose level of English might equally be low. Furthermore, the selection for primary teacher training criteria does not focus on ones’ performance in English language but the attainment of an overall grade ‘C’ at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE)
Examination. This criterion does not take into account the trainee’s scores in English language—precipitating a situation where one may have scored an overall grade of C plain but scored poorly in English (Onyamwaro 1990 cited in Commeyras & Inyega 2007). Educators in Africa have argued that the key to educational quality is the quality of the teaching force. No education system can be stronger than its teachers (Mutuku, 2000 cited in Commeyras and Inyega 2007). This called for the examination of the instructional practices teachers use in teaching English language skills, hence understand the basis of their instruction.

1.2.4 The Importance of Reading in Education

Reading plays a significant role in the education of an individual, especially children, hence an integral part of any child’s education. Reading is indeed a basic life skill, as such it is the cornerstone for a child’s success in school and throughout life (Zygouris, 2001). It creates a good foundation and inspiration for a child’s development and education. It awakens children’s interest in books, which helps to cultivate a reading culture in them hence a push to future academic excellence. It equally provides an opportunity to develop children’s minds and this helps them form enduring habits and character (Akindele, 2012). According to UNICEF(2005) cited in Akindele (2012) young children are in their most important developmental stage of life, what they learn now and what happens to them now will influence them for the rest of their life.
The early years in the child’s life are the most significant of the child’s psychosocial and cognitive development. Indeed the reading skills children are introduced to during the early years of school life will to a large extent influence their later reading for learning experiences. Reading for literacy experience and reading to acquire and use information for instance are two major purposes that account for the majority of reading experiences of young children. Readers make meaning of reading texts in a variety of ways, depending not only on the purpose of reading, but also on the difficulty level of the text and the reader’s prior knowledge (Martin et al., 2007).

Reading as a language skill as stated elsewhere in this work occupies a central position in enabling learners to access knowledge, skills and attitudes in various fields from the early years of a child’s life. It is also important for survival purposes and for pleasure.

The ability to read with understanding is one of the most important skills, not only in learning English language but also in other school subjects (Ellis, 1985, cited in Groenewegen (Ed). 2008). Skills in reading enable learners to benefit from educational activities, and to participate fully in the social and economic activities around them. It is indeed an important foundational skill that influences academic success across the school curriculum and an indicator for overall school achievement (N’Namdi, 2005). The long term goal of reading instruction therefore, is to provide learners with the skills necessary to
construct meaning from a text. Oyetunde (2007) observes that “education without literacy is no education at all”.

For learners to develop reading skills in English language fully, the teacher should be in a position to choose instructional practices carefully and purposefully. Each instructional practice chosen must be meaningful- should be aimed at enabling the learner to acquire a particular reading competency. This should also be followed by enough practice to ensure that the learner is able to apply the learnt skill in new reading contexts. However, a teacher’s choice of inappropriate instructional practices may fail to develop in the learners the necessary reading skills to enable them make meaning from reading texts they encounter in the various fields of knowledge. This eventually leads to poor examination performance not only in English language but also in other school subjects.

Low reading achievement may perhaps be one of the factors that is the root cause of frequent low pupils’ performance in the Kenyan primary school KCPE examinations. In Kenya for instance, it has been observed that once children enrol in school, many fail to make progress from one grade to the next due to their inability to comprehend content in the various realms of knowledge covered. For example, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology’s statistics show that the grade repetition phenomenon is considerable and that
the highest repetition rate of 17.2% was in standard one by the year 2002 (MoEST, 2003).

It is possible that the low reading achievement in upper primary may contribute to children dropping out of school, since schooling becomes a burden rather than an enjoyable experience. Perhaps this is owing to the use of English language as the medium of instruction, in a situation where many children do not have an appropriate English language competency. Obanya (2001) cited in Dlamini, (2005, p. 24) in support of this claim says:

...the African child’s major learning problem is a linguistic problem. Instruction is usually delivered in a language that is not normally used in his/her immediate environment, a language neither the learner nor the teacher understands and uses well enough.

This observation significantly reflects the Kenyan scenario, more especially for schools in the rural settings where the learners’ L₁ is predominantly used in communication outside the classrooms. This perhaps explains the differences in KCPE performance between schools in rural divisions in Kisii central district and those in the urban division (ref. Table 1.2 and 1.3).

1.2.5 The Status of Learners’ Reading Abilities in Kenya

Despite the fact that educational outcomes are narrowly measured by students’ achievement in national examinations and other types of assessment, there are indications from research that Kenyan primary school learners are not attaining reading competency levels necessary for successful learning. Kigotho (3rd October, 2012) observes that 20% of Kenyan children complete primary school
without having learned how to read, write....skills that should be obtained in the first two years of primary school learning. For instance out of the 770,000 pupils who sat KCPE in 2011, 153,000 pupils registered no tangible academic skills.

The 1998, Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) administered a criterion referenced English language reading test to a representative national sample of Kenyan primary schools. The results of this study indicated that 77% of Kenyan standard 6 pupils had not attained the English language reading mastery level, deemed desirable for successful learning in standard 7 (UNESCO II EP, 2001). This perhaps points to the eventual poor performance in standard 8 Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE), both in English language and in the content areas/subjects.

In another context, a Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) report of the KCPE of 2005 observed that some of the candidates were not ready for the examination. The candidates it indicates should not have gone beyond standard 1 as they had not learned appropriate skills in reading in English language and other subject areas, by the time they sat for the examination in standard 8. The report singled out the English language composition paper where some candidates spent their examination time copying the lead sentence over and over again instead of constructing a piece of narrative in line with the sentence.
This is a clear indication of how a number of learners are not able to read and understand questions correctly due to the inappropriate reading instructional practices teachers may have taken them through during reading instruction lessons. This further shows that some second language learners leave primary school without the necessary enabling reading skills and strategies to enable them interact with printed information (Groenewegen (Ed), 2008; Gathumbi & Masembe, 2005; Inyega, 2007).

The teachers who are supposed to guide pupils to develop the reading skills are themselves poor in the same skills. For instance UNESCO studies have pointed out that a large number of teachers in North Eastern counties of Kenya for instance have little competencies in reading primary English language books. Indeed, if this is the case in most rural primary schools in Kenya, it effectively then means that pupils’ academic performance will forever remain low. As observed by Pressley (2001), most teachers’ reading instruction is usually based on post-reading comprehension testing. In this type of instruction learners are given a text to read and later attempt a comprehension task based on the text. This instructional approach assumes that learners know how to read, interpret the questions appropriately and construct appropriate responses. Equally post-reading comprehension testing in one text does not provide learners with decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension skills to overcome reading difficulties in another text. Due to lack of these enabling
skills, learners will go through the education system with little gains in reading competencies.

Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) observe that much of the teaching in Kenyan primary schools is teacher-centred and pupils are hardly ever provided with any opportunity to express their ideas. ‘Teacher-talk’ dominates classroom teaching, giving the learners little time to practice the learnt skills. This approach presupposes a situation where the teacher’s choice of instructional practices is skewed to what the teacher will do during instruction and not what learners should be taught to do. Learners in most educational settings are viewed as passive listeners who are provided with knowledge by the teacher, their contribution in meaning construction being minimal.

In Kenya, pupils from rural schools perform significantly poorer in KCPE as compared to their counterparts from schools in urban areas. In Kisii Central District of Kisii County, for instance, pupils’ KCPE English language examination performance and the overall KCPE mean grade has been below average for over 10 years as shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Kisii Central KCPE Examination Results Analysis from 2001-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English mean score</td>
<td>44.47</td>
<td>43.6</td>
<td>43.94</td>
<td>45.28</td>
<td>45.06</td>
<td>45.29</td>
<td>45.18</td>
<td>44.67</td>
<td>47.92</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall mean score</td>
<td>231.3</td>
<td>226.9</td>
<td>226.7</td>
<td>230.4</td>
<td>228.7</td>
<td>232.8</td>
<td>229.8</td>
<td>230.0</td>
<td>232.6</td>
<td>230.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kisii Central District KCPE Analysis 2010 Report
Kisii district has four divisions namely: Getembe, Kiogoro, Keumbu and Mosocho. In the years 2008, 2009 and 2010, pupils’ KCPE overall examination mean score in English language in three out of the four divisions were below average as shown in tables 1.2 and 1.3 below. The divisions with the below average KCPE performance are all located in the rural parts of the district.

**Table 1.2:** Kisii Central Divisional English Language K.C.P.E Examination results order of Merit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>2009 mean score</th>
<th>2010 mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getembe</td>
<td>56.10</td>
<td>52.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosocho</td>
<td>46.25</td>
<td>45.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiogoro</td>
<td>45.85</td>
<td>43.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keumbu</td>
<td>43.47</td>
<td>41.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Table 1.3:** Kisii Central District, Divisional K.C.P.E Examination order of Merit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>2008 mean score</th>
<th>2009 mean score</th>
<th>2010 mean score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Getembe</td>
<td>264.15</td>
<td>266.46</td>
<td>263.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosocho</td>
<td>231.19</td>
<td>232.14</td>
<td>237.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiogoro</td>
<td>222.25</td>
<td>221.65</td>
<td>218.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keumbu</td>
<td>218.54</td>
<td>212.92</td>
<td>212.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 1.2 and 1.3 above indicate that the overall means and the English Language means for the rural divisions- Mosocho, Kiogoro and Keumbu are poor compared to those of Getembe division which is located in the urban setting of the district. Primary School pupils in rural Kisii are first introduced
to formal education through their L₁ language (Ekegusii) as it is the language of the catchment area. English then becomes the language of instruction from standard 4 onwards. English and Ekegusii share the same alphabetic orthography but have different phonological features hence instruction in reading during the transitional grade requires a careful selection of instructional strategies to avoid any confusion among the learners.

Appropriate English language reading instructional practices at this level require that the learner builds on the already acquired reading skills from the use of Ekegusii (L₁) as the language of instruction. The teacher should provide an enabling English language reading instructional environment that takes into consideration the learner’s already acquired reading skills from the first language so as to enhance pupils’ knowledge construction in English language reading contexts.

As the present study endeavoured to explore reading instruction in rural primary schools in Kisii central district, two key issues were worth thinking about:

- The instructional practices a teacher uses to enable learners know how to read in a transitional grade.
- The factors that influence the choices of these instructional practices in teaching reading in a transitional grade.
1.3 Statement of the Problem

For a long time the Kenyan academic, social and political scenarios have depicted articles in the print media that decry the poor English language skills of primary, secondary and college students. Kenyan primary school pupils in particular are not attaining literacy skills necessary for successful learning, hence, low educational outcomes in the country. Kigotho (3rd October, 2012) observes that 20% of children complete primary school without having learned how to read, write....skills that should be obtained in the first two years of primary school learning. Out of the 770,000 pupils who sat KCPE in 2011, a total of 153,000 pupils registered no tangible academic skills.

The 1998 SACMEQ criterion referenced English language reading test administered to a representative national sample indicated that 77% of Kenyan standard 6 pupils had not attained the English language reading mastery level deemed desirable for successful learning in standard 7 (UNESCO II EP, 2001). Further, a Kenya National Examination Council’s (KNEC) report, accompanying the 2005 issue of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination results indicated that some candidates spent their examination time copying the lead sentence in the English language composition paper, perhaps an indication of their inability to comprehend the textual meaning contained in the question. In fact, the 2008, KCPE analysis pointed out that 70% of the total KCPE candidature of over 69,5000 pupils
failed all the 10 test items based on the English language reading comprehension (KNEC, 2009).

Pupils from rural schools in Kenya perform significantly poorer in KCPE as compared to their counterparts from urban areas (Mutuku, 2000 cited in The Kenya Literacy Project, 2006). Pupils’ KCPE performance in English language in Kisii central district has been below average for over ten years (ref. table 1.1 above). The poor performance is not only experienced in English but also in the overall mean score which has also been below 240 marks out of a possible total mark of 500.

While the range of instructional practices for the teacher’s choice in the teaching of reading is varied, there is little research on what influences a teacher’s choice of particular instructional practices in the Kenyan context during a reading lesson and whether the chosen instructional practices promote effective reading skills or not. This study therefore aimed at examining the etiological status of the instructional practices prevalent in the teaching of reading in standard 4 in selected rural primary schools in Kisii central district, Kisii County, Kenya

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of instructional practices in reading instruction and reasons for teachers’ choice of reading instructional practices in developing learner’s English language reading proficiency in standard four English language reading lessons.
1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study objectives were to:

a) Explore the nature of instructional practices that characterize the teaching of reading in standard 4

b) Examine the factors that influence a teachers’ choice of instructional practices in teaching reading

c) Establish the nature of parental involvement in promoting children’s reading development

d) Explore the instructional resources used in the teaching of reading in standard 4

e) Establish challenges teachers face in the teaching of reading in the primary school level

f) Find out how the teachers cope with the challenges encountered

1.6 Research Questions

The research questions that underpinned the present study were:

a) What instructional practices do teachers use in the teaching of reading in standard 4?

b) What influence the teachers’ choice of instructional practices in the teaching of reading?

c) In what ways are parents involved in the development of learners’ reading skills?

d) What instructional resources do teachers use in the teaching of reading?

e) What influences the teacher’s choice of instructional resources in reading lessons?
f) What difficulties do the teachers face in teaching reading?

g) How do the teachers overcome the difficulties encountered?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings, suggestions and recommendations of this study will benefit a cross section of stakeholders in English language reading instruction. They include:

1. The Ministry of Education will be able to understand the primary school teacher’s reading instructional practices in relation to the Kenya development plan on literacy development among primary school children as it is enshrined in the government’s sessional paper no. 1 of 2005. (Ministry of education, April, 2012)

2. Provide standard 4 teachers of reading with feedback on the reading instructional process. This will help them evaluate own instruction with what research has brought fourth. This will help to ensure that quality instruction is going on in the primary school level.

3. Provide a platform for teachers to observe the nature of instructional practices used in teaching reading and whether these instructional practices help to develop reading skills in the learners.

4. Guide policy and decision personnel in decision making, evaluating and reviewing of the English language teaching curriculum in the primary school and teacher training levels.
5. Help to guide the ministry of education in selecting and designing of instructional resources targeted at promoting reading development among the primary school pupils.

6. Help schools and Ministry of Education to determine the in-service reading instructional courses that need to be mounted for primary school teachers to up-date them on the latest reading instructional developments.

7. Provide necessary in-puts in literacy-reading instructional training programmes for primary school teachers aimed at making them competent in reading instruction. College tutors will have access to information on effective reading instructional strategies that is useful for future training of English language primary school teachers. This will guide their training of primary school teachers of English language on the effective reading instructional strategies for effective development of reading competencies in the primary school going children.

8. Provide an additional in-put in the already existing literature in the area of reading instruction, thereby stimulating further research on ways of adopting appropriate instructional practices in the teaching of reading in English language.
1.8 Scope of the Study
The study was confined to public primary schools in Kisii Central district. The subjects that constituted the study sample were drawn from the rural public primary schools in the area. This is because in lower primary (classes 1-3), the language of instruction is the homogeneous language of the catchment area (Kisii) and English language as a medium of instruction is introduced in primary standard 4 which was the focus of this study. The study specifically focused on the teaching of reading in standard 4- a transitional grade from the use of L₁ to L₂ as the language of instruction.

1.9 Limitations of the Study
The study sample was picked from rural primary schools with a homogeneous L₁. Access to English by learners in this language environment is usually delayed hence have low literacy levels. The outcomes obtained in this study were therefore depended on the respondents, observations and the video recordings made during data collection period.

Initial expectations were that each school had three reading lesson from which observations were to be carried out. However, only one reading lesson was observed, since teachers’ explained that time was not adequate to give reading as a skill the three lessons envisioned in the syllabus. This however did not affect the quality of data collected.
1.10 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the assumption that all the teachers teaching in the sampled schools had gone through the primary teacher professional training and more specifically English language was one of the subjects they were trained in. The pupils in the schools were also assumed to belong to a homogeneous language community, hence the language of instruction during their learning in standards 1, 2 & 3 was the vernacular of the language community. The study also made the assumption that the official education language of instruction policy as stated in the ministry of education policy guidelines was implemented in the study schools.

1.11 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework guiding this study is based on the premise that success in learning to read is enhanced by the active involvement of the learner during the reading process. This is in line with Bernhardt’s 1986 constructivist model of second language reading, which emphasizes that reading is an active process of constructing meaning where the reader incorporates textual information to his existing system of knowledge -prior knowledge (Yu-Chen, 2008).

The model posits that certain text based and conceptual based components interact as a reader constructs meaning from an L2 text. The text-driven factors consist of phonemic/ graphemic decoding (recognition of words based on sound or visual match), word recognition (the semantic value of the words),
and syntactic feature recognition (interpretation of the relationships between words within sentences). On the other hand, the conceptually driven factors are intra-textual perception (the reconciliation of each part of the text with that which precedes and succeeds), prior knowledge (whether the text makes sense based on the reader’s previously acquired knowledge), and meta-cognition (the extent to which the reader is thinking about what and how well he/she is reading) (Li-Chun Lee, 2008). This model is illustrated in figure 1.1 below.
Figure 1.1: Bernhardt’s Constructivist Model of Reading

Source: Bernhardt’s (1986) in Li-Chun Lee (2008)

Key

- Interactions between the various reading components
- Interactions between text based reading components
- Interactions between conceptual based reading components

This model provides very significant insights in the teaching of reading at all grade levels. Firstly, it helps to define L2 reading as a process that is non-linear but interactive (see all arrows). The interactions occur between all the components contributing to the success in any L2 reading comprehension.
process. That is, the interactions occur within the text based components (arrows shown in red), the conceptual based components (arrows shown in blue) and between the text based and conceptual based components (arrows shown in black). During the reading process the reader equally interacts with the text and the teacher as well as other learners during reading lessons. Secondly, it emphasizes the active involvement of the reader during the reading process. In this sense then, a reader needs to employ various reading strategies to enable him/her become an active participant in the reading activity.

Constructivism in reading instruction views the reader as actively involved in building a mental representation of the reading text by combining new information from the text with previously acquired knowledge. Since, reading is a constructive process, readers read between the lines and make their own connections often on the basis of schematic knowledge structures. Holding a constructivist view of knowledge enables the teacher to effectively understand what it entails to produce effective learners. In fact reading instructional practices embedded in this theoretical orientation will always produce reading learners who are effective in handling texts of varied nature and who will embrace the ‘reading to learn’ philosophy in the subsequent grades.

A teacher’s understanding of these insights will help him/her to carry out reading instruction that will target to enhance the learners’ development of effective reading abilities. It should be realised that the main aim of a reading
lesson is to teach learners appropriate reading strategies (enabling skills) that will help them comprehend a text they are reading and those they will come across in the course of their learning. According to Yurdaisik (2008), learning occurs not by recording information but by interpreting the information one is provided with. Students actively process information, using prior knowledge, skills, and strategies. Teachers therefore, cannot simply transfer knowledge to the learners, instead, they have to teach them the process through which they can actively process knowledge during the reading lesson.

Research on early-grade reading points out that effective reading is made possible through active learning on how to read (Kara, 2008). As argued by Andima (2004 & 2012), learners in a constructivist classroom have the opportunity to take personal responsibility, exercise initiative and be in control in the instructional setting through a variety of experiences-instructional activities- provided by the teacher. He further argues that it is important to position the learner to be an active and engaged participant during the learning process.

In Kenya, the English language syllabus for primary education outlines the topics that need to be covered at each grade level. It does also suggest the instructional activities learners should be taken through in developing effective reading abilities. These suggested reading activities are not exhaustive, thus a teacher is then left to come up with what he/she deems to be appropriate for the
reading topics. This decision on which reading instructional practices one will choose so as to yield effective reading development is very critical in the teaching of reading. In an ideal situation this decision in influenced by four key variables: school administrative related factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors and the instructional resource factors. However, given the differences in the instructional environments teachers work in, the influences are varied. This study sought to explore the nature of instructional practices and what influences a teacher’s choice of these instructional practices in the teaching of reading in selected rural primary schools in Kisii central district of Kisii county. These factors in the instructional environment are discussed in the conceptual framework below.

1.12 Conceptual Framework
The long term goal of reading instruction is to provide learners with the skills necessary to construct meaning from a text. A teacher’s choice of instructional practices to meet this goal is often dependent on the instructional environment under which the teacher works in. The factors within the instructional environment that influence a teacher’s choice of instructional practices can be categorized into: school administrative factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors and instructional resource factors as illustrated in figure 1.2 below.
The instructional environment illustrated in figure 1.2 above consists of; school administrative factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors and instructional resource factors. These are the independent variables in this study. Each of them influences the other, thus determining the nature of instructional practices (dependent variable) a teacher will choose for his/her reading lesson.
For instance, if a school puts in place supportive reading policies more reading materials will be purchased. This will in turn expose the learners to more reading texts, consequently influencing the teacher’s choice of reading instructional activities based on the available texts.

1.13 Operational Definition of Terms

Aetiology
It is a critical analysis of the underlying reasons for a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in the teaching of reading in English in the primary school level.

Instructional practices
These are the activities the teacher engages learners in during reading instruction so as to enable them become effective readers.

Instructional resources
This will be used to refer to the materials, equipment and media used in the teaching and learning process.

Phonemic/phonological awareness
Phonemic awareness is an insight about oral language and in particular the segmentation of sounds that are used in speech communication. It is characterized in terms of the facility of the language learner to manipulate and produce sounds during oral communication. It helps children sound out words as they begin to read.
**Phonics**

This is a way of teaching reading through understanding the pronunciation of letters/sounds and group of letters. That is the relationship between letter symbols and letter sounds in English language.

**Reading**

Reading means one’s ability to decode a text, understand words and construct meanings of the text using one’s prior experiences, the context and the text content. It will also be used synonymously with the term literacy.

**Reading skill**

Skill refers to the ability to perform well or proficiently. Reading skill results in decoding and comprehension with speed, efficiency, fluency and usually occurs without awareness of the components/ control involved.

**Reading strategy**

A reading strategy is a deliberate goal, directed attempt to control and modify a reader’s efforts to decode a text, understand words and construct meanings of the text e.g. rereading, questioning as one reads a text to enhance comprehension. It simply refers to specific actions taken by the teacher and learner to make reading easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations. This is a cognitive tool a reader will employ to go around reading difficulties as and when they occur.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Learning to read is a sign of literacy and a gateway to education. It involves mastery of a rich variety of skills and is not accomplished quickly or easily. As a consequence, reading instruction forms a large part of the educational curriculum for many education systems all over the world during the early school years and is a basic concern of teachers, parents, and researchers. This chapter offers a review of the literature relevant to the study and is divided into several sections: methods of teaching English language as a second language, theories of reading, teaching reading, the teacher’s role in reading instruction, factors influencing teachers’ instructional reading decisions, parental involvement in primary school going children’s reading development, instructional resources in reading instruction, challenges facing teachers in the teaching of reading, teaching reading strategies, teaching reading in Kenya and Instructional practices and student achievement in reading instruction and Research on reading instruction.

2.2 Methods of Teaching English as a Second Language

Method, approach and technique are three terminologies sometimes used interchangeably by many people. Though closely related, each of them describes a different scenario within the teaching continuum. Anthony (1963) cited in Richards and Rodgers (1995) observes that language teaching is
hierarchical; it starts from approach to method and then technique. Approach refers to the theories about the nature of language learning that serve as the source of instructional practices and principles in language teaching e.g. the behavioural and cognitive approaches.

Method on the other hand is a systematic collection of activities and procedures which are derived logically from approach e.g. phonic, look and say, whole word methods. Techniques then, are the individual activities which are implemented during a lesson which in turn stems directly from method (Richards and Rodgers, 1995; Gathumbi, 1995). This includes activities such as loud reading, silent reading, questioning among others. Techniques as illustrated above will be used synonymously to mean the instructional practices used in reading instruction. A teacher’s choice of instructional activities referred to as instructional practices in this study is not only informed by a particular view of language and theory of learning, but it must also be consistent with a particular method of teaching. Some of these methods of teaching English as a second language are discussed in the section below.

2.2.1 Grammar Translation

This method is based on the premise that second language teaching should best be captured through spelling out of grammatical rules whose knowledge is then used to translate sentences from L₁ to L₂ and vice versa. Stern (1983) cited in Gathumbi (1995) says that L₁ is regarded as the reference system through which L₂ is acquired. L₁ is actually the medium of instruction and is used to
explain new items. Groenewegen (Ed). 2008) point out the following as the key features of this method in teaching English: emphasis on the writing skill, because its proponents believed that the written word is more important than the spoken form; explanation of grammar rules with examples; presentation of vocabulary in a bilingual list; translation from mother tongue to English and vice versa; selection of reading passages incorporating the above rules and vocabulary; development of exercises to provide practice on the structure and vocabulary introduced and accurate memorization of rules and content.

This method is still in use in a number of language classrooms in Kenya, especially with beginners (Gathumbi, 1995). Teachers using this method select their instructional activities such that the focus is on the written word, the rules of grammar and translation from L₁ to L₂ in order to enhance language learning. In this method reading is based on the word translations and reading comprehension is not emphasized.

This method may work well in beginner classes but may not be appropriate in the teaching of reading in the upper primary school levels, given the heavy language of education policy demands contained in the English language syllabus. This study aimed at establishing the instructional activities that are based on this method and why teachers chose to use them in the teaching of reading in a transitional class.
2.2.2 Direct method

This method was influenced by the need to communicate with other people. The key characteristics stressed by this method include: emphasis on teaching directly in the target language-English; emphasis on the listening and speaking skills-articulation of phonemes, words, the correct grammar and pronunciation of spoken forms of language; use of demonstration, pictures and models was used to teach concrete vocabulary while association of ideas was used to teach abstract vocabulary (Gathumbi, 1995; Groenwegen (Ed), 2008; Richard and Rodgers, 1995). The teacher in this case replaces the textbook in the early stages of learning. Verbal communication skills are promoted through question and answer exchanges between the teacher and the learners. This method is based on the recommendations of the Ominde commission – Kenya Education Commission of 1963. The commission had recommended that English be used as the language of instruction from primary one. Their argument was that by immersing learners into learning the second language early enough in their schooling life could enable them overcome difficulties in the systematic language development unlike in situations where L1 was used interchangeably with English language.

Despite the inherent weaknesses, Gathumbi (1995) observes that aspects like question, answer exchanges, emphasis on correct grammar and pronunciation are still practised in some Kenyan classrooms. This method works best in classrooms with smaller student populations in as far as verbal exchanges are concerned. With the enactment of free- primary education in Kenya most of the
classes in primary schools are over-populated. Reading for meaning in these classes may not benefit adequately from the limited verbal exchanges that are characteristic of this method.

2.2.3 Audio- Lingual method

This method is based on the structural theory of language teaching and learning. Language according to this theory is viewed as a system of structurally related elements for the encoding of meaning, the elements being phonemes, morphemes, words, phrases, clauses and sentences. This approach emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening skills before reading and writing. Reading in a second language is seen as incidental to oral language skills (Fries, 1945 and 1963 cited in Bharuthram, 2006). Proponents of this method argue that the primary medium of language is oral: speech in language. The theory of learning underlying the audio-lingual method is the behaviourist theory which is based on the belief that repeated behaviour occurrences leads to the permanence of that behaviour.

In fact, the process of learning to read is seen as being mechanical: “students develop habitual (eventually automatic) recognition of the written symbols corresponding to familiar (that is, spoken) language patterns . The behaviourist theory advances the notion that a human being is an organism capable of a wide repertoire of behaviours. The occurrence of these behaviours is dependent along the stimulus, response and reinforcement practices, which could only be possible through oral instruction with the main objective of language teaching being oral proficiency (Richards and Rodgers, 1995, Bharuthram, 2006).
Classroom practices that were considered fit for oral fluency involved listening comprehension, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Dialogue played a major role in language teaching in the classroom, since it provided the context of the structures, showed situations in which such structures could be used and the cultural contexts of the target language (Gathumbi, 1995). The main features of this method are: use of drills and dialogue on carefully graded series of grammatical structures, use of mimicry and memorization where learners imitate native speakers, learning dialogue and responses by heart.

All these are based on the premise that attaining perfect pronunciation is more important than meaning (Gathumbi, in Groenewegen(Ed) 2008). Learners are viewed as playing a reactive role by responding to stimulus and hence little control over the content, pace or style of learning. They are discouraged from initiating interactions so as to avoid making mistakes. This is actually a teacher-controlled teaching method. The teacher models the target language, controls the direction and pace of learning, monitors and corrects learners’ performance. Drills and use of dialogue in language teaching are some of the aspects present in language classrooms in Kenya. This method is more inclined to the bottom –up model of reading hence may not produce effective readers on its own.

2.2.4 Oral approach/ Situational Language Teaching

According to Palmer (1917,1921) cited in Gathumbi(1995) the development of the oral approach involved a systematic study of principles and procedures that
could be applied to the selection, gradation and organization of the course content of a language course. It also included the techniques of presentation. The theory underlying situational language teaching is the behaviourist–habit learning theory. Frisby (1957, p.136) cited in Richards and Rodgers (1995) argues:

As Palmer has pointed out, there are three processes in learning a language—receiving the knowledge or materials, fixing it in the memory by repetition, and using it in actual language practice until it becomes a personal skill which one can use freely in diverse language contexts.

The objectives of the situational language teaching method are to: teach a practical command of the four basic skills of language—listening, speaking, reading and writing; achieve an automatic control of basic structures and sentence pattern, which is fundamental to reading and writing skills through speech work.

Neither the native language nor the target language was to be used to explain the meaning of structures or new words but the meanings had to be induced from the way the form is used in a situation. Situational language teaching classrooms are teacher-directed with teachers acting as the controllers of the classroom activities. Teachers act as models by setting up situations that are conducive to practicing a particular structure and then, modelling the structure for the students to repeat. A drill based manner of presenting new sentence patterns is practiced. Pittman (1963) cited in Richards and Rodgers (1995) points out that ....almost all the vocabulary and structures taught in the first four–five years and even later can be placed in situations in which meaning is
clear. This is more relevant in the teaching of vocabulary through word picture associations. Some aspects of this method are still used in language classrooms in Kenya (Gathumbi, 1995). However, the present study was concerned with the type of teacher’s instructional activities and reasons for the choice of these instructional activities during reading lessons.

2.2.5 Communicative Language Teaching Method

The communicative language teaching is based on the premise that it is important to look at communicative aspects of language rather than at mere mastery of linguistic structures. The theory underlying this method views language as communication. The theory mainly focuses on the communicative proficiency of the learner. Hymes (1972) argues that the goal of language teaching is having communicative competence on the part of learners (Richards and Rodgers, 1995; Gathumbi and Masembe, 2005). This is the ability to know if an utterance is formal, informal, feasible or appropriate. This is clearly embedded in the instructional practices in language teaching classes that embrace this method.

The communicative language teaching is learner-centred. It advocates for cooperative learning where individual activities give way to group and pair work. Through this, learners are encouraged to interact and hence make meaningful use of language. Students are encouraged to engage in dialogue and class discussions either verbally or in written forms. The teacher plays two important roles in a communicative classroom: a facilitative role, creating
opportunities for everyone to participate and a participative role, independently participating in a group without using his/her authority to influence other members of the group, this position is in line with the constructivist view of L₂ reading instruction adopted in this study. This theory is a more modern approach to the teaching of English language skills.

Although this section has majorly focused on the methods of teaching the four English language skills, some of the issues addressed will specifically apply to the teaching of reading in particular. That is deriving meaning of lexical items in an L₂ text and getting meaning of an extended text. Although reading is not taught as an isolated skill in Kenyan language classrooms as is the case in developed countries, this study captured what goes on during the reading lessons within the integrated English language curriculum. Whatever method a reading teacher employed in a reading lesson, were greatly influenced by certain environmental factors. This was the concern of this study.

2.3 Theories of Reading

Effective reading is associated with making meaning from printed words. The following theories explain the different ways through which reading can be explained.

2.3.1 Bottom-up model

Wray and Medwell (1991. P. 97) cited in Mutenda (2008) indicate that reading can be seen as a ‘bottom up’ process which begins from the perceptual recognition and decoding of letters up to the level of the sentence, paragraph,
page and finally the complete text. According to Gough (1970), Laberge & Samwel’s (1975) cited in Mutenda (2008) it is necessary for children to excel in phonetic decoding and word recognition so as to comprehend a text. This Model views reading as a process which begins outside the reader whose task is to transfer into his or her consciousness the meaning represented by the writer as graphic symbols. The model suggests that meaning is obtained in a step by step fashion going from a letter to meaning as a sequence (Mutenda 2008, Yu-chou, 2008).

The phonic method is based on this model with the perception being that children should master sound-spelling relationships before they make meaning out of print. Newman (1979) cited in Yu-chou (2008) holds that without phonics, which is the backbone of word recognition, it would be difficult for a child who did not know words by sight to make sense of anything s/he reads. Knowledge of a simple phonetic rule will enable him to decode words. This is in line with the Kenyan English language syllabus recommendations in the teaching of reading especially in lower primary.

Teaching of reading in English in standard four should build on the basic reading skills- letter, sound and word identification covered in lower primary and gradually move on to the more complex skills that bring about the realization of meaning. Their coverage in standard four is meant to ensure no learners are left behind as the teacher rolls out the use of English as a language
of instruction policy in education where all subjects in the syllabus are supposed to be taught in English except Kiswahili. This study hoped to establish the reasons for the choice of reading activities that subscribe to this method.

2.3.2 Top-down model

This model postulates that the reading process starts in the mind of the reader. In other words, the model starts with the prior knowledge of a learner. It assumes that the most important “feature of reading is what is brought to the text from within the reader’s mind” (Mutenda 2008). Goodman, (1976) cited in Yu-chou (2008), argues that the reading processes are initiated by making guesses about the meaning of the text. As the ongoing decoding process continues, readers decode the text to either verify or modify their guesses. For Goodman (1976) the reading process is a psycholinguist guessing game in which readers rely more on the structure and meaning of language rather than on the graphic information from text.

By the time pupils reach standard four they should have mastered a good degree of knowledge in the L₁. This and the knowledge (schema) acquired from the environment they live in, will provide a basis for interpreting the text they read. Some of the methods of teaching reading based on this model include; look and say, story/whole sentence and language experience method. However, learners in standard four may not have acquired sufficient prior knowledge to enable them make meaning of their L₂ texts without a good
mastery of the lower level skills. These lower level skills as captured in the bottom-up model include; rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms. Given the limited English language exposure of learners in rural schools this study established the reasons that guide a teacher’s choice of instructional reading activities, more especially in a transitional grade. Due to the perceived weakness in the top-down model, the interactive theory may be found more effective. This theory is the subject of discussion in the next section.

2.3.3 Interactive model

This model is a combination of the ‘bottom-up’ and ‘top down’ models of reading (Mutenda, 2008; Buys, 2004 & Brown, 2004). The model claims that reading is both a perceptual and a cognitive process in which the reader uses both previous experiences and the ‘code’ features of the text to create meaning. As we have already seen, bottom-up theory relates to text or data driven processes, where the reader processes the text letter by letter, word by word, in order to arrive at the meaning the author intended. Top-down theory, on the contrary, is conceptually driven. The reader brings expectations to the text and continues to make predictions as s/he samples the text, while omitting parts of the text which s/he considers to be unimportant. If the predictions appear to be incorrect, the reader will return to read the text more carefully in order to create further predictions (Urquhart and Weir, 1998; Singhal, 1999 cited in Brown, 2004).
As Urquhart and Weir (1998: 42) point out, “Goodman views reading as a process of hypothesis verification, whereby the readers use selected data from the text to confirm their guesses.” Goodman (1967) used the term “psycholinguistic guessing game” to describe the reading process. This is a demonstration of the use of a reading strategy in making meaning of an L2 text. This was the aspect of interest in this study.

Reading is actually seen as a process which employs various sources of knowledge to access meaning which is not restricted to the text alone, but is a co-construction of the writer’s text and the reader’s interpretation. This clearly captures the spirit of Bernhadt’s (1986) constructivist theory of second language reading. Current popular ‘interactive models’ thinking suggest that the most successful readers are both skilful ‘bottom-up’ processors of texts-they can convert the language on the page into the information it represents both rapidly and accurately- and skilful ‘top-down’ processors- they can relate this new information to the relevant knowledge they already have to construct a plausible meaning for the text. In fact, the model assumes that during reading, skills at all levels (lower and higher) are interactively available to the reader to enable him/ her process and interpret the reading text. The model has informed the eclectic category of reading methods as highlighted by Gray (1969) in Mberia (2002). This category emphasizes both the analytical and synthetic methods of reading instruction. This model postulates that successful readers
use these two models simultaneously (Eskey, 1988, 1997 cited in Mberia, 2002). This study borrowed a lot from Bernhardt’s constructivist reading model as shown in the theoretical framework in chapter one.

2.4 Teaching of Reading

Approaches to reading instruction often differ since they are dependent on one’s definition of what reading is. This is why a comprehensive treatment of this aspect of reading in this study is important. The Atlantic Canada English language arts curriculum (1998) in Kara (2008) for instance, defines reading as a meaning-making, problem-solving process in which the reader interprets or constructs meaning from the text by applying knowledge of the language, meaning-making strategies and personal experiences. In this case meaning is constructed through interactions between the text and the reader.

The content of meaning is influenced by the text and the reader’s prior knowledge that is brought to bear on it (Anderson & Pearson, 1984 cited in Kara, 2008). This then determines the nature of instructional activities the learner is exposed to during the early school years. Since reading is an interactive process that is dynamic and constantly changing, each new task or assignment will alter the learning process, and challenge the reader to be active in her approach to the text.

Developing English language reading learners are often challenged with the changing nature of reading tasks especially as they move from one class level
to the next. They actually lack some of the strategies that expert readers employ as they read. Because of this, learners should be encouraged to take an active role in their learning process. Likewise, teachers play an important role in preparing students for the reading task and can help them become more aware of the reading characteristics they bring to the task.

Carrell and Floyd (1987) in Ajideh (2003) maintain that the ESL teacher must provide learners with appropriate schemata they are lacking, and must also teach them how to build bridges between existing knowledge and new knowledge. Accordingly, the building of bridges between a learner’s existing knowledge and new knowledge is needed for text comprehension. A number of organized pre-reading approaches and methods have to be used to facilitate reading through activation of background knowledge.

Mackay et al. (1979) cited in Ajideh (2003) draw several inferences in relation to the selection and use of second language reading materials for the activation of background knowledge while looking at Goodman’s 1970 definition of reading. The definition states:

Reading is a selective process that involves partial use of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader’s expectation. As this partial information is processed, tentative decisions are made to be confirmed, rejected or refined as reading progresses (Goodman, 1970, p.260).

The first inference is that reading is an active process. The reader forms a preliminary expectation about the material, then, selects the fewest, most productive cues that are significant in confirming or rejecting the preliminary
expectation. This is aided by the reader’s knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, and the real world. Secondly, reading must be viewed as a two-fold phenomenon involving process comprehending- and product-comprehension. Lastly that reading involves an interaction between thought and language. A reader brings to the task of reading a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs. This knowledge, coupled with the reader’s ability to make linguistic predictions, determines the expectations the reader will develop as s/he reads. Skills in reading depends on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world.

There is much debate concerning how best to instruct students to learn to read. Research has pointed out that the question of how to best teach beginning reading is the most debated topic in the field of education. After reviewing more than 100,000 studies, findings of the National Reading Panel (National Reading Panel, 2000 cited in Kara, 2008) found out that to become good readers, students require instruction and mastery in the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness (the ability to distinguish the individual sounds that make up spoken language), phonic skills (knowledge of the sounds that letters and letter combinations make and how to sound out words) fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension strategies.
In Kenya initial instruction of these components is taught in the learners’ L₁. This is in line with the language of instruction policy where pupils are instructed in the first language of the catchment area from standard 1-3 with English being taught as a subject and becoming a language of instruction from standard four onwards. Research has demonstrated that teaching pupils to read in L₁ promotes their reading achievement in L₂ (Goldenberg, 2010). This is perhaps as a result of a positive transfer of what has been learnt in L₁ to an L₂ context.

Standard Four is a critical period in a learner’s schooling in countries where English language is an L₂ and is used as a language of instruction more so in Kenya. The learners are not only required to sound out letters and subsequently words, but they must also attempt to understand the meaning of the words in connected texts. This will help them to effectively understand English as well as information in content areas. As observed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress-NAEP (1999), in Weaver (2002), fourth grade reading has three reading achievement levels. These are:

- **Basic reading achievement level**

  Learners performing at this level should be able to demonstrate understanding of the overall meaning of what they read. When reading fourth grade level texts, they should be able to make relatively obvious connections between the text and their own experiences and also extend the ideas in the text by making simple inferences.
- **Proficient reading achievement level**

Learners performing at this level should demonstrate an overall understanding of the text, provide inferential as well as literal information. When reading fourth grade level texts they should be able to extend the ideas in the text by making inferences, drawing conclusions and making connections to own experiences.

- **Advanced reading achievement level**

Learners performing at this level should be able to generalise about topics in the reading selection and demonstrate an awareness of how authors compose and use literary devices. When reading fourth grade level texts, the learners should be able to judge texts critically and give thorough answers that indicate careful thought.

These reading achievement levels sound more ideal than real especially for learners in the developing world. They should not scare reading educators but should act as a framework through which reading instruction should be organised. The essential reading components’ instruction should aim at enabling learners attain these levels gradually.

Phonological awareness is one of the best predictors of success in reading acquisition. The possession of phonological awareness skills in the early elementary years is associated with successful reading acquisition in later elementary grades (Juel, 1988; Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Burgess & Hecht,
Phonemic awareness, a sub-category of phonological awareness has been indicated as being the most sophisticated level of phonological awareness and the most important factor for learning to read.

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to isolate and manipulate phonemes, which are the smallest individual sounds in spoken words. Successful instruction in phonemic awareness is most effective when it focuses on both phoneme segmentation and blending. An example of phoneme blending would be to have students listen to a sequence of phonemes and combine them to form a word (i.e., the sounds /r/ /a/ /n/ make the word ran). An example of phoneme segmentation is having students break a word into its separate sounds, saying each individual phoneme (the word fast is made up of the sounds /f/ /a/ /s/ /t/). Phonemic awareness instruction helps all students acquire word recognition skills, including normally developing readers, children at risk for future reading problems, and students with reading disabilities (National Reading Panel, 2000 cited in Kara, 2008).

Phonics instruction is another component of effective reading instruction. Phonics teaches the relationships between the letters of written language...
(graphemes) and the individual sounds of spoken language (phonemes) and how these relationships are used to read and write words. There are different instructional approaches to phonics, including synthetic phonics and analytic phonics. Synthetic (or explicit) phonics programmes teach students to convert letters into sounds and then blend the sounds to form recognizable words. In contrast, analytic (or implicit) phonics programmes teach students to analyze letter-sound relationships in previously learned words to detect phonetic and orthographic patterns.

Readers do not always need to apply sounding out strategies to read words. The goal of reading instruction is to build up a reader’s sight word vocabulary. Words that often appear in students’ readings become sight words most readily. Effective sight word instruction for students who struggle with reading involves the introduction of words in groups, which are taught to mastery each week and followed by activities, repeated readings, and sentence reading practice with the sight words (e.g., Bryant, Fayne, & Gettenger, 1982; Lovett et al., 2000; Vellutino et al., 1996 cited in Kara, 2008).

Research studies examining word recognition strategies have overwhelmingly found that instruction for students who are struggling with reading, must be even more explicit and systematic, than instruction required by the majority of children (Kara, 2008). The teacher in explicit instruction directly explains models, and guides student learning. Major components of explicit instruction
include teaching in small steps, guiding students during initial practice, and providing them with high levels of successful practice (Simmons, Fuchs, Mathes, & Hodge, 1995 cited in Kara, 2008). This method of delivery can be used with one student, with small groups, or entire classrooms.

Systematic instruction is a teaching method that clearly identifies a carefully selected and useful set of relationships and then organizes the introduction of these relationships into a logical instructional sequence. It involves activities and lessons which are planned out over the entire content domain and provides students with ample opportunities to practice applying the knowledge of the relationships they have learned.

Reading comprehension is the other important component of reading instruction. Reading comprehension starts with decoding words, processing those words in relation to one another, and then operating on the ideas in the text to construct the overall meaning encoded in the text. The meaning constructed by the reader is a function of the ideas explicitly represented in the text and the reader’s response to those ideas. A reader’s response is often dependent on his or her prior knowledge (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Rosenblatt, 1978, cited in Kara 2008). Reading comprehension in fact consists of the processes of understanding and constructing conceptual knowledge from a text through active interaction and involvement with the text.
Instruction in Comprehension should begin early in the elementary school years because it will become increasingly important in the mid to late elementary grades (Sweet & Snow, 2003 cited in Kara, 2008). Comprehension is thought to improve with the teaching of comprehension strategy instruction. Effective reading comprehension instruction includes strategies such as; prior knowledge activation, question generation during reading, construction of mental images representing the meanings expressed in text, summarization and analyzing stories into story grammar components.

In conclusion, it should be realised that effective reading instruction as captured in ‘The American Federation of Teachers report (1999, pp. 7-8) Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science- cited in Zygouris (2010)’ should include the following:

- direct instruction of decoding, comprehension, literature appreciation and phoneme awareness instruction
- systematic and explicit instruction in the code system of written English
- daily exposure to a variety of texts, as well as incentives for children to read independently and with others
- vocabulary instruction that includes a variety of complementary methods designed to explore the relationship between words and the relationships between word structure, origin, and meaning
- comprehension strategies that include prediction of outcomes, summarizing, clarification, questioning, and visualization
- frequent writing of prose to enable deeper understanding of what is read.

2.5 The Teacher’s Role in the Teaching of Reading

The role of teachers in developing reading skills in learners is to create favourable reading environments and to guide them in ways similar to that of
care-givers in earlier years (Glazer and Burke, 1994 cited in Adam 2010). In performing this role teachers become observers of behaviour which requires them to have knowledge of human growth and development and apply that knowledge to behaviours they observe in children. They can then plan appropriate instructional activities to meet individual learner’s academic, emotional, social and physical needs in the classroom. The Early Childhood and Literacy Development Committee of the International Reading Association (1986) cited in Adam (2010) suggested the following roles for teachers in reading instruction:

- build instruction on what the child already knows about oral language, reading and writing. Children first learn oral language at home. Their initial exposure to reading and writing does to an extent take place at their home situations. In order to avoid the confusing and conflicting environments in the mind of the child, it is desirable that the home and the school environments are not separated. The instruction given by teachers should be built on what the child already knows. This makes the role of the teacher easier as well as making the learning faster on the part of the child.

- respect the language the child brings to school and use it as a base for language and literacy activities. Children first learn oral language at home. Their initial exposure to reading and writing does to a large extent take place at their home situations. The instruction by the reading teacher should be in the language the child already knows. This
will make learning easier as well as making the learning faster on the part of the child.

- provide reading experiences as an integrated part of the broader communication process which includes speaking, listening and writing. Communication takes place in various forms such as speaking, listening, writing and reading. It is important that teachers perceive reading as an integral part of the communication process. By providing reading experiences as an integrated part of the broader communication process, they are developing the communication abilities of the child which is core to their literacy development.

- use material for instruction that is familiar, such as well-known stories as these provide the child with a sense of control and confidence. The use of unfamiliar material and stories ignores the experience the children have from home situations. It also makes the school environment to the children strange resulting to fears and uncertainties that affect the children’s schooling morale. On the other hand the use of familiar materials and stories eliminate possible fears thereby making learning an enjoyable experience. The teacher should also build on available experience and this brings about closer working together between the teacher and the child. The familiarity of material and stories also boost the confidence and motivation of children as they feel being in control of the learning situation.
• make parents aware of the reasons for specific language programs at school and provide them with ideas for activities to carry out at home. Parents may not be able to assist when they are not aware of the reasons of the school program and the activities to be carried out at home. This makes parents unaware of what roles to play in the development of their children’s literacy. Parents are key stakeholders in the education process and should therefore be kept abreast of the language programs in the school. In order for parents to assist in the development of their children’s literacy, it is necessary that teachers provide them with ideas for activities to carry out at home. This improves co-ordination between parents and teachers and simultaneously makes parents aware of the teacher’s expectations and the children’s performance.

• encourage children to be active participants in the process of learning rather than passive recipients of knowledge, by using activities that allow for experimentation with talking, listening writing and reading. Children have a role to play in their own language development. This can be achieved if they are active participants in the learning process. Their involvement and full participation creates ownership of the process and results in full commitment as they do not see this as the teachers’ or parents’ responsibilities only. Use of knowledge and experimentation also help the children to apply and attach meaning to the information obtained.
To execute these instructional roles adequately, teachers’ instructional decisions must be accurately selected and implemented. Efforts in teacher instructional decision making have resulted largely from a feeling that instructional classroom actions stem from either implicitly or explicitly held beliefs. It is argued that teacher’s decisions are in effect based on varied and changing data which are filtered through a teacher’s philosophical or theoretical orientations (Kinzer, 1988).

The socio, psychological and environmental realities of the school and the classroom are thought to be so salient as to mitigate or preclude implementation of belief systems in instructional decision making. In this study these aspects are represented by the factors that influence a teacher’s instructional decision making in the instructional environment. It is indeed clear to note that the classroom environment is viewed as containing a set of filters that mitigate teacher’s belief systems and their resulting instructional choices.

Since the ability to read is highly valued and is important for personal, social and economic well-being of an individual, children need to be taught by knowledgeable teachers who provide quality reading instruction. These teachers require to understand the fundamental principles that guide reading instruction.
The first principle states that teaching of reading is knowledge based. This basically then means that learners need ample opportunities to practice the skills and strategies they learn with a variety of texts and genres. Comprehension instruction should for instance include attention to vocabulary development, background knowledge, text structure and thinking strategies.

The second principle states that reading is a complex cognitive and linguistic process. It involves decoding alphabetic symbols, drawing upon personal experiences, nature of language and using reading strategies effectively to make meaning out of the reading text. Successful reading is depended on having available a repertoire of decoding, comprehension skills and strategies. This will depend on the richness of a learner’s experiences and language both in the world and with print.

The third principle states that learners have diverse talents, strengths, interests and experiences. These variations influence the teacher’s reading instructional decisions. For instance teachers learn to plan their reading instruction based on the needs of the diverse interests of the learners during a reading lesson. This is because the teacher is required to be responsive to the vast and varied needs of each child, and to promote an educational climate that facilitates motivation and the desire to read. The reading lesson must reflect the identity of the children, children’s orientations and beliefs towards reading. For this to be possible teachers teaching reading should learn to plan their instructional
lessons so as to meet the individual needs of each learner in the reading lesson by using appropriate instructional approaches and resources.

Equally, the teacher should employ various behavioural and teaching strategies to promote pupil motivation. If children are motivated to learn to read, they will try to learn to read, and continue to do so, even when faced with reading difficulties. The teacher is responsible for creating an environment that motivates children to read. This will be done through planning quality reading instruction by drawing on the knowledge base of how children learn to read, grade level expectations, fundamental principles of effective instruction, learning to observe and assess children’s reading, writing and spelling competencies (Slowik, et al. 2012). Lancy (1997) cited in Peissig (2002) argues that successful learning to read among some learners is also influenced by among other factors, the amount of time learners practice what they have already learned. This therefore, means that the teacher has to create some time for learners to practice any new learning strategy before it is integrated fully into their repertoire of learning strategies.

A teacher's academic and professional qualifications are important predictors of the quality of teaching. This is because the essence of effective teaching lies in the ability of the teacher to set up desired outcomes (Muthwii, 2002). Too often primary school teaching in Kenya is someone's final option for a professional career. Hence teachers who are supposed to guide pupils to
develop the reading skills may themselves be poor in the same skills. For instance UNESCO studies have pointed out that a large number of teachers in North Eastern counties of Kenya have little competencies in reading primary English language books. This situation explains in part why primary teachers need better teacher education in reading to develop their own language skills so that they are better prepared to teach and conduct needs-based instruction (UNESCO Nairobi/IRA, 2004 cited in Commeyras, & Inyega 2007).

Previous research indicates that regardless of the quality of an education programme, resources and strategy, it is the teacher and the learning situation that makes the difference in reading instruction (Bond & Dyksra 1967/1997, cited in Tierney & Readence 2005). In his discussion on teaching reading to struggling readers, Rupley (2009) in Tierney & Readence (2005) argues that “Over the past 70 years, a number of major studies have demonstrated repeatedly the importance of the teacher to students’ learning to read.” One of such studies postulates that although, mental age is correlated with beginning reading success, the type of instructional activities, the teacher’s expertise and teaching effectiveness are important. In a study comparing different instructional methods at the first grade level, Dykstra (1967) in Tierney & Readence (2005) noted wide differences in reading achievement among classes and school systems that were using similar instructional methods. These differences repeatedly underscore the importance of the teacher’s role in reading instruction (Rupley, 2009).
The scientific study of reading has yielded major findings on the teacher’s role in reading success among learners of different levels. One of this is on the understanding of how to teach the majority of learners to acquire basic beginning reading skills such as identifying words and reading connected text. This position formed the basis of the present study, where specific interest is on the nature of instructional practices and what causes teachers to choose these particular practices in their reading lessons, whether they focus on any reading strategy and how effective the instructional practices are in reading instruction.

2.6 Factors Influencing Teachers’ Instructional Decisions

Decision making refers to individuals or groups making mental choices in order to affect outcomes. The decision maker uses available information and applies a reasoning process in order to make choices. The choice, either an action or an opinion, influences the results of whatever is being reviewed (Dewey, 1933 in Bentley, 2007). The concept of decision making by teachers is paramount to student outcomes. These decisions are influenced by a number of factors. Some of these factors are discussed in this section of the thesis.

Language teachers’ beliefs and their understanding of teaching and learning, play an important role in their classroom practices as well as their professional growth. Harste & Burke (1977) in Kuzborska (2011), argue that teachers make decisions about classroom instruction in light of their held theoretical beliefs about teaching and learning. These beliefs influence their goals, procedures,
material selection, classroom interactional patterns, teachers’ & students’ roles… In agreeing with this notion, Beijaard & De Vries (1997) in Hall (2005) observe that teacher’s beliefs and pedagogical knowledge about teaching and learning are closely connected. According to Richards & Rodgers (2001) in Kuzborska (2011), these belief systems provide the basis for the selection of particular approaches to language instruction.

Efforts in teacher decision making have resulted largely from a feeling that teacher actions stem from either implicitly or explicitly held beliefs or philosophies. Teachers’ instructional decisions are in effect based on varied and changing data which are filtered through their philosophical or theoretical orientations resulting in these instructional decisions (Kinzer 1988). In their contribution Rupley & Logan (1984) in Kinzer (1988) agree that beliefs about reading do indeed influence elementary teachers’ instructional decisions. It is on this basis that the present study’s aim was to understand elementary teachers’ decision making process in reading instruction in their teaching of reading in std 4 English language lessons.

Teachers’ theoretical beliefs are thought to make up an important part of their prior knowledge through which they perceive process and act upon information in the classroom (Clark & Peterson, 1986 & Munby, 1982 in Johnson et al. 1992). Harste & Burke (1977) in Johnson et al. (1992) define these theoretical beliefs as the philosophical principles or belief systems that guide teachers’

On a general view Stern (1983) in Johnson (1992), suggests that teachers' conceptions of English language teaching are often based on the methodologies they use. Such methods, he suggests, act as a theory of language teaching which imply certain objectives, a particular view of language and make assumptions about the language learner and the underlying beliefs about the nature of language learning process. Diller (1978), Howatt (1979) and Stern (1983) in Johnson (1992) have outlined three theoretical explanations of how languages are learnt. These explanations have influenced the methodological approaches towards second language teaching. These explanations include:

**Empiricist explanation**

This explanation assumes that language learning is a mechanical process of habit formation that results from behavioural and conditioned responses with the target language. It is operationalized in mimicry, memorization and repetition of native language patterns, drills and practice to generate language production, separate language study
into the discrete language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing.

**Rationalist explanation**

This explanation asserts that language learning is an innate ability which combines the intellectual understanding of language as an intricate system of grammatical structures with the desire to communicate within meaningful contexts. This is emphasized in rule based approaches that view L₂ learning as a process of rule- governed creativity, comprehension of language to precede language production, and treat all aspects of language learning as an interrelated whole.

**Communicative explanation**

This explanation places language learning in a social context of interaction. The learner must become a participant in real life language contexts. This is emphasized in function-based approaches that focus on the use of authentic language within situational contexts, providing functional language use and emphasizing meaningful communication over correct structural forms.

Understanding of teachers’ thoughts and actions should give a better understanding of how the two components-teacher thoughts and actions- interact to increase or inhibit students’ academic performance. According to the National Institute of Education’s (1975) report cited in Fang (1996),

Anderson & Holt-Reynold (1995) in Ibañez (2011), hold the belief that practical theories on teacher’s beliefs about learning and teaching…student motivation and interest are valued and therefore impact on the design of instructional activities. Ibañez (2011) further argues that, the teacher’s beliefs on the value of student motivation and mastery of content clearly reflect in their instructional practices. According to Bentley (2007), teachers make instructional decisions based on students’ need to develop critical thinking skills, engagement, motivation to learn and acquisition of necessary skills for future learning success.

Classroom teachers therefore, possess theoretical orientations that in effect organize and trigger their instructional behaviours (Duffy & Anderson, 1984,

2.7 Parental Involvement in Children’s Reading Development

Learning to read is a complex process that involves a variety of skills and abilities. Success in learning to read is, to a large extent dependent upon the amount of reading children do both in and out of school. Research studies indicate strongly that comprehension is directly affected by a reader’s background knowledge (Rasinski, 1995 in Adam, 2010). Children must therefore bring their existing knowledge and experiences to bear on the task of learning to read, which, for most learners begin in earnest with the introduction of formal instruction in grade 1. Learners who are exposed to reading both at home and at school are in a better position to comprehend reading texts given to them.

Parental involvement with children’s reading activities at home has significant positive influences not only on reading achievement, language comprehension and expressive language skills, but also on pupils’ interest in reading, attitudes towards reading and attentiveness in the classroom (Rowe, 1991; Gest, Freeman, Domitrovich, & Welsh, 2004 cited in Adam, 2010). Literacy development does not however, begin with formal instruction when children enter school. Children instead bring to school from home many concepts about literacy and certain competencies in oral language, phonemic awareness,

Some of these skills probably acquired through specific experiences at home or in kindergarten have a significant effect in the children’s literacy development in later schooling years. If teachers developed purposeful linkages between the home and the school literacy practices then, children’s reading development will greatly be enhanced. Robb (2003) and Browne (2004) cited in Adam (2010) suggest that the participation of parents in their children’s literacy activities at home should be carried out in the following ways:

- Being members of a public library and taking their children to the library, letting them browse through picture books and selecting the ones to borrow. This activity requires parents who are literate since they are able to access the library facilities and choose books that are relevant for their children’s literacy levels. Illiterate parents from rural areas, however, may face challenges in that they have no library facilities and even when there are, they are not able to read and thus cannot perform this activity. This basically then means that there is a need for creating a link between the school and the home literacy practices, if pupils’ reading skills have to be developed.
• Reading to children every day, then inviting them to use illustrations learned to tell about the book’s storyline after several attempts in rereading it. The availability of appropriate resources such as grade level books is a challenge in rural areas. Illiterate parents may not also be useful in this activity.

• Provide resources for learning at home, such as writing materials and books. The low socio-economic status of the parents in rural areas may affect this adversely as parents are not in a position to provide the resources necessary to undertake this activity.

• Translate children’s stories, published books, signs, labels, notices, letters and circulars and also supply materials for use in school. The performance of this activity requires literate parents. Parents who are illiterate may face a challenge in that they cannot translate the learning material, hence play limited roles in enhancing their children’s literacy development through this activity.

foundation for learning to read among early school learners" Ransinski et al.(1988) also argue that "Parents have an obligation to support their children's continued growth as readers".

It should however, be understood that for the parental role to have positive impact in promoting children’s literacy development, the parents will need to be guided on which literacy practices they need to engage themselves in so as to enhance reading development among children at home. As observed by Oyetunde et al. (2007, p. 12)

….What is needed by parents is information on how to participate in their children’s literacy activities more purposefully and meaningfully. In other words, they need to have some principles, which should guide literacy activities with their children. It is not enough to know that they should be involved or to do something casually or randomly, it is important that parents know what, why they do what they do and be consistent in doing it.

The information on what and how parents should be involved in their children’s literacy development is the responsibility of the teacher. The school in this regard should device ways through which teachers and parents are involved in some collaborative literacy ventures aimed at creating a favourable literacy link between the home and the school. This could be based on what Ransinski et al. (1988) call the principles of parental involvement in children’s literacy development. These principles include:

(1) **Regular daily time.** One precious gift parents can give their children is time. Moreover, time is most effectively used when it is provided regularly. As little as 20 minutes of child-parent reading interaction each evening can help children begin a lifelong reading habit. During
this time parents can engage children in one of the many literacy activities for example read- aloud, listening to children reading short texts, telling stories or even listening to stories among others.

(2) **Purpose and motive.** Reading activities for children and parents must be purposeful, the reasons for an activity should relate directly to the child's immediate life and interests. Activities that parents and children participate in can indirectly, yet effectively, relate to reading. A parent and child building a toy model together, for example, shares a real purpose for reading the assembly directions. Cooking is also a good example of a reading activity with a purpose. As the parent and child prepare the recipe, the child learns to read the cookbook, use vocabulary, and develop concepts related to measurement. Real stories, on the other hand, are an intrinsic motivator- children love to read and read good stories.

(3) **Real literacy activities.** Associated with real purpose is the notion of real reading and writing. Tasks that children are asked to participate in should reflect real literacy in form as well as in function. Parents and children should read real books and write real stories. Parents and children should look at and talk about the relationship found in storybook pictures, or to study letter forms in alphabet books, or to collaborate on an alphabet book of their own.
(4) **Internal interest.** Parent-child activities should be directed toward the child's interests. Too often, literacy activities have external motivators. Tokens, prizes, or awards given after certain tasks are accomplished, and graphing results of mastery tests are examples of the externalized motivators sometimes suggested to parents. Yet, a major goal of parent-child literacy activities should be the development of lifelong, avid readers (Ervin, 1984 in Ransinski et al. 1988). For avid readers, the motivation is the text itself—either the text presents a good story or it presents interesting or important information. Thus, the activities that parents and children are involved in must appeal to their interests. The activities, the parent and children engage in should by necessity reflect on the child’s interests i.e. animals, sports, cars etc.

(5) **Tolerance and patience.** Growth in reading and writing is not always as fast as one may wish. The best parent-child interactions require patience on the part of parents. Parents need to allow their children to move at their own pace. Patience and tolerance are vital components of effective parenthood. It is important that parents allow their children to consolidate literacy gains made before moving on to new ones.

(6) **Support and encouragement.** Regardless of how easy an activity may appear to an adult, it may overwhelm a child. The very best parent-child activities are those that allow parents to support their children's endeavours. Parents need to make reading easy, by providing sufficient background for activities, giving elaborate explanations, answering
questions, and sharing examples. In a sense, they act as a scaffold to support their children's language/literacy growth. Support also entails providing enough help so that children feel successful in the activity—in other words, offering encouragement. This means that children understand that risking an answer, even if wrong, is better than not attempting any response at all. Children need to realize that they are in a safe environment, free from ridicule and constant evaluation. Love of literacy is promoted when children are encouraged and helped to overcome seemingly formidable obstacles.

(7) **Informality.** Informal activities create an environment that encourages children to take risks and to be creative. For example, when parents and children lie on the floor to read the comic section of the newspaper, the children soon realize that the purpose of the activity is enjoyment. As a result, learning and reading become natural and pleasurable pursuits.

(8) **Interaction.** Parents and children should share in the responsibility for learning to read and write. Parents should encourage their children to ask questions and to answer them, to be the leader at times as are the cases in dialogic reading and to engage in give and-take dialogues. By allowing children to respond in these ways parents can assist their youngsters throughout any learning activity. Moreover, greater interaction tends to reduce the formality of a task. Children are usually more comfortable working on a problem together with a parent than attempting it alone. Parents can respond to their children's questions
and predictions, and share their own, thus demonstrating the hypothesizing process that characterizes fluent reading.

These principles can be communicated to the parents through pupils’ homework books, newsletters, encouraging formal as well as informal school visits by parents and possibly through parent-teacher workshops.

It should however, be realised that this will to a large extent work well with literate parents. In aid of the specific group of illiterate and low literate parents, teachers in primary school education should play an important role in enabling illiterate parents play a role in literacy activities with their children at home (Smith & Elish-Piper, 2002 cited in Menheere, et al. 2010). One cannot expect parents who lack the basic skills of reading to provide books as means of education or to judge whether or not a learning moment occurs while looking at a picture book with their child. In enhancing illiterate parents’ involvement in their children’s literacy, emphasis should be placed on what parents can do, not on what parents are not able to do.

On the classroom level, teachers could instruct parents on homework assignments and what is expected in their role in homework assistance. Schools could promote and teach parents in dialogic reading-the child leads the conversation around the pictures of a book-, the use of strategies to improve the length of children’s sentences, the use of complete sentences when speaking to the child, the use of books the children can handle, effective play with their
children and spending more time talking to them and the use of toys as a mediator of spontaneous language use.

Teachers, as professionals, are expected to guide parents in understanding the relationships between children’s reading behaviours in and out of school. The development of children’s literacy is expected to have a bearing on their behaviour as a whole. Because of what they learn at school, their literacy behaviour at home may change and parents may not understand the causes behind such changes. Teachers therefore, are expected to guide parents so that they understand the relationship between the children’s literacy behaviour in and out of school. This understanding will bring parents closer to their children as well as educators thus improving working together in enhancing the learners’ reading skills development. Illiterate parents can cultivate literacy in their children if teachers are willing to devote their time and patience to assist such parents. Teacher-parent interactions require that the teacher be sensitive, understanding, and responsive to the needs not only of the children but of the parents as well.

Illiterate parents may be embarrassed about their lack of reading and writing skills, however, many such parents have a strong desire for their children to become literate. These parents need a caring, understanding teacher who is willing to gently nudge them in the right direction so their children will acquire literacy and be able to share in the rewards and joys of being able to read and
write Pamela et al. (1991). This can be done through what Pamela et al. (1991) suggests as ways that teachers can use to facilitate literacy in homes where one or both parents are illiterate. These ways include:

- Teacher will need to schedule parent meetings which focus on ways not only to nurture literacy, but also to promote its value. Presentations during these sessions should be positive and enjoyable so that the parents are willing to make concerted efforts to return again and again.

- Parents can also be encouraged to tell stories to their children as a way of promoting literacy in the home. The stories can be told during different times when the parent and child are involved in common chores i.e. preparing a meal, working on a broken fence among others.

- Teachers can equally stock classroom libraries with more children’s literature texts. Pupils will be encouraged to borrow these books so as to read to their parents at home.

- Through use of wordless picture books parents should be encouraged to tell the stories contained in the book and also encourage their children to retell the story to them. The teacher should ensure that these picture books are easily available to the parent either in form of photocopied material, texts or in whichever form that is easy to access.

- The teacher can make use of content area books, with the parent and child discussions highly encouraged. Too often, early childhood and primary grade teachers emphasize narrative books and overlook content area books. There are several good picture books which depict simple
scientific and social studies concepts that require little or no reading. These books present concepts in a less complicated form with illustrations that stimulate parent and children on the actions portrayed in the books.

- The teacher can also use home visits to model on literate behaviours which the parents can easily imitate and perform with a child. For example, the teacher may take along a wordless picture book and encourage the child to tell the story. The teacher can then leave the book with the family so that it is collected later.
- The teacher can also make use of children’s videos, children books and read along cassettes which can be shared through an established library collection in the classroom. The children should be encouraged to borrow these materials so as to share with their parents while at home.

2.8 Instructional Resources used in the Teaching of Reading

Instructional resources are defined as all resources designed to support the instruction of a subject or course including but not limited to classroom textbooks, library books, newspapers, magazines, printed materials, charts, recordings, videos, DVD’s, pictures, exhibits, slides, transparencies, online resources, speakers and other personnel resources and all technology based materials. They are the practical aids that the classroom teacher employs during instruction so as to minimise teacher dominance in abstract subjects such as language- English language. Due to the abstract nature of English language the
teacher must let the learners see real objects, handle them, move them about and even make them (Adeigbagbe, 1997 in Ofodu, 2012).

The instructional resources function as stimuli and support for both the teacher and the learner in the teaching and learning process (Ogunnaike, 2000 in Ofodu, 2012). They are important in stimulating the learner’s interest, piloting his/her attitude towards effective learning, especially among 9-11 year old pupils. Eshiwani (1986) argues that most African countries experience a shortage of qualified teachers at all levels. Classroom instruction is often given by unqualified or relatively poorly trained teachers.

Provision of good instructional resources in such circumstances is likely to improve the quality of learning. This is because the instructional resources will help promote the sequencing of learning activities in the classroom and supplement the teacher’s limited knowledge in the particular instructional environment. Anderson et al. (1985) argues that school books should be rich with important concepts and information. That is books for all grades need to contain adequate explanations, taking into account the skill level, knowledge and reasoning power of the reader.

Student learning occurs primarily through interactions with people (teachers and peers) and instructional materials (textbooks, workbooks, instructional software, web-based content, homework, projects, quizzes, and tests). The effectiveness of teachers, the behaviour of peers, and the instructional materials
with which students have the opportunity to interact are affected by the home environment, leadership in the school and teacher’s own instructional philosophies. However, students learn by engaging in cognitive processes that are triggered and shaped by interactions with the teacher and instructional materials within a learning environment.

Instructional materials also have a strong indirect path of influence on student learning through their effects on teachers’ instructional orientations. Commercially produced instructional materials, for instance, dominate teaching practice in the United States—available estimates indicate that 70 to 98 percent of teachers use textbooks at least weekly (Mathew et al. 2012). It should be realised that instructional materials have varied influences on teachers’ instructional decisions—will influence the way the teachers use textbooks, teacher’s guides, and assessment materials— with some teaching strictly to-the-book and others exercising considerable flexibility. Those who strictly stick to-the-book are much more likely to cover topics presented in the materials selected than to cover topics not included, they are likely to follow the sequence of topics in the selected materials and their pedagogical approach will be influenced by the instructional design of the materials.

Research on how children acquire early literacy skills has demonstrated that children gain crucial understanding about print and its relationship with oral language by being immersed in literacy rich environments (Katim, 1994,
Kuby, Goodstadt-Killoran, Aldridge & Kirkland, 1999 cited in Keefe et al. 2010). Such environments display texts, pictures and graphics that are meaningful to the children in that setting. The materials offer the learners recurring opportunities to interact with books and other engaging printed materials either individually or in groups.

The children’s literacy knowledge and understandings emerge as they have meaningful and sustained interactions within literacy rich environments with other individuals who are literate models. In their study Neuman & Celano (2004) cited in Keefe et al. (2010), observe that children’s ability to read is related to reading skill development. This ability in children is developed by adults within print rich environments that facilitate the development of literacy skills. This simply means that teachers working in poor print environments cannot be effective in developing children’s literacy skills.

Books, papers, writing tools…should be visible everywhere in the classroom so that children can see and use literacy for multiple purposes. Sleger (1996) in Lin Chia-Hu (2001) observe that children are likely to engage more in reading and writing activities in print rich environments. Children will learn to construct their own literacy knowledge, reading strategies, learn to read and write naturally in this environment (Teale & Yokota, 2000 cited in Li, Chia-Hu, 2001).
However, as observed by N’Namdi (2005), the main problem in many rural areas is the lack of reading materials. This greatly affects the kind of reading learning classroom environments. It is then the teacher’s responsibility in such situations to create/improvise as many of the materials as possible. The creation of reading materials can also be done by the learners with the teacher’s guidance. For instance, a lesson in the writing of short stories, poems & etc, after editing can become a part of the permanent collection of resource materials in the classroom.

It is on this basis that the current study sort to establish the instructional materials teachers use in reading instruction and the ways these materials influence the teachers’ instructional practices during reading instruction in standard 4 in selected rural schools in Kisii central district of Kisii county.

2.9 Challenges facing the Teaching of Reading

Strickland et al. (2002) acknowledges the fact that the 21st century primary grade reading teacher is faced with huge challenges. Among the issues at the centre of the primary school education are:

- The teacher must understand as much as possible about how children develop and learn what they know and what they can do.
- The teacher must be able to apply a variety of teaching techniques to meet the individual needs of the students.
They equally need to identify students’ strengths and weaknesses so as to plan instructional programs that help students to make educational progress.

Schreiner (2013) in addressing issues affecting primary education observes that some students go to primary school with an understanding of the basics of reading while others have no experience with reading and might not know the alphabet. The challenge of planning an instructional programme that addresses these two types of learners is real for the 21st century primary school teacher. The problem is made more real as learners move from lower primary to upper primary grades especially in situations where instruction in the lower primary is not synchronised with that which takes place in the upper primary grades.

From a general perspective, large class sizes are an epidemic in the primary school education system. With school rooms overflowing with students and not enough teachers to provide adequate amounts of individualised attention, the students’ learning experiences are jeopardised. The big numbers make it a challenge for teachers to give students an equal amount of guidance on homework questions or in-class assignments. This is specifically a real challenge in reading instruction in the primary school level. With the implementation of the Free Primary Education in Kenya (FPE) in 2003, it has emerged that in some schools the ratio of teachers to pupils is as high as 1:70. This high ratio makes it difficult for teachers to pay attention to all learners, especially the slow ones. Teachers are not able to give adequate assignments to
the pupils because they cannot cope with marking and the teaching workload (UNESCO, 2005 cited in KENPRO, 2010).

The implementation of the FPE in Kenya is reported to be facing a major challenge in as far as teaching-learning facilities is concern (Okwach et al. 1997 cited in KENPRO, 2010). Sharing of textbooks at the ratio of 1:5 has become a norm rather than an exception in most schools. This sharing indeed affects the pupils’ access to the books while at home and many at times the pupils have to do their homework early in the morning the next day when in school. Shortage of supplementary reading books has also been identified as one of the FPE challenges. Indeed, N’Namdi (2005) concurs that the main problem facing many schools in the rural areas is the lack of reading materials.

Oyetunde et al. (1986) in Adeniji et al. (2010), in their study single out lack of reading materials, poor preparation of teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all, poor home background and lack of adult readers as models as some of the critical impediments to effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension in the primary school grades.

2.10 Teaching Reading Strategies

The fundamental goal of any reading process is reading comprehension. This is because of the fact that if one does not comprehend what he/she reads, then, the reading exercise becomes fruitless. In fact reading comprehension is an integral aspect in ones academic success. According to Kazembe (2005) cited in Adam (2010) schooling is about teachers’ helping learners mediate the knowledge
they bring to school with what they find in school in order to negotiate meaning in the situated context of function. Teachers are expected to help learners by engaging them in strategies that develop literacy. Strategies found useful for improving children's reading comprehension when dealing with reading texts include: prior knowledge activation, question generation during reading, making mental images during reading, summarization and analysing story structure. These strategies emphasise the importance of teacher’s explanation of why we read, how the reading system works including understanding of concepts and vocabulary.

Fluency is an important skill in reading comprehension because it is considered a mark of a skilled reader. Less fluent readers have poorer comprehension (Carnine, et al. 1990 in Hasbrouck, et al. 1992). Fluency can be defined as the speedy, effortless and flawless reading of a written text. It is considered a performance indicator of overall reading competency (Hasbrouck et al. 1992).

In Kenya English is the language of instruction from standard 4 on-wards, hence learners are likely to experience difficulties in comprehending what they read without adequate comprehension strategies. Second language researchers have pointed out that one of the ways of overcoming this is through reading comprehension strategy instruction (Bharuthram, 2006). Despite the context in which reading takes place, the nature of the reading process changes as children mature. Specific processes may vary among individuals and according
to purpose. During the early stages of reading, the identification of words demands greater concentration than is comprehension of text. As readers progress they should be able to use their ability to interpret written language for a variety of purposes. In order to attain this level of competence readers must use appropriate strategies before, during, and after reading, such as applying schema, or integrating new information with prior knowledge, and engaging in meta-cognitive or self monitoring procedures.

Comprehension strategy instruction focuses on providing students with strategies to use before, during, and after reading so as to build and activate their background knowledge, interpret text structures, use self-monitoring abilities, and review and reflect on what they have read. As argued by Cheng (1985) the main aim of a reading lesson should be to teach appropriate reading strategies (enabling skills) that will help the reader to comprehend texts and not just the text being studied in a particular lesson. Research has shown that instruction of reading comprehension strategies should include direct explanation, modelling, scaffolding, and guided practice, with the goal being independent use of the strategy by the student when confronted by a new reading text (Guthrie, Wigfield & Perencevich, 2004 cited in Chrapcynski (2009).

As pointed out in his strategy instruction study, Bharuthram (2006) argues that students not exposed to early reading strategy instruction usually become poor readers at higher level of schooling. It is therefore, the teacher’s responsibility
to teach learners the reading strategies and encourage them to consciously use them wherever engaged in reading. At the onset of the strategy instruction, the teacher should provide a brief explanation about the strategy, that is; what the strategy is, how, why, when and where it should be used. The teachers should introduce a few reading strategies, increasing them gradually to allow learners to master earlier ones before new ones are introduced. The more students get used to the use of reading strategies, the more they are likely to develop their own reading strategies in order to improve reading comprehension (Bharuthram, 2006).

In reading comprehension, vocabulary development is an essential skill for effective reading. In order for anyone to understand what they are reading, they must know the meanings of the words they encounter. People with limited vocabulary knowledge, especially those who have not learned techniques and strategies for inferring the meanings of unknown words, will experience difficulty comprehending both oral and written texts (Bharuthram, 2006).

Unlike the common practice where vocabulary development is enhanced through reference to the dictionary, L2 theorists have argued that vocabulary should be taught in context. This suggests that while learning vocabulary in context as opposed to providing students with a list of words to memorize, it is still essential to teach students strategies to help them cope with the context (Bharuthram, 2006). Coady (1993) cited in Bharuthram (2006, p. 22) stresses this point when he says:
Since foreign language readers typically do not have such vocabulary knowledge (large in sight vocabularies), it seems essential that they be taught to take advantage of contextual redundancy and clues in order to comprehend while they are gaining the exposure necessary to achieve sight vocabulary.

Reading is not a passive process, but an active process where students ask questions to decipher the author's intent. In order to encourage interactive readers, six types of comprehension questions (literal, reorganization, inference, prediction, evaluation, and personal response), and five forms of questions (yes/no questions, alternative questions, true or false, “wh” questions, and multiple choice) are necessary in order for one to engage himself/herself with the text. Instruction in these questions is essential to the reading comprehension activities learners will be engaged in. These questions will be asked during the three phases of reading—before reading, during reading and after reading.

Gersten et al. (2007) in Goldenberg (2010) argue that: assuming good instruction, we should expect early reading progress among English Language Learners (ELLs) to be comparable to that of native English language learners. Reading being a vital learning skill requires a teacher to adopt appropriate practices that will develop the learners’ reading competency. This is best accomplished through the teacher’s understanding of learner characteristics, the school instructional policy, his/her own beliefs on reading as well as the curriculum goals in general and specifically in the reading class he/she teaches.
In conclusion, Chrapcynski (2009) observes that proficient readers use one or more Metacognitive strategies to automatically comprehend texts. She identifies several common Metacognitive strategies that have proved effective for teaching reading comprehension to primary school learners. These strategies include:

- Activating prior knowledge/ identifying themes
- Teaching vocabulary
- Reading the story while modelling comprehension strategies used
- Summarizing key ideas
- Allowing time for questions
- Reviewing story sequence and main ideas.

From her study she concludes that children will have a greater chance of demonstrating reading success, the earlier they are taught how and when to apply Metacognitive reading comprehension strategies during their reading experience.

2.11 Teaching Reading in Kenya

In Kenya reading is not taught as a separate skill, it is instead taught within the integrated framework of English language skills. Within this framework all the language skills are based on a given theme. The reading text, language patterns, vocabulary and grammar are all grounded on this common theme. The reading text for instance provides rich learning materials for the learning of the other language skills. That is, oral practices, grammar aspects, vocabulary development and language patterns are all embedded in the reading text (KIE, 2002).
This is in line with the communicative language approach of teaching language. When the goal of instruction is communicative competence, everyday materials such as train schedules, newspaper articles, and travel and tourism Web sites become appropriate classroom materials, because reading them is one way in which communicative competence is developed. Therefore, instruction in reading and reading practice thus become essential parts of language teaching at every level.

Reading instruction in the Kenyan primary school English syllabus is divided into two levels, the lower primary and the upper primary. The specific objective of teaching reading in lower and upper primary schools is to enable learners acquire reading skills to be able to read and understand instructions, read for information and for pleasure. Specific to teaching reading in lower primary is the objective of enabling learners to develop vocabulary, sentence structure and comprehension skills. This is the level in which the initial reading skills are developed through the language of the catchment area- L1 as it is the language of instruction. Effective reading instruction at this level means that learners’ reading abilities in the subsequent grades will be boosted.

Mberia (2002) argues that the proper foundations for the acquisition and development of language skills are best laid during the early years of schooling. In fact reading instruction in standard 1-3 is supposed to play a major role in preparing learners for reading to learn from standard 4 upwards not only in English but also in other school subjects. The lower primary school learners are
supposed to learn the basic level skills in reading. These skills include letter-
word relationships and word recognition skills. These skills are taught using
either the synthetic or analytic methods. The synthetic methods are sound based
and include; the alphabetic method, the phonic method, and the syllabic method.
The analytic methods on the other hand are meaning based and include; whole
word method, sentence method and phrase method.

From standard 4 onwards otherwise called upper primary, the teaching of
reading is aimed at enabling learners to read and understand instructions, to
access information and to read widely for pleasure (KIE, 2002). At this level
then, reading instruction is supposed to focus less on the synthetic methods and
more on the analytic methods but this has to be done gradually as learners get
from standard 4 to standard 8. It is at this level that this study hoped to establish
how reading instruction was carried out with a view of establishing the nature of
instructional practices and the reasons for the choice of the observed practices
and their effectiveness in developing learners’ reading competencies.

2.12 Teachers’ Instructional Practices and Student Achievement
Croninger & Valli (2009) argue that good teaching promotes deep and
principled learning of content. It encourages the development of cognitive and
Metacognitive skills. It further, motivates students to engage deeply in subject
matter, address individual and developmental differences among students and
creates inclusive, affirming and successful learning environments. This is
expected to manifest itself through the kind of instructional practices a teacher will choose to use in an instructional environment.

Learners’ success in learning to read is to a large extent influenced by the instructional practices that teachers use in the classroom. Early-childhood reading researchers recommend that attention should be given in every primary-grade classroom to a wide array of early reading skills including the alphabetic principle, reading sight words, reading words by mapping speech sounds to parts of words, achieving fluency, accuracy and comprehension (National centre for educational statistics-NCES, 2006). In kindergarten, Ball and Blachman (1991) cited in NCES (2006) found that children who received instruction in phonemic segmentation and letter-sound combinations had higher reading and spelling scores than children who did not receive such instruction.

While there is general agreement on the skills that should be taught, approaches on how best to teach reading are often debated. Carmen Simich-Dudgeon (1989) cited in Adam (2010) suggest the following approaches in reading instruction:

a) **Skills based approach**

Teaching reading using the skills based approach is characterized by the assumption that learners learn how to read by mastering discrete elements of language at the onset of reading instruction. This approach explains that the student should master the phonemic letters of words that represent different
sounds before comprehending meaning. The skills of reading and writing develop together as children grow in literacy.

b) Whole language approach
This approach is based on the assumption that the introduction to reading must be meaningful and should be developed from real communicative situations in the life of the learners. This approach states that the link between oral language and print is easier to make, when awareness of it emerges naturally, rather than when that link is explicitly taught. It encourages the use of the learner’s past experiences, expectations and language intuitions as the basis for their learning written symbols and developing reading comprehension. This means that the reader is in an interactive relationship with the text. For the reader to gain meaningfully from the text, he must be able to predict and anticipate meaning. Children are assisted in their writing skills by the pictures, graphs and by reading a wide range of materials.

c) Language experience approach
In this approach the learner is allowed by the teacher to share meaning, events and stories which are then shaped into written form by the teacher. The learner makes the initial transition from oral language to reading and writing. In this way the learner is allowed to read meaningful story units rather than isolated words, parts of words or sentences. When a child comes across any text, s/he will be able to conceptualise and construct imaginary meaning of events in their minds.
d) **The eclectic approach**

The eclectic approach in literacy development allows the teacher to select those materials and methods that best fit the needs of the learners. It incorporates the learning of whole linguistic units, from words to phrases while stressing comprehension. Once word meaning relationships have been mastered, the phrase may be broken down into words, then into syllables next into letters and finally appropriate sounds can be given to the component parts.

Some research with primary-grade children has shown that no single approach to teaching reading is superior to the rest. A balanced or integrated early literacy instruction, for example, instruction employing the eclectic method that includes an emphasis on both phonetics and meaning is more effective in learning to read (Adams 1990; Chall 1992; Snow, Burns, and Griffin 1998 cited in NCES, 2006).

statement identified eleven reading instructional practices that effective teachers routinely engage their learners through:

1. Teaching reading for authentic meaning-making
2. Using high-quality literature.
3. Integrating a comprehensive word study/phonics program into reading/writing instruction.
4. Using multiple texts that link and expand learning concepts.
5. Balancing teacher- and student-led discussions.
6. Building a whole-class community that emphasizes important concepts and builds background knowledge.
7. Working with students in small groups while other students read and write about what they have read.
8. Giving students plenty of time to read in class.
9. Giving students direct instruction in decoding and comprehension strategies that promote independent reading.
11. Using a variety of assessment techniques to inform instruction.

In agreeing with this view, Snow et al. (1991) cited in Allington et al (2000) observed second- and fourth-grade teachers who differed in effectiveness. The more effective teachers they concluded were characterized as:

- providing explicit instruction,
- using classroom routines,
• challenging and involving students,
• creating a supportive, encouraging, and friendly classroom climate,
• engaging in lots of constructive teacher-student exchanges,
• offering a variety of reading materials,
• scheduling frequent library visits,
• crafting stimulating curricular activities,
• asking many inferential questions, and
• displaying student work prominently.

To create substantial forms of instructional effectiveness, the teachers will need to weave a variety of teaching activities implied in these practices together in an infinitely complex and dynamic response to the flow of classroom reading experiences. The classroom reading environment will need to follow what the Nation Book Development Council of Kenya and the Canadian Organization for Development through Education (2012) calls the BDA reading framework. The framework simply divides reading into three phases- the before reading, during reading and the after reading phase. Subsumed into this reading framework are the reading activities otherwise called instructional practices in this study meant to enable readers make sense of what they are reading.

For instance pre-reading tasks have traditionally been used to focus exclusively on preparing the reader for likely linguistic difficulties in a text. Attention has now shifted to cultural or conceptual difficulties (Ajideh, 2003). Pre-reading,
activities remind readers of what they already know and think, that is to activate existing schematic knowledge. Through these activities learners express their own experience of knowledge about the topic prior to reading it.

As argued by Ajideh (2003, p. 7):

After the students have adequately shared their knowledge, the text becomes the focus of the class. During this segment of the lesson, the teacher asks the students to read short sections of the text and then questions about the content.

The teacher must be sensitive to those text areas that could elicit misunderstandings and work through any difficulties that the students may have. In the final stage, the teacher aids the students to draw relationships between personal experiences and the material discussed in the text stage. This provides an opportunity for each student to make comparisons and contrasts with what they already know and to accommodate the new information into their pre-existing schemata. Through this process, student’s schemata become redefined and extended. The teacher has the responsibility of leading the students to the appropriate answers without giving them too much information, so the task becomes one of self-discovery and integration.

Langer’s (1981) cited in Ajideh, (2003) explains that the pre-reading plan begins with the teacher introducing a key word, concept or picture to stimulate a discussion. By having the students say anything that initially comes to mind and having that information recorded on the chalk-board, learners are able to see the associations inherent in the reading text. By asking the learners questions, such as, “What made you think of...?” they become aware of their
network of associations. They also have the opportunity to listen to other explanations and interact with others. This interactive process also provides them with the opportunity to accept, reject or alter their own initial associations and to integrate them into more accurate pictures of the target concept. The third and final step is the reformulation of knowledge, which provides the opportunity for learners to verbalize any changes of modifications of their associations that may have occurred during the discussion phase. The purpose of helping the learner to link his/her background knowledge with concepts in the text is to set up appropriate expectations about the language and content of the passage. By taking students through this process, teachers are modelling what good readers do before attempting an unfamiliar piece. Pre-reading gets students to think about ways the text might connect: text to self, text to text, and text to world.

2.13 Research on Reading Instruction

Reading instruction forms a large part of the educational curriculum for many education systems all over the world. Because of this, a number of reading research studies has been documented. This section has highlighted on those studies related to the study from within and without Kenya.

In one of the documented studies, Kara (2008) studied the use of evidence based instructional practices in reading instruction among students who struggle to acquire reading skills. These evidence based practices were
specifically examined in the teaching of word recognition and reading comprehension among the students who struggle to read in elementary grades. The study adopted a critical evaluation of literature in reading instruction by linking evidence-based research to curriculum outcomes so as to provide teachers as well as psychologists, practices that may bring about reading effectiveness. This is a library based study and fails to account for the reasons for teachers’ choice of one instructional practice as opposed to the other. This is the gap that this study attempted to fill.

In a study exploring the reflections of teachers’ beliefs about reading theories and strategies on their classroom practices, Chou (2008) indicated that teacher’s beliefs about learners, learning, theories of learning and reading strongly accounted for their instructional practices. However, the study used only a questionnaire to arrive at this conclusion. This means that there may be a discrepancy between this conclusion and the actual corresponding classroom activities. This study used an observation schedule and an interview schedule with the aim of validating this position and hence minimise the weakness observed.

In their study Li & Wilhelm (2008) observed that reading teachers base their instructional classroom practices on their own learning experiences and the contexts within which they work. The study compared two teachers’ reasoning for the choice of instructional orientations in their reading lessons. One teacher who used a traditional approach to reading instruction argued that her concern
was to prepare students for success in college entrance examinations. The other teacher’s lesson was influenced by the teacher’s desire to get her students interested in the reading text, to share their experiences and to reflect on the strategies they do and can use when tackling a reading text. It is notable that her concern was to guide the students and develop their reading skills, reading autonomy and ability to discover reading strategies by themselves. Whereas this study was conducted among senior middle school classrooms in China and took a comparative approach, this study was conducted in a standard 4 reading classroom in Kisii central, Kenya.

In her study, ‘Teaching reading in grade 4 Namibian classrooms: a case study, Mutenda (2008) argues that the way teachers teach reading is influenced by the instructional context in which they work in, the curriculum, their beliefs, previous experience and the way they were trained. Although this is true, the study did not look at other equally strong variables that may influence a teacher’s instructional choices. A part from teacher and curriculum factors, the learner, school administration policies and nature of teaching & learning resources also determine a lot on which instructional practices teachers may prefer to employ in their reading classrooms. This study examined all these factors’ influence on a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in selected rural schools of Kisii central district, Kenya.

Kirigia (1991) studied the reading performance of pupils completing primary education in Meru municipality, Kenya and determined the difficulties
accounting for the variations in performance. It was realised that a large number of pupils who took the test did not comprehend messages written in English. This was observed to be because of: Pupils’ inability to understand general statements when used in particular contexts, their failure to apply the statements in particular situations, inability to comprehend statements which had unfamiliar vocabulary or vocabulary that had specialised usage, even when they were irrelevant to the understanding of the text and the un-usual text layout including unfamiliar syntax. Unlike Kirigia’s study, this study investigated the teacher’s instructional in-put in realising the learners’ reading potential. Equally this study’s sample consisted of homogeneous subjects from a rural setting in Kisii central district.

In her study, Mberia (2002) surveyed the teacher’s instructional practices in the teaching of reading in English in lower primary classes of Gathundu division in rural Thika district, Kenya. She concluded that teachers used various methods in teaching reading in lower primary classes. Eighteen teachers constituted the study sample. In this study however, the researcher administered a questionnaire before the use of observation and interview schedules in data collection. Hence, what was observed and the interview responses may have been influenced by the respondent’s knowledge of the contents contained in the questionnaire making the conclusions arrived here-in faulty. This study used the three research instruments used by Mberia with the observation schedule coming first followed by the interview and the questionnaire respectively. This study involved teachers teaching English in standard 4 in selected schools in
Kisii central district unlike those teaching English in lower primary in Mberia’s study.

Onyamwaro (1990) surveyed lower primary school teachers in the Kisii municipality to find out if they used methods from textbooks to teach reading in Kiswahili. He included two approaches to the teaching of reading—the "analytical" and "synthetic." The analytical approach emphasizes the teaching of reading through emphasis on the elements of the words and their sounds to identify words. The synthetic approach on the other hand emphasizes the teaching of the relationship of text elements to understand meaning contained in a text. Specifically, he asked teachers about the alphabetic, phonic and syllabic methods. At least 30 teachers (97%) used at least one of the methods included in his questionnaire. However, some teachers appeared not to be aware of all the methods included in the questionnaire. Onyamwaro’s study brings out the situation as it is in the teaching of reading in Kiswahili which is relatively different from English. For instance, Kiswahili words are regularly spelled and therefore decodable, whereas a significant percentage of English words are irregularly spelled and cannot be decoded following phonic generalizations. Though, the study was conducted in Kisii central, there are differences between schools in the municipality and those in the rural setting. This study focused on the teaching of reading in English in schools in rural Kisii central district.
2.14 Summary of the Reviewed Literature

The literature review discussed here-in shows that a teacher should have a thorough understanding of second language teaching methods and theories of reading to be able to effectively teach reading. This is more so the case with the primary school level where learners are learning to read. Different scholars have a diverse understanding of what may pass for the best approach in reading instruction, but equally agree that whatever the approach five reading components are essential in all grades. These components include: phonemic awareness, phonic skills, fluency, vocabulary development and reading comprehension strategies.

Since learners’ academic progress is greatly influenced by their ability to read for learning, teachers must ensure that reading instruction is carefully planned and implemented. The choice of reading activities in a reading lesson is determined by the instructional environment under which instruction takes place. As is evident from the reviewed literature, the teacher plays a critical role in ensuring that learners learn to read, and the decision on which instructional activities will result in effective learning to read is paramount in reading research. It is on this basis that the proposed study seeks to explore the reading practices prevalent in the teaching of reading in standard 4 classrooms in Kenya and establish the factors behind the choice of these practices.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter discusses the research design, variables of the study, location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling techniques, research instruments, pilot study, data collection techniques, data analysis, the logistical and ethical considerations of the study.

3.2 Research Design
The study used a descriptive survey research design. The major purpose of this design is to describe the state of affairs as it exists (Kombo & Tromp, 2009, Orodho, 2005). A descriptive survey design therefore, attempts to describe characteristics of subjects or phenomena, opinions, attitudes, preferences and perceptions of persons of interest to the researcher (Kombo & Tromp, 2009, Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This design therefore, helped to describe the reading instructional situation as it was in the study location and the reasons for teachers’ instructional orientations.

3.3 Variables
Ary et al. (2002) postulate that a dependent variable is the outcome of interest and an independent variable is that which is hypothesized to influence the dependent variable. Section 3.3.1 discusses the two types of variables that were key in this study.
3.3.1 Independent Variables

The school administrative factors
The study sought to investigate the influence a school’s language policy, reading support policies, assessment policies and scheduled reading time had on a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in a reading lesson.

Teacher related factors
The study sought to investigate the influence a teacher’s attitude and beliefs on reading instruction, perception on learner’s reading ability, teacher’s understanding of the reading process, and nature of teacher’s training and teaching experience had in the choice of instructional practices in a reading lesson.

Learner related factors
The study sought to investigate the influence a learner’s attitude and motivation towards reading, background knowledge, reading abilities and expectations, approach towards reading and parental expectations of his/her reading progress had on a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson.

Nature of teaching and learning materials
The study sought to find out whether any of the following: variety of instructional resources, quantities, and accessibility did influence a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson.
3.3.2 Dependent Variables

Reading instructional practices

The dependent variable in the present study was the teachers’ choice of instructional practice(s). These practices included: Teaching reading for authentic meaning-making, using high-quality literature, integrating a comprehensive word study/phonics program into reading/writing instruction, using multiple texts that link and expand learning concepts, balancing teacher- and student-led discussions, building a whole-class community that emphasizes important concepts and builds background knowledge, working with students in small groups, students read and write about what they have read, giving students plenty of time to read in class, giving students direct instruction in decoding and comprehension strategies that promote independent reading, balancing direct instruction, guided instruction, and independent learning and using a variety of assessment techniques to inform instruction.

3.4 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in three rural divisions of Kisii Central district, in Kisii County, Kenya. The district has four administrative divisions- Getembe, Mosocho, Kiogoro and Keumbu. Getembe division is located within Kisii municipality hence was not part of the study, whereas the remaining three divisions are located in the rural parts of the district. This area was chosen because of its history in registering a generally poor KCPE examination results performance for a long time (ref to table 1.1). The rural divisions are the worst
affected in terms of the KCPE examination performance as shown in tables 1.2 and 1.3. This study then aimed at understanding the reasons for choice of instructional approaches by teachers in the teaching of reading as learners transited from an L₁ language of instruction to an L₂ one in standard 4, hence the suitability of this locale for the study.

3.5 Target Population

The target population for this study included, primary school head-teachers and standard 4 primary school teachers of English language. There are 96 primary schools in the three divisions of interest to the study. The target population for each category outlined above was; 96 primary school headteachers and 96 standard 4 primary school teachers of English.

3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.6.1 Sampling Techniques

The researcher used different sampling techniques to determine the various samples required in the study. To get the schools to be used for the study from the three divisions (given their distribution; Mosocho 38, Keumbu 37 and Kiogoro 20) proportional stratified sampling technique was used. Ary et al. (2002) argues that this technique is appropriate when characteristics of the entire population are the main concern of the study. Each stratum was represented in the sample in exact proportions to its frequency in the total population. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) posit that for descriptive studies, a 10% of the target population is representative enough. Ary et al. (1972) further posits that a 10% - 20% sample of the total population is adequate enough to
give a representative sample of the total population. This study sampled 20% of schools from each stratum. Simple random sampling was used to select the individual schools in each stratum on the basis of the numbers required from the strata. Purposive sampling was used in picking the class level and the teachers to take part in the study. This technique involved selecting subjects who met a certain criterion of interest to the researcher. The criteria for picking the two was based on the researcher’s interest in the teaching of reading in standard 4, hence this technique was deemed to be appropriate in selecting the class level and the teachers teaching English language at this level. However, three schools that had more than one standard 4 stream, here simple random sampling through balloting technique was used to pick the stream that took part in the study. The headteacher of each of the sampled schools was also purposively selected.

3.6.2 Sample Size

The sample size consisted of 40 key informants, who comprised of 20 Head-teachers of the sampled schools and 20 teachers teaching standard 4 English language in the sampled schools. The schools included in the study were drawn from the rural setting as explained in chapter one section 1.2.5. The key informants’ distribution is shown in table 3.1.
Table 3.1: Distribution of Key Informants of the Study by Division in Kisii Central District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Mosocho</th>
<th>Keumbu</th>
<th>Kiogoro</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Target population</td>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>Target population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers’ sample</td>
<td>38 20%</td>
<td>8 20%</td>
<td>37 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std 4 teachers of English sample</td>
<td>38 20%</td>
<td>8 20%</td>
<td>37 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7 Research Instruments

The instruments used for data collection in the present study were:

Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation schedule (RIPCOS), Standard 4 teachers of English language Interview schedule, the Head-teachers’ questionnaire, the standard 4 teachers’ of English language questionnaire and the English language reading instructional resource checklist. All these instruments were mainly used to collect primary data.

3.7.1 Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation Schedule (RIPCOS)

Kombo & Tromp (2006) argue that observation is a tool that provides information about actual behaviour. This tool allows the researcher to put certain behaviour occurrences into context thereby understanding them better. Kumar (2005) also defines observation as a purposeful, systematic and selective way of watching and listening to an interaction or phenomenon as it
takes place. In this study the researcher adopted the non-participant observation in that the researcher did not get involved in the reading instructional activities taking place during the reading lessons in the research schools, but instead remained a passive observer. The researcher used two ways of recording the observation data; one was the partially use of the narrative approach where brief notes were entered in the comment column of the constructed structured observation schedule with a tick being placed either on the observed or not observed columns. The schedule was constructed such that it captured the standard 4 classroom environment, the reading instructional practices during the pre-reading, reading and the post-reading phases of the lesson. (See appendix 1).

To safeguard against bias and forgetting to record an important piece of interaction during narrative recording, the researcher also recorded the observation on a videotape. The advantage of this is that the researcher had the opportunity to watch the recorded interactions a number of times before drawing objective conclusions on the nature of reading instructional practices used during reading lessons in the research schools.

3.7.2 Teachers’ Interview Schedule

Wiersma & Jurs (2005), state that, an interview is an effective tool for collecting data in a survey research. This is because an interview provides the researcher with the opportunity to understand observed occurrences in an in-depth manner. This instrument was based on the teacher’s knowledge of
reading and the reading instructional practices he/she engages learners in during reading lessons. It was administered to every standard 4 primary school teacher of English language in the sampled schools after having gone through the observed lesson. The interview mainly focused on understanding the teacher’s knowledge of reading instruction and the reasons for the choice of the reading instructional practices usually used during reading lessons. The researcher made use of a semi-structured interview schedule that acted as a guide in establishing the aetiology of the instructional practices in reading lessons (See appendix 2).

3.7.3 Headteachers’ and Teachers’ Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a useful tool for collecting data from a large population that is widely spread. It is a list of written questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. The respondents are required to read the questions interpret what is expected and then write down the answers in the spaces provided in the questionnaire (Kumar, 2005). In the present study the questionnaires were used to collect data from the Head-teachers and the standard 4 teachers of English.

The Head teachers’ questionnaire was used to collect data on: the school administrative factors, the instructional resource factors that influence a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in a reading lesson (See appendix 4). The class 4 teachers’ questionnaire on the other hand was used to collect data on the teacher, learner and instructional resource factors that influence
instructional practices in reading instruction (See appendix 3). The questionnaires contained both closed ended and open ended questions relevant to this study.

3.7.4 Instructional Resource Checklist

The instructional resource checklist contained all possible instructional resources for the teaching of reading in standard 4 at the primary school level. It was used to collect data on the nature, availability, quantity and accessibility of the teaching/learning materials made use of in a standard 4 reading lesson (See appendix 5).

3.8 Pilot Study

Before undertaking the main study, the data collection instruments were pilot tested in one public primary school in Kisii central district that did not take part in the study. The researcher visited the pilot school and made arrangements on the dates convenient for the instruments to be pilot tested during reading lessons. During the piloting, the researcher observed the actual reading lesson in progress and recorded the observations using RIPCOS and also the reading lesson was video recorded. The video recording was done by an assistant researcher who had been trained prior to the actual recording time on what the recording was to focus on. The video recording was meant to help the researcher have the opportunity to watch all the instructional activities that took place during the reading lesson several times so as to make objective conclusions on the subject of study. The activities of interest in the study
included the classroom environment where reading instruction was taking place, teacher related activities and learner related activities. It was realised that video recording had significant effects on the learners’ participation during the reading lesson. To minimise this effect during the actual data collection period a lesson preceding the actual reading lesson in each research class had to be video recorded first. This was meant to make the pupils get used to the instrument and the video recording activity hence minimise anxiety and tension during the reading lesson which was the lesson of interest to the researcher.

After observing the reading lesson in the pilot school, the researcher interviewed the standard 4 teacher who taught the lesson to generate data on the reasons for the choice of the instructional practices noted during the reading lesson. After the interview a questionnaire was administered to the headteacher and the standard 4 teacher of English in the piloting school. The pilot study helped to ensure that the data collection instruments were clear of any ambiguity, bias, unclear wording and were able to measure what they were supposed to measure. The pilot was also to establish if the time allocated to administer each instrument was viable as well as establish the feasibility of the study. Data generated from the instructional resource checklist during piloting of the instrument revealed that the distinction between availability and accessibility was not very clear hence could not generate accurate data in relation to the instructional resources used in the teaching of reading in standard 4. To make the data generated relevant in the study the researcher
resorted into focusing on the instructional resource varieties, quantities and pupils’ accessibility to these materials.

3.8.1 Validity

Validity of research instruments is critical in any research. In itself validity is the ability of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure. Ary et al. (2002, P. 79) argue:

...the most obvious type of scientific validity evidence is based on content, which may be gathered by having some competent colleagues who are familiar with the purpose of the survey, examine the items to judge whether they are appropriate to measure what they are supposed to measure and whether they are a representative sample of the behaviour under investigation.

Therefore, in this study the researcher consulted educational experts in the fields of education and language pedagogy in Kenyatta University with a view of getting their expert input in as far as the instrument’s validity was concerned. Item inconsistencies realised during piloting and the opinions of the said experts helped to validate the instruments used to collect data in the study.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a data collection instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. It is the extent to which a measuring instrument yields consistent results when administered again in similar conditions (Creswell, 2009). The reliability of the data collection instruments in this study was based on the use of the triangulation method. Different methods of data collection were used to collect data on a similar area of study. Equally different respondents were used to give the researcher same
information on the study area from multiple perspectives. After piloting, those items found inconsistent with the study in each instrument were removed so as to increase the instrument’s reliability.

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

Before proceeding to the field to collect data for this study, the researcher sought for a permit from the National Council for Science & Technology of the Ministry of education Science and Technology of the government of Kenya. Once this was provided, the researcher trained a research assistant with whom the research data was to be collected. The main work of the research assistant was to video tape the reading lessons. The researcher then, visited the sampled schools to officially introduce the research team to the school administration and the standard 4 teacher of English in each school. During this visit the researcher arranged with the standard 4 teacher on the appropriate day and lesson when reading was being taught to enable the researcher plan on the administration of the research instruments. The administration of each instrument is discussed below.

3.9.1 Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation Schedule

In upper primary classes, that is, Standards 4 to 8, the English language syllabus allocates reading 3 lessons (preparation for reading, reading comprehension and library lesson). The researcher observed that the common practice in all the research schools is that teachers teaching English language
did not follow guidelines from the syllabus but rather followed the chronological arrangement of topics in the textbooks they were using. So, only one reading lesson was observed in each sample school using a structured observation schedule. Before getting into the classes for observation in each school, the researcher requested for the consent of the teacher as well as the pupils to have the lessons video recorded. The video-recording was meant to assist the researcher to get the opportunity to watch the recording many times so as to make objective conclusions on the issues under study.

3.9.2 Standard 4 Teachers of English Language Interview Schedule

The interview was conducted in a quiet room to ensure maximum teacher concentration in responding to the questions in the interview schedule. Data from the interview was recorded in the interview schedule worksheet in form of brief notes by the researcher. So as not to over concentrate on writing and forgetting to note an important point given by the respondent the interview was video recorded for purposes of giving the researcher the opportunity to listen and watch the respondent’s answers later, hence be in a position to make objective conclusions on the issues under study. This was done with the express authority of the respondents.

3.9.3 Questionnaires

i) Headteacher’s Questionnaire

This instrument was meant to bring out information on the administrative and instructional resource factors’ influence on a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson. The researcher administered the instrument
to the headteacher of each of the sampled schools during the day of carrying out observation and interview of the standard 4 teacher in the research school. The completed questionnaires were then collected by the researcher for analysis.

ii) Standard 4 Teacher’s Questionnaire

This instrument was administered by the researcher immediately after the going through the teacher’s interview. The instrument covered broader areas than those covered by the interview schedule. The teachers were requested to fill the questionnaire and upon completion the researcher collected it for analysis.

3.9.4 Instructional Resource Checklist

The researcher used one instructional resource checklist in each of the sampled schools. As explained in section 3.7.4 above, this instrument sought to capture data on: varieties, quantity and pupils’ accessibility of instructional resource materials for the teaching of reading in a standard 4 reading lesson.

3.10 Data Analysis

In this study both qualitative and quantitative data were generated from the primary sources. Qualitative data generated from the interview schedule was organised according to the study themes and presented descriptively on the basis of the study objectives and research questions. Quantitative data generated from the questionnaires and the observation schedule were edited, coded and entered into the computer for analysis using a computer programme.
- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 17 (SPSS). Chi square was used to analyse association between teachers’ instructional practices and choice of instructional resources against teacher demographics. Data in this thesis is presented in tables and figures.

3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Before commencement of this research the researcher got approval from Kenyatta University’s graduate school. Then he proceeded to seek for a permit from the Ministry of Education science and technology. The researcher then, visited the schools to establish a rapport with the school administration and the teachers who constituted the research samples. He introduced himself and the purpose of the study was explained to the head-teacher and the participating teachers. During research, all ethical issues were observed and confidentiality of information provided by respondents was assured. The respondents were required to respond to the concerns of the researcher voluntarily.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analyses, presentation and discussion of results. Data for this study were generated using the following instruments: Classroom observation schedule, Teacher’s interview schedule, Teacher’s questionnaire, Headteacher’s questionnaire and the Reading instructional resource checklist. Data analysis, presentation and discussion were guided by the study objectives:

a) Explore the nature of instructional practices that characterize the teaching of reading in std 4

b) Investigate factors that influence a teachers’ choice of instructional practices in teaching reading

c) Establish the level of parental involvement in promoting children’s reading development

d) Establish the instructional resources used in the teaching of reading

e) Establish challenges teachers face in the teaching of reading

f) Establish how teachers cope with challenges encountered

4.2 Description of the Biographic Data of the Study Subjects

The subjects used in this study were the standard 4 teachers of English language and the headteachers of the schools where these teachers worked. This section, therefore, presents information on the distribution of the standard 4 teachers of English language by gender, years of teaching experience in the
primary school level, level of education and years of teaching experience in Std 4. The section also presents information on the distribution of the headteachers by gender, years of teaching experience at the primary school level, education level and years of English language teaching experience in Std 4 (See tables 4.2a, b, c, d & e below).

### 4.2.1 Gender Distribution of Standard 4 Teacher’s and Headteacher’s

The table below presents the head teachers’ and teachers’ distribution by gender in the location of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Standard 4 teachers</th>
<th>Headteachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.1 shows that a large percentage of standard 4 teachers of English language in the location of study were female (13) 65% while (7) 35% were male. The high frequency of female teachers teaching English language may be due to the fact that females are good in languages than is the case with males who are said to be good in science related subjects( Bryden, 1979, cited in Andima, 2012). However, the nature of instructional practices in reading instruction and factors influencing their choice under investigation in this study may not necessarily have been influenced by gender.
Table 4.2.1 also shows that there were more male Headteachers (17) 85% as compared to the female Headteachers (3) 15% of those sampled in the study locale. It is important to note that the number of female teachers teaching Std 4 is higher than the number of their male counterparts. However, in this case there were more male headteachers as compared to the number of female ones. This clearly illustrates the fact that very few of the female teachers teaching English language in Std 4 take up leadership positions.

4.2.2 Teachers’ English Language Teaching Experience

A teacher’s’ teaching experience in a given grade has considerable influence on the way s/he carries out instruction in the same grade during the subsequent years of instruction. This may be due to the familiarity of the content of instruction and the nature of learners within the grade level. Table 4.2.2 shows the teachers’ distribution by English language teaching experience in general and in standard 4.
Table 4.2.2: Distribution of Teachers by Years of Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Teaching experience</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Std 4 Teaching experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.2 shows that a greater percentage of the standard 4 teachers of English language (80%) had over 6 years of teaching experience, while (20%) of the teachers had less than 5 years teaching experience. This finding clearly shows that majority of the Std 4 teachers of English language who were sampled for the study were experienced. In this study, it was considered that years of teaching experience could influence the nature of instructional practices one was bound to use in the teaching of reading. Table 4.2b also, indicates that majority of the teachers (65%) had 0-5 years English language teaching experience in Std 4. Very few of the teachers (2) involved in this study had an English Language teaching experience of above 16 years in Std 4.
This finding clearly shows that all the teachers used in the study had at least taught English language in Std 4. Whether this teaching experience had a positive or negative influence on the selection of reading instructional practices, was the subject of investigation in objective two of this study: investigate factors that influence a teacher’s choice of reading instructional practices.

4.2.3 Level of Education

A teachers’ level of education plays a critical role in terms of the choices one makes in the selection and use of instructional practices during instruction. Table 4.2.3 shows the distribution of teachers and headteachers by their level of education.

Table 4.2.3: Distribution of Teachers and Headteachers by Level of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of education</th>
<th>Standard 4 teachers</th>
<th>Headteachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.T.E certificate</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma certificate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P. T. E certificate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other- ATS IV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.3 above indicates that majority 14 (70%) of the English language teachers had a Primary Teacher Education certification. Only 1 teacher had a Bachelors degree representing 5% of the total number of those sampled for the study. Although this finding shows that all the teachers sampled were
professionally trained, only a few had attained higher training levels beyond the certification level. It should however, be realised that those teachers who hold higher grades, diploma and bachelor certifications did not advance their studies in the teaching of English language at the primary school level or English language educational pedagogy.

Table 4.2 above, also indicates that there were very few headteachers in the study location with high qualifications, that is either having a Bachelors or a Masters qualification. On the other hand most of the headteachers held a P.T.E or Diploma certification, 40% and 35% respectively. Nevertheless, this finding clearly shows that all the Headteachers had some level of professional qualification. This professional qualification was key in enabling them provide instructional leadership in the teaching of reading.

4.2.4 Headteachers’ Years of Teaching Experience

Information generated from the headteachers on administrative and the instructional resource factors that influenced the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in a reading lesson were based on their accumulated general teaching experience and their std 4 English language teaching experience. Table 4.2.4 below shows the distribution of the headteachers’ general teaching and standard 4 English language teaching experiences.
Table 4.2.4: Headteachers’ Distribution by Years of Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Teaching experience</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Std 4 English language teaching experience**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.4 indicates that a large percentage of the Headteachers had many years of teaching experience. Most (85%) had an experience spanning over 20 years, while only three had an experience of below 20 years. Table 4.2d also indicates that the majority of Headteachers (12-60%) sampled in this study had very few years of English language teaching experience in Std 4. The table further indicates that 8 (40%) of the Headteachers had over 11 years teaching experience in Std 4.

This finding clearly shows that although, all the headteachers (100%) in this study had experienced teaching English language in Std 4 at one point in their teaching career, most of them had less than 5 years teaching experience in English language teaching.

4.2.5 Headteachers’ Experience as School Heads

Asked about their experience as school heads, the headteachers gave varying responses as indicated in Table 4.1.5 below.
Table 4.2.5: Headteachers’ Experience as School Heads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience (years)</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2.5 indicates that a large number (45%) of the headteachers had been in the headship position for between 0–5 years. Although the majority as shown in the above table had less than 5 years experience as headteachers, they had long years of teaching experience as shown in Table 4.2c. This was considered appropriate to enable them provide dependable data on their school’s reading support policies. Those Headteachers who had over 16 year experience as Heads constituted 35% of the Headteachers sampled. Coupled with their long years of teaching experience, their experience as heads was considered sufficient enough to provide necessary data on the school administrative factors’ contributions in a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.

4.3 Nature of Instructional Practices

Data generated for this section is based on objective one of the study: to explore the nature of instructional practices that characterize the teaching of reading in Std 4. This section looks at the nature of reading instructional
practices used by Std 4 teachers of English language in the location of study. It focuses on the classroom reading environment, instructional practices during the pre-reading, reading and post-reading phases of the reading instruction lesson.

4.3.1 Classroom Reading Environment

The classroom reading environment is one of the key elements necessary to enhance children’s progress in learning to read. It should provide learners with opportunities to integrate literacy with other areas of the curriculum and other aspects of language arts: speaking, listening, reading and writing. The lessons observed during this study did show varied characteristics in the classroom reading environment as shown in Table 4.3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom characteristics</th>
<th>% Available</th>
<th>% Not available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of a variety of reading texts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of reading area/classroom library</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display of pupil’s written work on the classroom walls</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts and pictures displayed on the classroom walls</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate seats and writing surface provided</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization for small group reading instruction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3.1 shows that out of the 20 lessons observed, only 1 (5%) had a variety of reading texts. In this lesson the teacher made use of the course-book as well as other texts from where learners’ reading tasks were drawn from. However, the varieties were not many. In 19 (95%) of the other reading lessons, the course-book was the only key resource used in the teaching of reading. The course-books used in the reading lessons included: New Primary English Pupils’ book 4, New Progressive Primary English Pupils’ book 4 and Keynote English book 4. Their selection was entirely dependent on the choice of the specific school, hence the variation between the three course-books. During the reading lesson as indicated earlier, either of these course books was used in 19 (95%) of the observed lessons.

Contrary to this finding, Leibling’s (1998) study cited in Zygouris (2001), indicates that effective reading instructional environments should have a print-rich environment, this may be in the form of a class library that contains a wide variety of texts: picture books, storybooks, poems, and informational texts, big books, patterned or predictable books, books on tape, computer-based reading, and children’s magazines. This is meant to foster an association between the spoken and written symbols in the classroom. This was missing in a majority of the classrooms where lesson observation took place.

It is indeed crucial to understand that the hub of an effective literacy classroom is the classroom library (Reutzel et al., 2002 in Reutzel et al. 2011). The class library is not just for free time reading, but is a rich resource integrated into
daily literacy instruction and practice as a place for peer-assisted or independent reading and for storing a variety of engaging reading materials (Reutzel et al. 2011). The fact that there were no classroom libraries in all the classrooms where lesson observation took place means those teachers in these classrooms did not integrate this resource into their daily reading instruction and practice. The lack of classroom libraries was not entirely due to the teacher’s contribution but factors beyond their ability.

The type of instructional classroom environment presented here does not therefore enhance children’s progress in learning to read. It lacks quite a number of classroom instructional essentials necessary for the development of pupils’ literacy. In their argument, Allington and Johnston (2001) found that one common belief of effective fourth grade teachers (those who had impacted student achievement) was that print-rich environments were necessary for children to learn literacy. Print-rich environments are created by the text materials in a classroom in terms of their amount, attractiveness and accessibility.

Regarding display of pupils’ written work on the classroom walls, Table 4.2.1 shows that there were no displays of pupils’ written work, either emanating from their reading tasks or any other written assignments in all the observed lessons. Wall displays do play a critical role in enhancing reading development in young readers. They are most effective especially when co-produced by the
pupils and the teachers. This is because placing students' artwork and writings on the walls give them ownership in their classroom hence enhances their reading development.

As argued by N’Namdi (2005), giving pupils opportunities to take part in the generation of classroom wall charts helps them to visualize their participation in literacy and as a result feel compelled to learn more. The displays can take the form of: classroom rules, calendar, daily schedules, numbers, colours and alphabetic letters among others. They should be neatly produced and displayed to set the standard for high quality work in the classroom (Reutzel et al. 2011).

In 3 out of the 20 lessons observed the presence of old teacher written charts and pictures in content areas were displayed on the classroom walls. These materials did provide a platform for pupils’ extended reading beyond the reading lesson. However, these wall charts and pictures were old and poorly displayed. As argued by Reutzel et al. (2011) the displays should be neat and appropriately displayed if they have to create an enticing reading environment for young children.

In 11 out of the 20 (55%) lessons observed, pupils’ desks were considered appropriate and had appropriate writing surfaces for the Std 4 pupils. This is because the desks were in good condition and of reasonable height. However, teachers did not take advantage of this, to create small-group instructional
reading groups essential in literacy instruction. N’Namdi (2005) observes that small-group reading instruction gives the teacher opportunities to divide pupils into groups of diverse skills and abilities. Each pupil in these groups is hence given the chance to contribute to the group’s reading discussions differently based on their skill and ability. Small-group reading instruction is a necessary ingredient in any effective literacy programme (Mathes et al., 2005; Torgesen, Rashotte, Alexander, Alexander, & MacPhee, 2003; Tyner, 2009; Tyner & Green, 2005 cited in Reutzel & Clark, 2011).

An ideal small-group reading instruction should have a U-shaped table, student chairs, a teacher’s chair, and a rolling cart to organize necessary instructional materials to be near where the teacher will teach the small group. This however, must not be the case in every lesson because of the different levels of school endowments. Teachers are therefore at liberty to set up their classrooms to accommodate small-group classroom discussions based on the prevailing conditions in their schools.

4.3.2: Instructional Practices during the Pre-Reading Phase

It is considered that what the reading teacher does during the pre-reading phase greatly influences a learner’s comprehension of the text in question. During the pre-reading phase, the researcher observed the use of various instructional practices in the reading lessons as shown in Table 4.3.2 below.
Table 4.3.2: Instructional Practices during the Pre-reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional practices</th>
<th>Carried out</th>
<th>Not carried out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of previous lesson</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>previewing of the reading text</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activation of pupil’s background knowledge</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion of topic before reading of text</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of the type of text to be read and determining the purpose for reading it</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives for the reading lesson clearly presented</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New vocabulary discussed in meaningful Context</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of appropriate feedback to pupils’ pre-reading discussions</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesson embraces active learner participation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.3.2, a variety of instructional practices were used in reading lessons during the pre-reading phase. Out of the 20 lessons observed for instance, review of previous lesson was carried out in 11 (55%) lessons, previewing of the reading text was carried out in 15 (75%) of the lessons, activation of pupil’s background knowledge was carried out in 8 (40%) lessons, in very few lessons (20%) text type and purpose of reading was identified, provision of appropriate feedback to pupils’ pre-reading discussions was observed in (25%) lessons while active learner participation was observed in 8 lessons.

These instructional practices when used effectively in reading lessons do enhance pupils’ reading development in various ways. Activation of pupil’s
background knowledge for instance, though used in only 9 lessons is extremely important in influencing how learners eventually interpret what they read and learn from a reading text (Anderson, 1977 in Ogle, 1986). Making sure that learners have understood the purpose of a given reading task has substantial benefits in literacy instruction. Despite the fact that it was only used in 4 (20%) of the lessons, research has indicated that it helps learners get the main idea, specific information, understand meaning contained in the text, simply enjoy reading the story or helps the learners to select certain reading strategies that are appropriate for that particular reading purpose (National Capital Language Resource Centre, 2006). This is equally the case with clearly presented lesson objectives in reading lessons.

A discussion of vocabulary in meaningful context was observed in 10 (50%) of the lessons. It is effective to discuss the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases in their context, especially when dealing with young readers. Richards et al. (1985) states that words are organized into an intricate, interlocking system, hence cannot be learnt in isolation without considering their context of use. Vocabulary discussions in most of the lessons observed in this study were either a follow-up activity on the previous lesson or a pre-reading activity. Vocabulary pre-teaching assists in the activation of appropriate content schema so as to improve the learner’s comprehension of texts (Tudor, 1982 in Alemi et al. 2010). This finding concurs with Kara’s (2008) findings that vocabulary instruction should be contextual so as to enhance a learner’s comprehension of reading texts.
Effective feedback to pupils’ contributions during the learning process is very important. As shown in Table 4.2.2, this practice was only observed in 5 (25%) of the lessons. It should however, be realised that it is very critical in enhancing effective learning. Pressley (2007) in Taylor (2008) observes that, teachers in effective classrooms provide their learners with encouragement, praise and positive feedback during their lessons. This feedback is meant to inform learners about the degree of correctness in their performance so as to enhance improvement in subsequent tasks, and it should be given immediately after the performance of a task. In doing so the teacher facilitates and scaffolds pupil’s learning (Bitter et al. 2009). Wharton-McDonald et al. (1998), cited in Zygouris (2001), observe “…providing effective feedback, modelling and scaffolding are key elements of effective reading instruction”.

The findings in this section, however, show a limited application of pre-reading instructional practices meant to enhance pupils’ effective reading development. Where there was an attempt to utilize some of the pre-reading instructional practices as shown in Table 4.3.2, they were not thoughtfully used for particular purposes. Unfortunately, their use was more of routine than meant to develop particular reading skills. During the interviews that followed the lesson observations, teachers were asked to explain why they used particular instructional practices during the pre-reading phase. It apparently became clear that they did not have specific skills to develop through these practices.
Generally, it is worth noting that pre-reading activities play a significant role in pupils’ reading development. As observed by Ajideh (2003), pre-reading activities get students to think about ways the text might connect: text to self, text to text, and text to the world. Mayer (1994), in Alemi et al. (2010), further, observes, “pre-reading activities prepare readers to understand concepts that are to be introduced, make the reading task easier …and enjoyable”. By taking students through this process, teachers are modelling what good readers do before attempting to read an unfamiliar piece.

4.3.3 Instructional Practices during the Reading Phase

The instructional practices a teacher exposes learners to during the reading phase greatly enhances their ability to draw relationships between personal experiences and textual experiences. Table 4.3.3 below shows what the researcher observed in the reading lessons.
Table 4.3.3: Instructional Practices during the Reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional practices</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th></th>
<th>Not observed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils evaluate initial predictions at appropriate points</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils read aloud portions of text that confirm or disapprove predictions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension discussion focuses on the purposes established</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factual as well as high level thinking questions are used</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher models fluent reading and encourages pupils to read fluently with expression</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher monitors the pupils’ reading and assists them</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher models use of new vocabulary in sentences during discussion.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils encouraged to use a variety of word study strategies in meaning comprehension</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher gives section summaries</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the Std 4 teachers as indicated in table 4.3.3 did not use a variety of instructional practices that are critical in influencing the pupils’ reading development during the reading phase. Instructional practices such as: confirming or rejecting predictions, discussion on comprehension based on the purpose set for reading the text, teacher’s use of unfamiliar vocabulary in sentences during discussions, pupils’ use of a variety of word study strategies were used in less than 20% of the lessons observed. This has far reaching negative effects in pupils’ reading development.

It should be noted that making of predictions before and during reading determines the reader’s expectations in a reading text, hence enhances one’s
ability to follow the flow of information in the text (Mackay et al. 1979 in Ajideh, 2003). Discussing the predictions is one way of monitoring reading comprehension, and this makes it a critical instructional element in effective reading instruction during the reading phase (Weaver, 2002). Use of questions during reading is supposed to help one make predictions and also carry out comprehension discussions. Through the use of such questions pupils are helped to evaluate their predictions at appropriate points in the reading and identify and read portions aloud to confirm or reject predictions made during the pre-reading phase.

A close examination of results in Table 4.3.3 above clearly shows that most of the Std 4 teachers of reading in the schools studied in Kisii Central District, commonly used three instructional practices in teaching reading. These are:

- teacher modelling fluent reading and encouraging pupils to read fluently with expression (70%),
- teacher monitoring pupils’ fluent reading and providing appropriate assistance while they read (80%)
- teacher giving of section summaries (75%)

According to Allington et al. (2000), fluency training and monitoring improves overall reading ability of learners. However, they are not sufficient in building the pupils’ ability to comprehend reading texts. In fact giving learners section summaries denies them the opportunities to be active participants during the teaching learning process.
The During-reading instructional practices are generally meant to help learners develop reading strategies, improve their comprehension of text and work out meaning of unfamiliar words encountered in the course of reading (Almacıoğlu, et al. 2009). The use of the during-reading instructional practices in the lessons observed in this study is limited. As observed early this has negative effects in developing the learners reading abilities.

4.3.4 Instructional Practices during the Post- Reading Phase

The primary goal of the reading activities during the post- reading phase is to further develop and clarify interpretations of the text and also help the reader to remember what they had individually created in their minds from the text. Table 4.3.4 shows the instructional practices observed in Std 4 reading lessons during the post-reading phase.
Table 4.3.4: Instructional Practices during the Post-reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional practices</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Not observed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils asked to read aloud sections of the text that provide</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answers to questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are asked to retell the text read concentrating on major</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>events or concepts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are asked to answer set questions verbally</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are asked to explain their answers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are asked to provide a written response to the</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils are encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher models the use of new vocabulary in written contexts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing is used as an extension of reading tasks</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher monitoring of pupils’ comprehension</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils evaluate the texts’ relevance and appropriateness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection phase is carried out</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A close examination of the teacher’s instructional practices during the post reading phase in the reading lessons as indicated in Table 4.3.4 revealed that three instructional practices were commonly used by most of the teachers: pupils asked to answer set questions orally 18 (90%), pupils asked to provide a written response to the comprehension questions 13 (65%) and teachers monitoring pupils’ reading comprehension 11(55%).

These findings point to the fact that most of the teachers observed did not use a variety of instructional practices during the post-reading phase of the reading lesson. Despite the fact that some of these instructional practices are useful in
enhancing the learner’s reading development, they were not used at all or were used in less than 40% of the lessons. These included: pupils’ reading aloud portions of the text that answered comprehension questions, pupils’ asked to explain their answers, pupils asked to use vocabulary in written contexts, teacher’s use of vocabulary in written contexts, use of writing as an extension of reading, text evaluation and reflection.

Reading aloud sections of the text that provide answers to comprehension questions for instance, is useful in helping pupils identify the textual structure of the reading text. This is because of the fact that to be able to correctly identify where the correct answer is found in the text, the pupil will have correctly identified the sequence of information in the text. This is also enhanced by the pupil’s ability to re-tell events captured in the text. Retelling as observed by Morrow, (1996) in Palingo, (2003) is a post reading activity where a reader tells what he/she can remember after reading a given text. Retelling extends and enhances the reader’s comprehension and comprehension processes. Through it, readers become active participants, hence, results in their increased language development, comprehension and interest in books and in learning to read (Evans & Strong, 1996 in Palingo, 2003).

It is worth noting that effective reading instruction for primary school learners is dependent on the nature of the reading instructional environment, nature of
reading instructional practices/activities selected for use in the pre-reading, during reading and post-reading phases of the reading lesson. The findings presented in this section simply mean that the reading instructional environment and the reading instructional practices presented in this study provided limited options to enhance the development of pupils’ reading abilities. The big concern in this study then was why teachers chose to create this type of instructional climate in their lessons and yet it does not promote effective reading instruction. The reasons for the teachers’ instructional decisions as observed above are discussed in the next section.

4.4 Factors that Influence a Teacher’s Choice of Instructional Practices

Data generated for this section is based on objective two of the study: to investigate the factors that influence a teachers’ choice of instructional practices in the teaching of reading. This section focuses on the factors within the instructional environment that do influence the nature of instructional practices teachers use during reading lessons. These factors are categorized into: the school administrative factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors and the instructional resource factors. They are discussed in the sections that follow.

4.4.1 School Administrative Factors

In the quest to establish the nature of implementation of the language of instruction policies in the schools and their effect on a teacher’s choice of
instructional practices in reading instruction, the researcher sought for information from headteachers and the std 4 teachers of English language. Data from the Headteachers’ questionnaire and the teachers’ interview were used to establish this information. Data from the Headteacher’s questionnaire is presented in figures 4.4.1a, 4.4.1b, and 4.4.1c below.

Figure 4.4.1a: English language strictly used as a language of instruction

Language Policy

Figure 4.4.1a above indicates that a greater percentage of the schools (60 %) sampled do not strictly observe the language of instruction (LOI) policy. Only 40% of the schools sampled are shown to be observing the policy strictly. Asked whether Kiswahili was used during instruction alongside English language, the headteachers gave the information contained in figure 4.4.1b.
As shown in figure 4.4.1b, in 65% of the schools sampled, the Headteachers indicated that Kiswahili was used alongside English during English language reading lessons.

Also asked whether the learners $L_1$ was used alongside English language during reading instruction, the headteachers gave the information contained in figure 4.4.1c

**Figure 4.4.1b**: Kiswahili used alongside English during English Language reading lessons

**Figure 4.4.1c**: Use of $L_1$ during English language reading lessons
The Headteachers indicated that the pupils’ L₁ was used (45%) alongside English during English language reading lessons (see figure 4.4.1c). This was meant to clarify certain English language concepts that seemed difficult for the pupils to comprehend during the reading lessons.

It is clear from these findings that the Kenya language in Education policy is not strictly adhered to in these primary schools. The school administration has a key role to play in ensuring that the school curriculum is adequately implemented. This includes giving guidance on the effective implementation of the language of instruction policy in the primary school level. The language in Education policy in Kenya holds that: the language of the catchment area (L₁) should be used as a language of instruction from standard one to three, with English language being learnt as a subject. English language (L₂) should then be used as a language of instruction from Std 4 onwards in all subjects a part from Kiswahili and the foreign languages.

Data presented in the three figures above concur with Gathumbi’s (2005) observation on classroom instruction in Kenyan primary schools. Gathumbi states that the most common practice in teaching, in Kenyan primary schools is the use of a mixture of first language, Kiswahili and English as languages of instruction, even when the language policy states otherwise.
The LOI policy, however, did not significantly influence the teacher’s choice of instructional practices during the teaching of reading in the Std 4 reading lessons. Only 5% of the teachers interviewed indicated that the choices of their reading instructional practices were influenced by the LOI policy. The fact that the language of instruction does not influence teacher’s instructional practices in reading lessons can be attributed to the fact that they are more inclined to ensuring that the pupils’ subject mean score is improved no matter what happens to skill development. In her argument Gathumbi (2005) observes that teaching in Kenyan primary schools is examination oriented. Greater emphasis is put on the grades learners obtain in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) oblivious of the implementation of educational policies and the attainment of educational objectives. She further observes that acquisition of language skills for use in language undertakings takes a back seat as grade determine if one is a success or failure in school.

**School Support Policies**

A school’s reading support policies play a critical role in enhancing the pupils’ reading skills development. The reading support policies do vary from one school to the other. Responses to item number 3 of the Headteachers’ questionnaire which required them to indicate their preferences on the reading support policies that applied in their schools are captured in Table 4.4.1a.
### Table 4.4.1a: Headteachers’ Preference on their School’s Reading Support Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School’s reading support policies</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial reading lessons given to weak pupils in reading</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching is usually practiced in this school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading taught within the timetabled time only</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents partner with teachers to help improve their children’s reading abilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents provide reading texts for their children</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good readers are rewarded according the class level during the school’s reading competition day</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents read for pupils during reading lessons</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers tutoring provided for weak pupils in the school</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings in Table 4.4.1a indicate that from the Headteachers’ responses, three reading support policies are seen to influence the choice of instructional practices during reading lessons. These practices are: remedial reading lessons given to weak pupils in 80%, use of team teaching in reading lessons in 60% and parents partnering with teachers to improve pupils’ reading abilities in 50% of the schools sampled.

These support policies play significant roles in pupil’s reading development, whenever they are used. Providing remedial reading programs for instance, is imperative in improving both reading fluency and reading comprehension, particularly to elementary school students. This is because fluency and comprehension are particularly important at this stage of development and
early intervention can have an impact on the progression of reading difficulties (Hausheer, 2011). Team teaching as observed by Armstrong (1977) leads to higher learner achievement. This is due to the fact that it permits team members to take advantage of individual strengths in planning for instruction and in working with learners among other reasons. Oyetunde (2007) too argues that strengthening of parental involvement in children’s literacy enhances better performance.

However, it is worth noting that the Headteachers’ responses perhaps present ideal reading instructional situations. This is because of the fact that responses from the teacher’s interview showed that their choice of reading instructional practices was not influenced by the reading support policies present in the schools.

**School Assessment Policies**

In regard to the role played by the school’s assessment policy in a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson, the headteachers were asked to choose from a five point likert scale, whether their school’s assessment policy influenced the teacher’s choice of instructional practices. The results are as shown in figure 4.4.1d.
Figure 4.4.1d: School’s assessment policy

Figure 4.4.1d indicates the Headteacher’s reactions to whether the school’s assessment policy influenced the teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson. The findings show that 18 (90%) of the Headteachers were positive that assessment policy played a significant role in the choice of a teacher’s instructional practices during a reading lesson (75% agree and 15% strongly agree). The ultimate goal of classroom assessment is to inform instruction. Assessments provide real-time student information so that teachers can make decisions about “next steps” for continuing student learning using effective teaching strategies. It is an integral component of learning and teaching. Teachers, who develop useful assessments, provide corrective instruction and eventually improve their instruction and help students effectively learn (Guskey, 2003).

Despite the fact that 90% of the Headteachers saw assessment as being crucial in influencing a teacher’s instructional decisions on reading instruction, the teachers interviewed did not identify this as one of the factors that influenced their choice of instructional practices in their reading lessons. This perhaps,
explains the reasons for the limited options in the nature of instructional practices observed in their reading lessons. Zygouris’ (2001) study however, posits that successful reading instruction should be driven by accurate diagnostic information.

**School’s Co-curricular Activities**

In regard to whether pupils’ co-curricular reading activities influenced a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson, a five point likert scale was used to capture the data as shown in figure 4.4.1e.
Figure 4.4.1e: Pupils’ co-curricular reading activities

Figure 4.4.1e shows that 65% (50% and 15% respectively) of the headteachers agreed that co-curricular activities do indeed influence a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during reading. These activities provide opportunities for students to learn the values of teamwork, a channel for reinforcing skills and the opportunity to apply academic skills in other areas as a part of a well-rounded education (Sitra et al. 2005).

Despite the fact that 65% of the Headteachers sampled indicated that pupils’ co-curricular reading activities had a positive impact on a teacher’s choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson, data from the Std 4 teacher’s interview indicated that the pupils’ co-curricular reading activities did not influence their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. A possible interpretation of this is that the language teachers do not engage learners in co-curricular activities and even when they do, they do not link them to classroom...
instruction. It also means that the headteachers and teachers do not share same instructional ideals, a situation that paints some element of disharmony between the curriculum implementer and the overseer of curriculum implementation process at the primary school level.

Reading taught within the timetabled time only was indicated by 30% of the headteachers to influence the instructional practices in reading lessons (see Table 4.4.1a). This was, however, indicated by 60% of the Std 4 teachers of English language to be one of the critical factors that influenced the nature of instructional practice they used in reading lessons. The teachers attributed their choice of instructional practices to the time they are allocated in the school timetable. These teachers felt that reading activities in their lessons were dictated upon by the time given in the school timetable. This meant that they selected reading activities that could enable them cover the English language syllabus within the stipulated period. Duffy (1982) in Shapiro et al. (1990) agrees that the belief of urgency to cover instructional materials within a given time and have a well managed classroom is the actual driving force behind most teachers’ instructional decision making. However, effective schools should attempt to make maximum use of instructional time based on the quality of learning envisaged and not the quantity of work covered (Zygouris, 2001).

4.4.2 Teacher Related Factors

The teacher plays a significant role in developing pupils’ reading skills. This is done through the nature of instructional decisions the teacher makes in relation
to the instructional practices chosen for a particular reading lesson. However, this is depended on a number of factors that influence the teacher’s instructional decision making. This section presents data on the teacher related factors that influence a teacher’s instructional decision making in reading lessons.

**Teachers’ Understanding of the Reading Process**

One of the key factors significant in the choice of instructional practices during a reading lesson is ones’ understanding of the reading process. Figure 4.3.2a presents the teacher’s view in regard to their understanding on what constitutes the reading process.

![Figure 4.3.2a: Teachers’ understanding of the term ‘reading’](image)

Figure 4.3.2a above indicates that the teachers sampled viewed the term ‘reading’ differently. Data presented here show that 40% of the teachers held the view that reading is an active process of constructing meaning. A learner
incorporates text based information to his existing stock of knowledge in a given area. In this case the teachers also viewed reading as being both a perceptual and a cognitive process in which the reader uses both previous experiences and the ‘code’ features of the text to create meaning (Yu-Chen, 2008).

The figure also indicates that 50% of the teachers viewed reading as a sequential process where readers begins reading by analysing the text in small units and these units build progressively into larger units until meaning is extracted. This is in line with Mutenda (2008) & Yu-chou (2008)’s argument that meaning is obtained in a step-by-step fashion, going from a letter to a phrase, to a clause and to the sentence sequence in order to establish meaning in a text. Lastly, the figure shows that 10% of the teachers viewed reading as a process that involves readers constructing meaning of the text by using their prior knowledge of the world or particular text components to predict what comes next in that text. This is what Brown (2004) calls the top-down reading theory.

Findings from the Std 4 teachers’ interview also indicate that the teacher’s definition of the term reading actually influenced their choice of reading instructional practices during reading lessons. Duffy and Anderson (1982) in Kinzer (1988) observe that teacher’s theoretical orientations on reading exert considerable influence on their instructional decisions. Rupley & Logan (1984)
in Kinzer (1988) concur by saying that beliefs about reading influence elementary teacher’s instructional decisions.

**Table 4.4.2a: Other Teacher Factors that Influence choice of Instructional Practices during Reading Lessons**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher factors</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature of professional training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service courses attended</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher perception of Learner’s reading responses/</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4.2a shows the other teacher related factors that influence a teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. The discussions below show how each of these factors influenced the choice of instructional practices during reading lessons.

**Nature of Professional Training**

Findings from Table 4.4.2a show that, 30% of the teachers sampled attributed their choice of reading instructional practices to their professional training. A further analysis indicated that the teachers’ level of education in particular influenced their choice of type of reading text and determining the purpose for reading it ($\chi^2 = 6.696$, $P = 0.035$ refer to Table 4.4.2e). Given that the $P$-value is less than 0.05, the $\chi^2$–value of 6.696 was found significant. This implies that
a teacher’s educational level was found to have a positive influence on the choice of reading text and determining the purpose for reading it.

This finding corroborates Ciminelli’s (2011) argument that teacher decision making in reading instruction is influenced considerably by the nature of a teacher’s training. Majority of the teachers 14 (70%) involved in this study had a PTE certification. Given the limited options in the nature of instructional practices observed in their reading lessons, it is possible to raise questions on the efficacy of the primary teacher training programme on reading instruction. This is because of the fact that the few reading lessons that exhibited rich instructional options were determined by the in-service courses teachers attended. In this case, their primary teacher training programme did not prepare them adequately to teach reading in the primary school level.

**Teacher Perception of Learner’s Reading Response/Behaviour**

Table 4.4.2a shows that 45% of the teachers’ responses indicated that selection of their reading instructional practices were influenced by their perception of the learner’s reading response/behaviour. This information corroborated data generated from the teachers of English language interview on the role of learner reading response/behaviour in the teacher’s choice of reading instructional practices. The analysis shows that 45% of the teachers in the teacher questionnaire and 60% of teachers’ responses during the teacher interview based their instructional decisions on the learner’s reading response/
behaviour. These findings are reflected in the data in figure 4.4.2c on the influence pupil’s reading ability has on the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in a reading lesson. The findings point out that 45% of the teachers strongly agreed while 45% of them just agreed that learner’s reading ability influenced their choice of instructional practices during reading lessons.

![Bar Chart]

**Figure 4.4.2c:** Teacher’s choice of instructional practices in relation to pupils’ reading ability

These findings are in line with what Buike (1981) stated in her study that teacher instructional decisions and classroom practices are based on student performance in given reading skills. For instance, teachers involved in her study made on-the-spot decisions if students showed learning difficulties in any aspect of their lessons.
Lesson Objectives

Teachers were asked to state whether lesson objectives influenced their choice of instructional practices during reading lessons. Their responses are shown in Figure 4.4.2d.

Figure 4.4.2d: Nature of lesson objectives

Teacher’s responses on whether the nature of lesson objectives influenced their choice of reading instructional practices showed that 55% strongly agreed and 45% of the teachers agreed that lesson objectives played a significant role in the choice of instructional practices during reading lessons. The cognitive level of the lesson objective should influence a teacher’s instructional choices regarding the organization of students and methods to be used in presenting lesson content. The teachers in the lesson observed however, did not make clear intentions on what instructional objectives were guiding their lessons.
Importance of Reading items in Reading Comprehension

In an attempt to understand teachers’ views on a number of items in reading comprehension, teachers were asked to rate the importance of a number of reading items considered critical in effective reading comprehension. This is presented in Table 4.4.2b.
Table 4.4.2b Teacher’s rating of Reading items in Reading

Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading items</th>
<th>Teacher’s % ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Title</td>
<td>85%(17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Vocabulary</td>
<td>80%(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Grammar</td>
<td>60%(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Reading the text a loud</td>
<td>20%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Translating the reading text into Ekegusii</td>
<td>15%(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Prior knowledge or background knowledge of the reading content</td>
<td>65%(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Understanding the connections of each paragraph</td>
<td>70%(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Guessing the meaning of words</td>
<td>20%(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Finding the main idea</td>
<td>65%(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Summarizing</td>
<td>35%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Outlining</td>
<td>30%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Retelling the text</td>
<td>45%(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) Predicting the main idea of each paragraph</td>
<td>30%(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n) Monitoring reading comprehension</td>
<td>70%(14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o) Asking questions to check Comprehension</td>
<td>80%(16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p) Using the dictionary to get the meaning of new vocabulary items in the reading text</td>
<td>35%(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q) Making use of visual aids in a reading lesson</td>
<td>70%(14)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: 1-very important 2-important 3-Fairly important 4-Not sure 5-Not important

Table 4.4.2c shows that teachers rated the following as being very important in reading comprehension: text title, vocabulary, understanding connections of each paragraph, monitoring comprehension, asking questions to check comprehension and use of visual aids in a reading lesson. All these items
received between 70%-85% approval ratings. These data corroborated the
lesson observation data in the sense that during the classroom lesson
observation, most teachers gave these items more prominence than the rest on
table 4.4.2c. However, the use of visual aids which, though shown to have
attracted a 70% approval rating was only observed in one lesson. The table also
shows that translation of the reading text from English to Ekegusii was given a
15% approval rating. This is despite the fact that English is supposed to be
used as the language of instruction at this level. This approval rating
corroborated data presented in Figures 4.4.1a, b and c which focused on the
implementation of the language of instruction policy in Kenyan primary
schools.

To get a clear picture of the teachers’ mean approval ratings on these reading
items, a mean rating for each item was computed as shown in Table 4.4.2c.
**Table 4.4.2c Means of Teacher’s rating of Reading items in Reading Comprehension**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading items</th>
<th>Mean rating</th>
<th>Implication of the rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Title</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Vocabulary</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Grammar</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Reading the text a loud</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Translating the reading text into Ekegusii</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Prior knowledge or background knowledge of the reading content</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Understanding the connections of each paragraph</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) Guessing the meaning of words</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>Fairly important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i) Finding the main idea</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j) Summarizing</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k) Outlining</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>l) Retelling the text</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m) Predicting the main idea of each paragraph</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n) Monitoring reading comprehension</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o) Asking questions to check Comprehension</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p) Using the dictionary to get the meaning of new vocabulary items in the reading text</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q) Making use of visual aids in a reading lesson</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: **1**-very important **2**- important **3**-Fairly important **4**-Not sure **5**-Not important

The mean ratings for most of the reading items as indicated in table 4.4.2c above are between 1 (very important) and 2 (important). Translating the reading text from English to Ekegusii and guessing the meaning of words however, had a mean of 3.7 (not sure) and 3.15 (fairly important) respectively.
This, therefore, means that the teachers sampled viewed all the items in table 4.4.2c as having a significant influence in reading comprehension, apart from the translation of L₂ texts to L₁ which had a not sure rating. In some lessons however, translation of English language texts to Ekegusii was witnessed.

Also, from the classroom observation there was a discrepancy between the teachers’ approval ratings and what was observed during the actual lesson presentation. During the actual classroom observation for instance, reading items such as predicting of main idea in each paragraph (important), summarising (important), outlining of the main idea in each paragraph (important) and retelling of sections of the reading text (important) were not observed in any of the lessons. This raises fundamental questions regarding the relationship between teachers’ conceptions of theory and practice in reading instruction. Despite there being considerable evidence showing that there is consistency between a teacher’s theoretical beliefs and practice, research as observed by Johnston et al. (1992) has shown that the classroom complexities can constrain teachers’ abilities hence producing instruction that is inconsistent with their beliefs. The specific classroom complexities that may have produced the inconsistency observed in this study may be due to the challenges teachers of reading face in their teaching of reading lessons.

Further analysis was carried out to find out whether the teachers’ demographic factors did correlate with the observed instructional practices during the re-
reading, reading and the post-reading phases. The findings are presented and discussed in the sections that follow.

Teacher’s teaching experience significantly influenced ($\chi^2 = 9.428$, $P = 0.05$) teachers’ practice of reading a story outside that meant for the lesson and eliciting pupils' personal details. Specifically teachers having many years of teaching experience practised the pre-reading habit of reading a story outside that meant for the lesson as shown in Table 4.4.2d

**Table 4.4.2d: Cross Tabulation of the Effect of the Teachers’ Teaching Experience on Instructional Practices during Pre-reading Phase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ demographic data</th>
<th>Pupils preview, read title of text, look at illustration and discuss content</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Not observed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 5 yrs</td>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>11 – 15 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(25%)</td>
<td>4(80%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3(75%)</td>
<td>1(20%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 7.289$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$P = 0.121$</td>
<td>$P = 0.05$</td>
<td>$P = 0.05$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicate Chi –value significant at $P \leq 0.05$

Teachers read a story outside that meant for the lesson, eliciting pupils personal details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ demographic data</th>
<th>Teachers read a story outside that meant for the lesson, eliciting pupils personal details</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Not observed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 5 yrs</td>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>11 – 15 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(25%)</td>
<td>2(50%)</td>
<td>1(50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3(75%)</td>
<td>2(50%)</td>
<td>1(50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.861$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$P = 0.302$</td>
<td>$P = 0.302$</td>
<td>$P = 0.302$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers read a story outside that meant for the lesson, eliciting pupils personal details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ demographic data</th>
<th>Teachers read a story outside that meant for the lesson, eliciting pupils personal details</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Not observed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching experience</td>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 5 yrs</td>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>11 – 15 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1(25%)</td>
<td>2(40%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3(75%)</td>
<td>3(60%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 9.428*$</td>
<td></td>
<td>$P = 0.05$</td>
<td>$P = 0.05$</td>
<td>$P = 0.05$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicate Chi –value significant at $P \leq 0.05$
Teachers level of education significantly influenced the teachers use of identification of the type of text to be read and determining the purpose for reading it ($\chi^2 = 6.696, P = 0.035$) as shown in Table 4.4.2e.

Table 4.4.2e: Cross Tabulation of the effect of the Teachers’ Level of Education on Instructional Practices during Pre-reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers demographic data</th>
<th>Pupils preview, read title of text, look at illustration and discuss content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers level of education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>1(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.T.E Cert.</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 2.857$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P = 0.240$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>3(60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.T.E Cert.</td>
<td>1(7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 6.696^*$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P = 0.035$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value significant at $P \leq 0.05$

Teachers’ experience in teaching English in Std 4 had a significant relationship with the teacher’s use of activation of the background knowledge of text through charts, mind maps and guides ($\chi^2 = 6.538, P = 0.038$) as well as generation of discussion about the topic before reading the text to create interest ($\chi^2 = 6.340, P = 0.042$) during reading phase as shown in Table 4.4.2f
Table 4.4.2f Cross Tabulation of the effect of the Teachers’ Experience in Teaching English in STD 4 on Instructional Practices during Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers demographic data</th>
<th>Pupils preview, read title of text, look at illustration and discuss content</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Not observed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching std 4 English experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>9(69.2%)</td>
<td>4(30.8%)</td>
<td>13(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>4(80%)</td>
<td>1(20%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 yrs</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.964$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 6.538^*$</td>
<td>Activation of the background knowledge of text through charts, mind maps and guides</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td>6(46.2%)</td>
<td>7(53.8%)</td>
<td>13(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td></td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 6.340^*$</td>
<td>Generation of discussion about the topic before reading the text, to create interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td>10(76.9%)</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
<td>13(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td></td>
<td>1(20%)</td>
<td>4(80%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value significant at $P \leq 0.05$

Further analysis revealed that, teachers’ gender had significant effect on their choice of instructional practices during the reading phase of the lesson ($P < 0.05$). More male teachers were observed to have allowed pupils to evaluate their initial predictions at appropriate points, made use of factual as well as high level thinking questions during the comprehension discussion, modelled fluent reading and encouraged pupils to read fluently. However, more female teachers were observed to have allowed pupils to identify and read aloud portions of text that confirmed or disapproved their prediction, monitored pupils reading and provided appropriate assistance and feedback and modelled
use of new vocabulary in sentences during discussion. This is as shown in Table 4.4.2g.

Table 4.4.2g Cross Tabulation of the Effect of the Teacher’s Gender on Instructional Practices during the Reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers demographic data</th>
<th>Pupils evaluate initial predictions at appropriate points</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1(14.3%)</td>
<td>6(85.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1(7.7%)</td>
<td>12(92.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 0.224 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils identify and read aloud portions of text that confirmed or disapprove prediction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 0.567 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehension discussion focuses on the purposes established for reading the text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 1.900 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factual as well as high level thinking questions used during the comprehension discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 0.848 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher models fluent reading and encourages pupils to read fluently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 0.010 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher monitors pupils reading and provides appropriate assistance and feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 3.516 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher models use of new vocabulary in sentences during discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 3.516 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value significant at \( P \leq 0.05 \)
Analysis carried out on teachers’ years of Std. 4 English teaching experience on their choice of instructional practices during reading phase revealed that, there was a significant effect on the practice of teacher monitoring pupils reading and providing appropriate assistance and feedback while they read. Teachers who had 0 – 5 years of teaching Std 4 English were significantly observed to monitor pupils reading and provided appropriate assistance.

Table 4.3.2h Cross Tabulation of the effect of the Teachers’ Teaching Experience in Teaching English in Std 4 on Instructional Practices during the Reading Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers demographic data</th>
<th>Pupils evaluate initial predictions at appropriate points</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching std 4 English language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 yrs</td>
<td>1(7.7%)</td>
<td>12(92.3%)</td>
<td>13(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 yrs</td>
<td>4(80%)</td>
<td>1(20%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20 yrs</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.855$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Pupils identify and read aloud portions of text that confirmed or disapprove prediction |  |  |  |  |
|  | Observed | Not observed | Total |  |
| 0 – 5 yrs | 1(7.7%) | 12(92.3%) | 13(100%) |  |
| 6 – 10 yrs | 0(0.0%) | 5(100%) | 5(100%) |  |
| 16 – 20 yrs | 0(0.0%) | 2(100%) | 2(100%) |  |
| $\chi^2 = 0.567$ |        |            |        |  |
| P = 0.753 |        |            |        |  |

| Teacher monitors pupils reading and provides appropriate assistance and feedback |  |  |  |  |
|  | Observed | Not observed | Total |  |
| 0 – 5 yrs | 12(93.3%) | 1(7.7%) | 13(100%) |  |
| 6 – 10 yrs | 4(80%) | 1(20%) | 5(100%) |  |
| 16 – 20 yrs | 0(0.0%) | 2(100%) | 2(100%) |  |
| $\chi^2 = 9.231^*$ |        |            |        |  |
| P = 0.010 |        |            |        |  |

NB: * indicate Chi – value significant at P ≤ 0.05

During the post reading phase as shown in table 4.3.2i, only the teachers’ education level had a significant influence on teachers choice of modelling the use of new vocabulary in written responses ($\chi^2 = 6.667$, P = 0.0036). Teachers
who had Diploma education were specifically observed to use this practice in their reading lessons. This is as shown in table 4.3.2i below.

**Table 4.3.2i Effect of the Teachers’ Educational Level on choice of Instructional Practices during the Post-reading Phase**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers demographic data</th>
<th>Model use of new vocabulary in written context in post-reading phase</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers education level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(100%)</td>
<td>1(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>2(40%)</td>
<td>3(60%)</td>
<td>5(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.T.E Cert.</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>14(100%)</td>
<td>14(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \chi^2 = 6.667^* )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = 0.036</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value significant at P ≤ 0.05

A cross tabulation analysis on teacher’s experience in teaching English language in Std 4 and the general teaching experience were observed to have no significant effect on their choice of instructional practices during the post-reading phase of the reading lesson (P > 0.05). This is shown in Table 4.4.2j.
Table 4.4.2j: Effect of Teachers’ English Language Teaching Experience in Teaching Std 4 on Instructional practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience in teaching English language in std 4 (Years)</th>
<th>Pupils to read aloud sections of the text that provide answers, confirm or disapprove predictions they had made about the topic/ideas</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>2 (15.4%)</td>
<td>11 (84.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 1.923$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pupils are asked to answer set questions verbally</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>12 (92.3%)</td>
<td>1 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>5 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 4.188$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pupils are asked to explain their answers</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>3 (23.1%)</td>
<td>10 (76.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>0 (0.0%)</td>
<td>2 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 1.292$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pupils are asked to provide written response to questions based on the reading</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>9 (69.2%)</td>
<td>4 (30.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 0.355$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pupils are encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Not observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5</td>
<td>2 (15.4%)</td>
<td>11 (84.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 – 20</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2 = 1.908$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers’ understanding of reading and its influence on their choice of instructional practices was subjected to cross tabulation with the reading practices observed during the pre, during and the post reading phases of the reading lesson. Teachers’ understanding of reading had a significant influence
on pupils being asked to explain their answers ($\chi^2 = 8.800, P = 0.012$) and pupils being encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses ($\chi^2 =7.200, P = 0.027$). This is as shown in Table 4.4.2k

### Table 4.3.2k Effect of Teachers’ Understanding of the term “Reading” on choice of Instructional Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of reading and its influence on choice of instructional act</th>
<th>Pupils are encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading an active process</td>
<td>2(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers begin the reading process</td>
<td>1(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers construct meaning</td>
<td>2(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$ = 7.20*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P$ = 0.027</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupils are asked to explain their answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading an active process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers begin the reading process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readers construct meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\chi^2$ = 8.80*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P$ = 0.012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value is significant at $P \leq 0.05$

### 4.4.3 Learner related Factors

Teachers’ instructional decisions are to a considerable degree a function of learner related factors. The figures used in this section report findings on which learner factors influenced teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.
Learner attitudes to Reading

Teachers were asked to indicate whether learner attitude influenced their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. Findings in figure 4.4.3a show that the majority of the teachers’ (85%) instructional activities in reading lessons were influenced by learners’ attitude towards reading. This is corroborated by data on Table 4.4.2a. It is worth noting that learners’ attitude towards reading is important in a teacher’s instructional decision making process. This is because, children with positive feeling about reading are likely to perform well in reading tests and performance tasks (Greaney & Hegarty, 1987 in Baccus, 2004). This will in turn influence the teacher’s choice of instructional activities in reading lessons.

In regard to the importance a learners’ reading ability has on the teacher’s choice of instructional practices during reading lessons, Fig. 4.4.3b captures the teachers’ responses.
Figure 4.4.3b: Importance of learner’s reading proficiency

Figure 4.4.3b shows that all the teachers indicated that learner’s reading proficiency influenced their choice of instructional activities in reading lessons. Most of the teachers (55%) out of those sampled for this study viewed learner’s reading ability as being very important in their reading instructional choices. A few (20%) of the teachers, however, viewed pupils’ reading ability to be fairly important in their choice of instructional practices during reading lessons.

Fundamentally, instructional decision making in the teaching of reading is to a considerable degree dependent on the learner’s ability to read. More proficient learner’s, for instance, require more independent reading activities unlike the less proficient ones. Torgesen et al. (2007) says that valid and reliable assessments of students’ reading proficiency provides key information that allows teachers to target their instruction for individual students, and also allows them to determine when further adjustments need to be made.
Learner’s Background Knowledge

Figure 4.4.3c below captures the importance of learner’s background knowledge of the reading text on the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.

![Importance of learner background knowledge of the reading content](image)

**Figure 4.4.3c:** Importance of learner background knowledge of the reading content

Figure 4.4.3c above shows results of the question on how teachers rated learners' background knowledge in influencing their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. The study shows that 8 (40%) of the teachers viewed it as being very important, 10 (50%) as being important and 2 (10%) as being fairly important. The result means that all the teachers agreed that learner’s background knowledge is crucial in the choice of instructional practices in reading lessons despite their varied levels of agreement.

Learner's background knowledge of reading content is crucial in text comprehension. Activation of this background knowledge is important in
influencing how readers eventually interpret what they read and learn from a reading text (Anderson, 1977 in Ogle, 1986). Learners’ background knowledge of a particular reading selection gives a reading teacher valuable information on the nature of learning activities the learners should be exposed to in order to develop their effective reading abilities.

**Learner’s Reading Expectations**

In regards to the learners’ reading expectations’ influence on the teacher’s choice of reading activities, the teachers were asked to rate the importance of this reading item on a five point likert scale. The results are shown in Figure 4.4.3d.

![Figure 4.4.3d: Importance of learner’s reading expectations](image-url)

The study sought to find out how teachers rated the importance of learners’ reading expectations in their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. Figure 4.4.3d shows that 50%, of the teachers viewed it as being very
important, 40% as important, 5% as fairly important while 5% as not important. This basically means that 95% of the teachers in the study saw learner’s reading expectations as important in reading instruction.

A learner’s reading expectations is a strong indicator of the kind of pupil one will have in a given reading class. This will in turn also influence a lot on the teacher’s ways of conducting the reading lessons so as to meet the individual expectations of the learners. Despite their varying rates, the teachers’ responses of (95%) as shown in figure 4.3.3d, agree that pupil’s reading expectations are significant in the choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. This finding concurs with Bentley’s (2007) study, which found that teachers make instructional decisions based on the students’ expectations on how to develop critical thinking skills, be engaged, motivated to learn and acquire necessary skills for future learning success. This is because effective readers have personal expectations about what they will get from a reading selection and they bring this expectations to bear as they read by predicting and testing their predictions.

**Learner’s Motivation towards Reading**

Fig. 4.4.3e below shows the teachers’ rating of the importance of learners’ motivation towards reading in their choice of instructional activities in reading.
Figure 4.4.3e: Importance of learner’s motivation towards reading

Figure 4.4.3e shows that all the teachers in this study indicated that learner motivation influenced the selection of their reading instructional activities, with 60% of the teachers saying that it was very important, 35% important and 5% fairly important. The ratings of not important and not sure were not selected by any teacher. This means that all the teachers in this study agreed that learners’ motivation was key in the determination of the reading instructional practices to select for reading lessons.

In their contribution Anderson & Holt-Reynold (1995) in Ibañez (2011) share a similar view as the one shown in the findings in figure 4.4.3e. They argue that the belief that practical theories on teachers’ beliefs about learning and teaching…, student motivation and interest are valued and therefore have an impact on the design of the teachers’ instructional activities in lessons. Ibañez (2011), further postulates that the teachers’ beliefs on the value of student
motivation and mastery of content, clearly reflects in their instructional practices.

This is perhaps a clear pointer to the reasons why 95% of the teachers agreed that learner’s motivation determined their instructional practices in reading lessons. This therefore means that teachers have had the realization that learners’ level of reading motivation play a significant role in reading success (McRae, et al. 2009). Since pupils’ motivation is a key factor in student’s reading success, teachers should therefore try to nourish pupils’ level of reading motivation through the kind of instructional practices they select for their reading lessons.

**Pupil’s Approach to Reading**

Figure 4.3.3f below shows responses by teachers on the importance of pupils’ approach to reading on the choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

**Figure 4.4.3f:** Importance of learner’s approach to reading
Figure 4.4.3f show that 55% of the teachers felt that learners’ approach to reading was very important, 40% important while 5% fairly important. This finding clearly suggests that teachers view learners’ reading approach as playing a critical role in their instructional decisions in reading lessons.

This finding resonates well with Allington et al.’s (1995) observation cited in Zygouris (2001) that there is no quick fix in reading instruction, instead, teachers must be able to recognize different student learning styles and be able to select appropriate strategies to the individual needs of the child and to strive to find balance for every child in their classrooms. As observed by Ibañez (2011), teachers’ beliefs on matching instruction with students’ needs and experiences does indeed influence the teacher’s instructional decisions on lesson planning and delivery.

These expectations are a product of the readers already acquired reading skills. Such that reading development in learners will vary depending on their personal, social and cultural experiences. Once the how-to-read skills have been mastered, learners will tend to move to higher level skills, attitudes and reading behaviour. For reading to be successful, a teacher should ensure that his/her preferred reading approach does not radically conflict with pupils’ reading approaches. This therefore means that, in choosing instructional activities for reading lessons, a teacher should try to understand what the pupils reading
orientations are before introducing them to new ones. This basically entails the teaching from the known to the unknown instructional philosophy.

**Learner’s challenges in Reading**

Figure 4.4.3g shows responses by teachers on the importance of learner challenges in reading on their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.

![Graph showing responses by teachers on the importance of learner challenges in reading](image)

**Figure 4.4.3g:** Importance of learner challenges in reading

Figure 4.4.3 above shows that 55% of the teachers rated learner’s challenges as being very important, 35% important, 5% fairly important and 5% not important in the choice of instructional practices in reading instruction. Learning to read in a second language is a complex challenge for second language learners. The learners’ reading challenges can manifest themselves at the phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency,
vocabulary development or the reading comprehension levels in reading lessons.

This finding agrees with views from research on differentiating classroom instruction based on the unique challenges learners face in the learning process. Tomlison (2001) in Hall et al. (2003), views classrooms as consisting of learners with diverse learning abilities. He therefore, proposes that instruction should be designed to mitigate each learner’s challenges in the learning process. Hall et al. (2003) in borrowing from Vygosky’s (1978) works proposes that classroom instructional activities should be based on the concept of ‘readiness’. Once learners’ challenges are addressed in the instructional activities, then effective learning is possible for all the students.

**Parental expectations on Children’s Reading Progress**

Figure 4.4.3h shows responses by teachers on the importance of parental expectations of their children’s reading progress on the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.
Figure 4.4.3h: Importance of parental expectations on children’s reading progress

Figure 4.4.3h shows that 30% of the teachers rated parental expectations as being very important, 40% as important, 25% as fairly important while 5% rated it as important in their children’s reading progress. It is clear from this finding that 95% of the teachers agree that their instructional decisions are influenced by parental expectations. Parents as well as teachers play a significant role in the instructional process.

The findings are a pointer to a teacher’s realization that parental involvement in children’ literacy is critical in enhancing the children’s reading development (Peissig 2002). This is coupled with the fact that parents place high premiums on changing the family’s socio-economic status through the successful education of their children. This is more so with parents from low socio-economic backgrounds. Gathumbi (2005) says that parents…perceive success
in the learning of English language and by extension reading as a key to further education and social economic development.

### 4.3.4 Instructional Resources

Instructional resources have a strong influence on student learning through their effects on teachers’ instructional orientations. Table 4.4.4a summarises teacher responses on the various instructional resources’ influence on their choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.

#### Table 4.4.4a Influence of Instructional Resources’ on Teacher’s choice of Instructional Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional resource</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks- course books</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading series-basal readers, graded readers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s newspapers/magazines</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials from the internet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short stories</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material from other subjects</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils’ written materials</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’ crossword puzzles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s games</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses in Table 4.4a shows how various print resource materials influence teachers’ choice of instructional practices in reading instruction. Course books (95%), basal readers (50%), short stories (85%), materials from other subjects (75%) and pupils written materials are the ones that influenced a teacher’s reading instructional decisions most.

Although the findings in the table indicate that various print resources influence a teacher’s reading instructional decisions, information generated from the lesson observation indicated that most of the reading lessons were actually course-book driven. In all the lessons observed the principle source of instructional activities were the pupils’ course book and the teacher’s guidebook. This was equally corroborated by views from the teacher’s interview where one teacher for instance said:

“My instructional reading activities are basically drawn from the guidebook. I teach the reading topics, the way they are structured in the teacher’s guide…”

This finding concurs with Shapiro et al. (1990) in their observation that classroom practices are strongly influenced by commercial reading materials. Shannon (1989) in Shapiro et al. (1990), however, view teachers who make instructional decisions based on what their guidebooks say as deskill professionals. They in fact become alienated from their reading program. This perhaps explains the reason for continued reading failures in our primary schools.
None of the teachers sampled (see table 4.4.3a) indicated that his/her instructional practices were influenced by reading materials from the internet. Due to the poor socio-economic background of parents in the location of study, teacher’s use of internet materials would form a critical mass of alternative literacy materials in reading instruction. The fact that the teachers did not use these materials in reading instruction classes, shows that they have limited knowledge in the application of technology based resources in the teaching of reading.

4.5 Parental involvement in Children’s Reading Development

Data generated for this section is based on objective three of the study: to establish the nature of parental involvement in promoting children’s reading development.

Parents play an important role in the literacy development of their children. This is done through reading to the children, listening to them reading books and telling stories, providing reading resources both at home and at school for their children, among others. This section presents the study findings on parental involvement on their children’s reading development in the location of study.

4.5.1 Parental Sensitization on Children’s Reading Development

Before delving into whether parents helped with their children’s’ reading development in and outside school, the study sought to find out from the
Headteachers if parents were sensitised on helping children with reading.

Their responses are presented in figure 4.4.1a below.

![Pie chart showing the responses of Headteachers](image)

**Figure 4.5.1a: Parental sensitisation on children’s reading development**

The figure shows that 13 (85%) of the Headteachers indicated that parents were sensitised on helping their children with reading while at home. This information corroborated very well with the responses from the std 4 teachers’ interview on how they involved parents with the reading development of their children. They indicated that parents were talked to during class conferences on ways of involving themselves in their children’s reading. This finding concurs with Oyetunde et al. (2007) who advances the argument that strengthening of parental involvement in children’s reading development will go along way in enhancing their literacy development. As observed by Monique (2002), there exists a clear correlation between children’s reading development and parental literacy activities. The Headteachers were further asked to show how they
engaged parents in their children’s reading development, their responses are discussed below.

In following up on what roles parents reported to be involved in, with regard to their children’s reading development, the Headteachers said that some of the parents reported to be involved in:

i. Borrowing reading materials from the school library for their children

ii. Buying reading materials for their children

iii. Encouraging their children to attempt reading tasks while at home

iv. Helping their children in certain reading skills-pronunciation (Literate parents)

v. Engaging in vocabulary tasks-giving meaning of words

vi. Assisting their children to do homework

vii. Reading books while their children listened to them

viii. Liasing with the reading teachers on their children’s reading developments

This finding echoes some of Ransinski et al.’s (1988) principles of parental involvement in children’s literacy development. The principles indicate that parents should: Create regular daily literacy time for their children, parents and children reading real books, parents need to offer their children support in reading development and parents and children sharing reading responsibilities.
Teacher- Parent Partnerships

Most of the Headteachers further, indicated that most of the parents though asked to help with the reading development of their children, were not able to do so given the high levels of illiteracy in the area. This is illustated by the Headteacher’s responses on items on the nature of school reading policies in their schools that involved parents. This is as captured in the Headteachers’ questionnaire and shown in the figures below.

![Teacher-Parent Partnerships](image.jpg)

**Figure 4.5.1b:** Teacher- parents partnerships to improve reading skills

Figure 4.5.1b shows that 50% of the Headteachers indicated that parents indeed partnered with the teachers in improving the reading skills of their children. An equal percentage of the Headteachers sampled also indicated that parents did not partner with teachers in helping to improve the reading abilities of their children. On further inquiry into the nature of partnerships parents were involved in, figures 4.4.1c and 4.4.1d presents the Headteachers’ responses.
Fig 4.5.1c shows that 7 (35%) of the Headteachers agreed that parents provided reading materials for their children while 13 (65%) said that parents did not provide reading materials for their children’s reading while at home and in school. It should be understood that in the year 2003 Kenya enforced the Free Primary Education programme (FPE) in all Kenyan primary schools. Among other provisions in the programme, was that every primary school in Kenya was allocated funds to buy textbooks for her learners. Due to the programmes’ financial limitations, the funds have not been sufficient to meet all the resource needs of every schools in the country. That is why perhaps some parents as indicated by 35% of the Headteachers find it necessary to buy reading materials for their children. But majority of the parents especially in the rural primary schools, believe that providing all types of reading materials for all school going Kenyan children is the responsibility of the government. This view is reflected in Smith & Elish-Piper (2002) in Menheere et al. (2010)
whose argument is that, it is difficult to expect parents who lack basic reading skills to provide books for their children as a means of education.

**Parental involvement in Reading Lessons**

Parental involvement in reading for children or even listening to children reading during reading lessons has considerable influence on children’s reading skills development. Table 4.5.1d below shows the headteachers’ responses on parental involvement in reading lessons.

![Pie chart showing parental involvement in reading to their children](image)

**Figure 4.5.1d:** Parents’ involvement in reading to their children

Whether parents were involved in reading for their children during reading lessons at school, 3(15%) of the Headteachers said that parents participated in reading for their children during reading lessons. This represents literate parents whose numbers are extremely few in rural primary schools and who may not have sufficient time to attend to reading instructional sessions in their children’s schools.
However, majority of the Headteachers (85%) said that parents did not participate in reading to their children during reading lessons. This finding agrees with Smith & Elish-Piper (2002) in Menheere et al. (2010) who observe that one cannot expect parents who lack basic reading skills to not only provide books for their children but also read for them during reading lessons.

4.6 Instructional Resources used in the Teaching of Reading

Data generated for this section is based on objective four of the study: to establish the instructional resources used in the teaching of reading in standard 4. The study sought to draw information on the reading instructional materials, in terms of:

i. varieties

ii. nature

iii. quantities

iv. Accessibility for pupils’ use.

The instructional resources used in the teaching of reading in Std 4 in the location of study varied from one school to the other. The distribution of these resources is shown in table 4.5.
Table 4.6.1 Instructional Resources used in the Teaching of Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of instructional resource</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New primary English for std 4 (teacher /pupil)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New progressive primary English std 4 (teacher /pupil)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote English book 4 (teacher /pupil)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English aid for standard 4 (teacher /pupil)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basal readers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s magazines/newspapers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content area texts</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s own written texts</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher written texts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry books</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of short stories</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet generated texts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture books</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoon strips</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash cards</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts (teacher made)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data generated from the instructional resource checklist as shown in Table 4.6.1 indicate that the commonly used resources in the teaching of reading in the study location are the Std 4 course books (pupils’ and teachers’ guides). There were two main course books in use in most of the schools, 45% of the schools made use of the New Primary English book for Std 4 while 55% of the schools used the Progressive Primary English book for Std 4. In some instances supplementary course books were used in the teaching of reading: 5% of the schools used Keynote English book 4 while another 5% used English Aid book for Std 4. This finding on the over-reliance on the course book in reading lessons concurs with the study by Mathew et al. (2012), which indicated that available estimates showed that 70-98% of teachers in U.S.A used course books more during their reading instructional lessons.
To generate data on the other types of reading resources that were not used during the observed lessons, the researcher through the assistance of the reading teacher identified them from the school library. It was however, not easy to establish whether they were actually used during reading lessons. Table 4.5 shows that 100% of the teachers in the research schools used basal readers, 25% used children’s newspapers/magazines, 40% content area books, 45% children’s own written texts, 5% teacher written texts, 60% collection of short stories, 50% picture books, 5% flash cards and 15% cartoon strips. The quantities for each of the instructional resources were however, low. This finding is in agreement with N’Namdi (2005) who observed that the main problem with reading instruction in many rural areas is the lack of reading materials.

It was established that all the resources used as main course books and supplementary books are all approved by the Kenya Institute of Education, as appropriate for the teaching of English language in Std 4. The book-pupil ratio in the research schools ranged between 1:2 in 20% of the schools, 1:3 in 60% of the schools and 1:4 in 20% of the schools. The basal readers included those approved by K.I.E and others not listed in the Ministry of Education’s approved catalogue (the yellow book). In terms of numbers, the basal readers consisted of assorted titles and were not sufficient in numbers for use by all pupils. The same was the case with flash cards which were based on different themes and limited in terms of availability for use by all the pupils.

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There was limited access by the pupils to the use of the instructional resources, more especially for independent reading. The course books were only accessible to all the pupils during reading lessons. This is because all the pupils in all the research schools shared a text, at least between two or more depending on the individual school’s population. This in effect then meant that the pupils’ accessibility to the reading texts after reading lessons was limited. Contrary to this finding, Lin-Chia-Hui (2001), postulates that books, papers…should be visible everywhere in the classroom so that children can see and use them for multiple purposes. In all the research schools, the print instructional resources-books were kept in the learners’ bags hence the limited accessibility.

**Factors influencing Teacher’s choice of Instructional Resources**

Teachers choice of instructional resources was established to be significantly influenced by the teachers’ English language teaching experience in Std 4 ($\chi^2 = 6.538$, $P = 0.038$, ref Table 4.5.2, pg 196). In particular teachers who had taught English language in Std 4 for 0 – 5 years embraced the use of children crossword puzzle than the teachers who had served for longer than 5 years. The choice of other instructional resources in the teaching of reading were however, not significantly influenced by teacher demographic factors. This data is presented in Table 4.6.2
Table 4.6.2 Teachers’ choice of Instructional Resources in a Reading Lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>English language experience in teaching std 4 (in years)</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 - 5</td>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12(63.2%)</td>
<td>5(26.3%)</td>
<td>2(10.5%)</td>
<td>19(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1(100%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2$-value</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s crossword puzzle</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6(75%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>2(25%)</td>
<td>8(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7(58.3%)</td>
<td>5(41.7%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>12(100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\chi^2$-value</td>
<td>6.538*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.038</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: * indicate Chi –value significant at P ≤ 0.05

4.7 Challenges Teachers face in the Teaching of Reading

Data generated for this section is based on objective five of the study: to “establish challenges teachers face in the teaching of reading in the primary school level”. In establishing data for this objective, the Headteachers’ views were used to corroborate the information provided by the teachers. This is presented below.

In responding to item number 8 in the Headteacher’s questionnaire which was based on this objective, the Headteachers gave the following as the most common challenges teachers face in the teaching of reading in Std 4.

i. Shortage of reading instructional resources
ii. Mother-tongue interference for both the teachers as well as the pupils

iii. Lack of an appropriate sync between reading instruction in lower primary and upper primary.

iv. Teachers’ had difficulties in selecting and using instructional resources in the teaching of reading.

v. Heavy workload hence no sufficient time is created for remedial reading instruction or differentiated instruction for both the slow as well as the fast learners.

On the other hand the teachers’ responses to item number 12 in the teacher’s questionnaire on the challenges they face in their selection of instructional practices in reading, show the following as their most common reading instructional challenges:

i. Most pupils are heavily affected by their L₁ making it difficult to read English language texts fluently with understanding.

ii. Teaching of many lessons- heavy workload.

iii. The lack of sync between reading instruction in lower primary and upper primary

iv. Shortage of a variety of reading instructional resources

v. Overcrowded classrooms making it difficult for individual pupil attention.

vi. Lack of parental support in their children’s reading development

These findings can broadly be categorized into: lack of instructional resources in reading, teachers overloaded with too much work, lack of a clear
instructional sync between lower primary reading instruction and the upper primary and lack of parental support.

From the above findings, there is a clear agreement between the Headteachers’ and teachers’ views on the common instructional reading challenges teachers face in the selection of reading instructional practices in reading lessons. They both indicate that shortage of instructional resources is a major impediment to effective reading instruction. This was clearly feasible during the reading lessons observed. The lack of a print-rich environment in the classroom was a clear testimony of this challenge.

Parental support is necessary in enhancing children’s reading development. However, in this study, teachers reported a lack of parental support in pupils’ reading development. Parental support is either in the form of buying reading materials for their children or making follow-ups on reading tasks pupils are meant to carry out while at home. The findings presented here represent the reading instructional situations prevalent in most rural settings. This is perhaps the reason why teachers are not getting the support they need from parents. Parents in rural setting are in most cases illiterate hence cannot offer teachers useful literacy support they so require.

These findings also, show that both the Headteachers and teachers agree that there was a lack of appropriate instructional sync between the teaching of reading in lower primary and upper primary. Whereas reading instruction in
lower primary is supposed to lay ground for reading instruction in upper primary, it was clear that in some instances, the Std 4 teachers of English language were actually teaching basic reading skills that were otherwise supposed to have been covered in lower primary according to the KIE syllabus. This perhaps raises pertinent questions on either the nature of teacher training or the nature of lesson preparation of primary school teachers selected to teach English language in lower primary. It also raise questions on the nature of reading content and methodology used in reading lessons at these levels.

It is also clear that there is a misunderstanding on the relationship between a learner’s L₁ reading ability and the development of L₂ reading competence. Whereas both the Headteachers and teachers isolated the L₁ influence on L₂ reading as a challenge, research has indicated that learners with strong L₁ skills will acquire L₂ more quickly than children with less developed L₁ skills (Charles et al. 1999). Continued development of learners’ L₁ facilitates faster and easier acquisition of reading abilities in L₂. Ndamba (2008) in supporting the use of L₁ in lower primary grades says “…mother tongue education in the primary school years offer the best introduction to literacy that eventually becomes useful in the acquisition of English as a second language.” This is why observing the language of instruction policy in lower primary is necessary in the children’s mastery of language skills crucial in the learning process.
Equally, challenges like a heavy workload and overcrowded classrooms were pointed out in this study. This is perhaps due to the implementation of the FPE in Kenya which saw an upward surge in numbers of primary school enrolment rates of about 1.5 million new entrants.

These findings corroborate the views of Strickland et al. (2002) who observe that indeed, the 21st century primary school reading teacher is faced with huge instructional challenges. The findings further concur with Oyetunde et al. (1986) cited in Adeniji et al. (2010) who argue that lack of reading instructional resources, poor home literacy support, poor teacher preparation and teacher overloads are critical impediments to effective reading instruction in primary school grades.

4.8 Teacher’s coping Mechanisms on the Reading Instructional Challenges

Data generated for this section is based on objective six of the study; “Find out how teachers cope with the challenges encountered”. Asked how they cope with the challenges encountered during reading instruction in their schools, the Headteachers identified the following as the coping mechanisms they have put in place in their schools:

i. To arrest the challenge of shortage of instructional resources, the Headteachers advised teachers to use improvised alternative resources i.e. use of flash cards, teacher/pupil made picture books in their reading lessons.
ii. Through parent meetings, the Headteachers indicated that they had tried to sensitise parents on their role in fostering their children’s reading development, for instance through buying reading materials.

iii. Coming up with remedial lessons specifically tailored towards alleviating reading difficulties

iv. Developing a school’s language policy-use of English language as a medium of communication within the school compound

v. Ensuring that pupils’ promotion to standard 4 is based on their ability to read in English

vi. Encouraging peer coaching in reading skills among the pupils.

The teachers on the other hand, identified the following as measures they had put in place to overcome the challenges they faced in reading instruction. These include:

i. Sacrificing their free time to have remedial lessons for weak pupils in reading skills.

ii. Writing reading texts on the chalkboard so as to ensure all pupils access reading texts with ease.

iii. Coming up with improvised teaching aids so as to create reading interest in pupils.

iv. Encourage parents to attend class conferences where they are sensitised on their roles in fostering their children’s reading development.
v. Using pupils to mobilise reading resources such as old newspapers, magazines and any form of writing they come across and using the same during reading lessons.

The Headteachers’ as well as the teachers’ coping mechanisms to the challenges experienced in reading instruction as indicated above can broadly be categorized into various thematic areas: reading resource mobilization, soliciting for parental support, creation of more reading instruction time, varying reading instructional approaches, using reading evaluation to inform pupils’ promotion from Std 3 to Std 4 and establishing a school’s language policy.

Regarding reading resource mobilization, the head teachers and teachers indicated that they used reading resource improvisation, pupils collecting reading texts- newspapers and magazines- for classroom use, and teacher writing reading texts on the chalkboard. Apart from improvisation and pupil collected reading texts, writing the reading text on the chalkboard is not only hectic but untenable too. This is because pupils will not have the opportunity to refer to the text once the reading lesson is over, hence denying them the chance to do extended practice outside the lesson time. As observed by Lin-Chia-Hui (2001), books, paper and print materials should be visible everywhere in the classroom so that children can see and use them for multiple purposes.
Despite the fact that parental participation is lacking in the teachers’ instructional activities in the study location, the Headteachers and teachers still indicated that they have been engaging parents with the hope that eventually their support in reading instruction will be attained. As observed by Oyetunde et al. (2007), what is needed by parents is information on how to participate in their children’s literacy activities more purposefully and meaningfully. Parents in most rural settings usually remain illiterate, poor and powerless. They are unable to give practical and intellectual support to the educational aspirations of their children (Mahenge, 1985). That is why the approach taken by Headteachers as well as teachers in engaging them more often, is a step in the right direction.

Regarding the creation of more reading instructional time for poor readers, the head teachers and teachers indicated that they had subjected poor readers to extra reading activities. Given the time constraints teachers face coupled with the heavy work load, this coping mechanism perhaps is not adequately utilized. This was clearly indicated by the nature of instructional practices that were observed in their reading lessons. Although varying of instructional approaches is also indicated as one of the coping mechanisms for their instructional challenges in the teaching of reading, the use of peer coaching, for instance, was not used in the reading lessons observed. This still points to the limited print environments in which reading lessons were conducted.
Establishment of a school’s language policy and ensuring that promotion from Std 3 to Std 4 is based on a pupil’s reading ability in English language were also suggested as solutions to teacher’s challenges to reading instruction. The focus of these two is perhaps to suggest that language is a factor in achieving success in reading instruction. However, second language research shows that reading competence in L₁ actually fosters faster learning in L₂ (Charles et al. 1999). This then means that continued use of this approach as a solution for pupils’ development of reading abilities may not help improve effective reading instruction.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of reading instructional practices in Std 4 reading lessons and the reasons for the teachers’ choice of such instructional practices. Based on this purpose then, this chapter presents the key findings of the study, conclusions drawn and recommendations for further research.

The study sample consisted of 20 Std 4 teachers of English language and 20 headteachers of the sampled schools. The sample was drawn from the rural primary schools in Kisii central district of Kisii County. Quantitative as well as qualitative data were generated by use of five data collection instruments: Observation schedule, Interview schedule, Teacher’s questionnaire, Headteacher’s questionnaire and the Instructional resource checklist. All the instruments were piloted on samples from one selected primary school in Kisii Central district, who were not taking part in this study.
5.2 Summary

This section presents a summary of the key findings as per the objectives of the study.

5.2.1 Nature of instructional Practices

This section presents summary findings on the nature of reading instructional practices in the teaching of reading in the location of study. Specifically the summary is based on: nature of classroom reading environment, instructional practices during the pre-reading, reading, and post-reading phases of the reading lessons.

5.2.1a Nature of the Classroom Reading Instructional Environment

The study found that in most of the reading lessons, teachers relied heavily on the use of the course-book as the key resource in their teaching of reading. The course-books used ranged from; New Progressive Primary English Pupils’ book 4, New Primary English Pupils’ book 4 and the Keynote English book 4. In all the Std 4 classes in the research schools, the study also found that there were no classroom libraries. The study too found that a number of other classroom reading essentials were missing. This included; lack of displays of pupils’ written work on the classroom walls, this meant that there were no talking walls in these classes. Despite the fact that the pupils’ desk heights and the writing surfaces were appropriate for the Std 4 pupils, teachers did not embrace small-group reading instructional organizations. This finding clearly
shows that the classrooms in this study had a poor print environment that does not support literacy growth.

5.2.1b Instructional Practices during the Pre-Reading Phase

The study revealed that there was a limited application of the pre-reading instructional practices at this phase. The instructional practices that were used in at least half of the lessons observed included: review of the previous lesson, previewing of the reading text, discussion of topic before reading the text and discussion of new vocabulary. However, majority of the instructional practices were used in less than half of the lessons observed. These included; activation of learners’ prior knowledge, identification of the type of text to be read and determining the purpose for reading it, presentation of clear objectives for the reading lesson, provision of appropriate feedback to pupils’ pre-reading discussions and lesson embracing active learner participation. The limited use of pre-reading instructional practices during reading lessons would explain the reasons for learners’ low reading abilities, more especially in the rural schools of Kisii central district in Kisii County.

5.2.1c Instructional Practices during the Reading Phase

The study established that teachers in the study locale commonly used three instructional practices during the reading phase. These are: teacher modelling fluent reading and encouraging pupils to read fluently with expression, teacher monitoring pupils’ fluent reading and providing appropriate assistance while
they read and teacher giving section summaries during the reading lesson. A variety of other instructional practices critical in enhancing pupils’ reading development were however, not used. They included: pupils’ evaluating their initial predictions at appropriate points, reading aloud portions of text that confirmed or disapproved their predictions, comprehension discussion based on the reading purpose established, use of factual as well as high level thinking questions, teacher modelling use of new vocabulary in sentences during discussions and pupils encouraged to use a variety of word study strategies in meaning comprehension. This is a further demonstration of the teacher’s lack of attempts to develop learner’s reading development through the use of appropriate reading activities.

5.2.1d Instructional Practices during the Post-Reading Phase

The study established that during the post-reading phase of the reading lesson, three instructional practices were used by most of the teachers as shown in chapter 4. These included: pupils asked to answer set questions orally, pupils asked to provide a written response to the comprehension questions and teachers monitoring pupils’ reading comprehension. It can also be noted that a number of instructional practices essential in enhancing pupils’ reading development were not used or used in very few of the lessons. These included: pupils asked to read aloud sections of the text that provided answers to questions, pupils asked to re-tell the text read concentrating on the major events in the reading, pupils asked to explain their answers, pupils encouraged
to use new vocabulary in written responses, teacher modelling the use of new vocabulary in written contexts, writing used as an extension of reading, pupils evaluating reading texts in terms of relevance and appropriateness and carrying out reflection. This finding clearly shows that teachers adopted a very narrow perspective in developing reading development during the post reading phase of the reading lesson.

5.2.2 Factors influencing Teachers’ choice of Instructional Practices

This section focused on the factors in the instructional environment that influenced a teacher’s choice and use of instructional practices during reading lessons. The factors are categorized into: the school administrative related factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors and the instructional resources related factors.

5.2.2a School Administrative Factors

The study established that the amount of time English language was allocated in the school time table influenced the teachers’ choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. Teachers selected reading activities that could enable them cover the English language syllabus within the stipulated period. The schools’ language policy, reading support policies and assessment policies, though critical in the learners’ reading development, did not influence the teachers’ choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.
5.2.2b Teacher related Factors

The study revealed that teachers’ understanding of the term “reading” influenced the nature of instructional practices they chose during reading lessons. Additionally, the nature of teachers’ professional training correlated significantly with their choice of instructional practices during the teaching of reading. The other teacher factors that influenced the teacher’s choice of instructional practices included: teachers’ perception of learners’ reading ability, teachers’ educational level, teachers’ experience in teaching Std 4, teachers’ gender, nature of lesson objectives and teachers’ attitude and beliefs on the nature of reading instructional processes.

5.2.2c Learner related Factors

In regard to learner related factor, the study established that; learners’ attitude towards reading, background knowledge, motivation, challenges in reading, reading expectations, approaches to reading and the parental input & expectations of learner’s reading progress influenced the teachers’ instructional choices during reading lessons. This was however, not observed to influence the teachers’ instructional activities in the lessons observed. This implies that there was a clear lack of sync between the teacher’s conception of theory and practice.
5.2.2d Instructional Resource Factors

The study established that teachers’ choice of instructional practices in the teaching of reading in the location of the study was influenced by the availability of course books, basal readers, short stories and materials from other subjects. Teachers selected reading activities based on how the activities were presented in the said resources. However, the course books were observed to have significantly influenced the nature of instructional practices teachers selected in their reading lessons.

5.2.3 Level of Parental involvement in Children’s Reading Development

In this objective the study established that parents were sensitized on helping their children to develop reading abilities. The parents were particularly talked to during school parent meetings and class conferences on ways of involving themselves in developing their children’s reading abilities. However, it was established that limited parental support in developing children’s reading abilities was witnessed in the provision of reading materials and monitoring children’s homework.

5.2.4 Instructional Resources used in the Teaching of Reading

In this respect, the study established that two main course books were mostly used in most of the schools. These course books are: the New Primary English book for Std 4 and the Progressive Primary English book for Std 4. In some instances the Keynote English book 4 and English Aid book for Std 4 were also
used in the teaching of reading in some schools. Other reading materials used by teachers included: basal readers, children’s newspapers/magazines, content area books, children’s own written texts, teacher written texts, collection of short stories, picture books, flash cards and cartoon strips. The study further established that the course books and supplementary books were all approved by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) as appropriate for the teaching of reading in Std 4. The book pupil ratio ranged between 1:2 in 20% of the schools, 1:3 in 60% of the schools and 1:4 in 20% of the schools. The basal readers included those approved by K.I.E and others not listed in the Ministry of Education’s approved books’ catalogue. The basal readers consisted of assorted titles and were not sufficient in numbers for use by all pupils. The same was the case with flash cards which were based on different themes and limited in terms of availability for use by all the pupils.

The study further established that there was limited access by the pupils to the use of the instructional resources more especially for independent reading. The course books were only accessible to all the pupils during reading lessons. This is because all the pupils in all the study schools shared a text, at least between two or more depending on the individual school’s population. The choice of instructional resources for the teaching of reading was established to be significantly influenced by the teachers’ teaching experience in Std 4.
5.2.5 Challenges Teachers face in the Teaching of Reading

The study established that the teachers’ faced several challenges in teaching reading. These challenges included: Most pupils’ pronunciation was heavily affected by their L1 making it difficult for them to read English language texts fluently with understanding, heavy workload, the lack of sync between reading instruction in lower primary and upper primary, shortage of a variety of reading instructional resources, overcrowded classrooms making it difficult to offer individual pupil attention and lack of parental support in children’s reading development. This information corroborated the Headteachers’ data on the challenges teachers in their schools faced in the teaching of reading.

5.2.6 Teachers’ coping Mechanisms on the Instructional Challenges

In their attempt to overcome the reading instructional challenges in the teaching of reading, the study revealed the following: creation of more instructional time for the teaching of reading, writing of reading texts on the chalkboard, improvising teaching aids aimed at creating reading interest in pupils, encouraging more parental participation in fostering pupils’ reading development and using pupils to mobilise collection of reading resources. Despite the fact that these attempts had been in place for some time, learner’s reading abilities were still poor.
5.3 Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was to explore the nature of instructional practices prevalent in Std 4 reading instruction in the study location and also establish the factors influencing the teacher’s choice of these instructional practices. On this basis then, the following conclusions are made:

i. The classrooms observed, had poor literacy enhancing environments. Therefore, the lack of rich literacy friendly classrooms in the study location explains the reasons for the poor reading level.

ii. There was a limited application of a variety of effective reading activities that enhance reading development during the three phases of the reading lessons. This is despite the fact that instructional activities during the pre-reading, reading and post-reading phases in a reading lesson play a significant role in enhancing the learners’ reading development. It can therefore be concluded that the teaching of reading in the study location does not promote effective reading abilities.

iii. The time allocated for English language lessons was found to strongly influence the choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. Teachers were pre-occupied with covering the syllabus content oblivious of how much learning occurred in their lessons. To them achieving results meant covering the syllabus.

iv. A number of teacher related factors influenced the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons. These included: teachers’ understanding of the term “reading”, teacher’s professional training,
teachers’ perception of learners’ reading ability, teachers’ educational level, teachers’ experience in teaching Std 4, teachers’ gender, nature of lesson objectives and teachers’ attitude and beliefs on the nature of reading instructional processes. This implies that teachers were conscious of what would result in effective reading instruction, though this was not observed in their classroom practices.

v. Learner related factors did not influence the teacher’s choice of instructional practices in reading lessons in the lessons observed. This call for a concerted effort by teachers to consider learner factors as contributing significantly in their choice of reading activities during reading lessons.

vi. The course books were observed to have significantly influenced the nature of instructional practices teachers selected in their reading lessons. It can therefore be concluded that the course book being the centre for reading instruction could be a good indicator for the limited use of instructional practices in reading lessons.

vii. Limited parental support in developing children’s reading abilities was witnessed, more especially in the provision of reading materials and monitoring children’s reading homework. Probably, children’s reading skill development would be improved if parents were more involved.

viii. The New Primary English book for Std 4 and The Progressive Primary English book for Std 4 were the two main course books used in reading lessons. They were however, not available for pupils’ independent
reading because of their limited numbers. Pupils might benefit more during independent reading if these books were sufficient in number.

ix. The choice of instructional resources for the teaching of reading was established to be significantly influenced by the teachers’ teaching experience in Std 4.

x. Heavy workload, lack of sync between reading instruction in lower primary and upper primary, shortage of a variety of reading instructional resources and lack of parental support in children’s reading development are the challenges found to greatly inhibit teachers’ reading instructional effectiveness.

xi. The study concludes that teachers’ coping mechanisms to the challenges faced in reading instruction are not strong enough to bring about the desired effects in reading instruction. There is need for teachers to do more, especially by ensuring that they try the use of clear and focused interventions to ameliorate reading challenges in their reading lessons.

5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the summary findings and conclusions drawn, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

i. In-service reading instructional courses for teachers of English language should be mounted. This is to ensure that language teachers are kept abreast of the cutting edge reading instructional methodologies
from research findings that are effective in enhancing learners’ reading development.

ii. The Ministry of Education should ensure that all primary schools have well established functional libraries.

iii. Teachers of English language should establish class libraries in all their classrooms and equally mobilise learners to collect easily available reading materials for the class libraries.

iv. Schools should encourage teachers and pupils to develop school made reading materials such as newspaper cuttings, stories written by the teachers and pupils.

v. There should be concerted efforts in come up with strategies of ensuring that parental support is effectively harnessed in promoting learners’ reading development.

vi. The quality assurance and standards officers should ensure that teachers thoroughly understand the sync between the language curriculum in lower primary and upper primary. This will ensure that appropriate reading skills are covered in lower primary to enable learners have a smooth transition from lower to upper primary in the learning of reading.

vii. The Ministry of Education through her field officers should ensure that the language of instruction policy is strictly adhered to. This will ensure that L₁ literacy skills are fully developed during the early literacy years before the learners are introduced to L₂ literacy skills.
5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The secondary data from the literature review and the study results reveal the fact that effective reading instruction forms a significant part of reading success among school going children. Success in reading will not only be useful in English language as a subject but also greatly enhance understanding of information in content areas. On this basis then, the following are suggestions for further research. Studies should be conducted to:

i. Establish the relationship between teachers’ instructional practices and pupils’ reading performance.

ii. Investigate the effects of the nature of a teacher’s training on the choice of reading instructional practices.

iii. Establish the effect of evidence based instructional practices’ application on pupil’s reading performance.
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APPENDIX 1 Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation Schedule

Reading Instructional Practices’ Classroom Observation Schedule (RIPCOS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Number of pupils in class</th>
<th>Teacher’s gender (Male)</th>
<th>Teacher’s name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Instructional objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Instructions: Tick 1 to show observed practice or 2 to indicate not observed and comment how the practice was carried out.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom environment</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A variety of reading texts are available in the classroom for pupils to read independently</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The classroom has a reading area such as a corner or classroom library where pupils are encouraged to read for enjoyment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils written work is displayed on the classroom walls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate seats and writing surface provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate organization is provided for small-group reading instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instructional Practices during the Pre-reading Phase**

| Pupils’ preview text: read title of the text, look at illustrations and discuss the possible content of the text |   |   |         |
| Activation of the background knowledge of text through k-w-l charts, mind maps, anticipation guides |   |   |         |
| Generation of discussion about the topic before reading the text, to create interest in reading |   |   |         |
| New vocabulary discussion in a meaningful context-words central to the understanding of the story |   |   |         |
| Identification of the type of text to be read and determining the purpose for reading it |
| Objectives for the reading lesson are clearly identified and their relationship with previous lesson(s) shown. |
| Provision of appropriate feedback to pupils’ pre-reading discussions |
| Lesson embraces active participation and social interaction as integral parts of reading instruction |
| Others |
| **Instructional practices during the Reading Phase** |
| Pupils evaluate initial predictions at appropriate points during the reading |
| Pupils identify and read aloud portions of text that confirmed or disapprove predictions they had made about the story |
| Comprehension discussion focuses on the purposes established for reading the text |
| Factual as well as high level thinking questions used during the comprehension discussion |
| Teacher models fluent reading and encourages pupils to read fluently with expression |
| Teacher monitors the pupils’ reading and provides appropriate assistance and feedback while they read |
| Teacher models use of new vocabulary in sentences during discussion |
| Pupils encouraged to use a variety of word study strategies i.e. words within words, context, syllabification to decipher meaning of new words, reading in chunks, pausing, paraphrasing |
| Others |
| **Post-reading Phase** |
| Pupils asked to read aloud sections of the text that provide answers to questions, confirm or disapprove predictions they had made about the topic/ideas |
| Pupils are asked to retell the text read concentrating on major events or concepts |
| Pupils are asked to answer set questions verbally |
| Pupils are asked to explain their answers |
| Pupils are asked to provide a written response to the reading |
| Pupils are encouraged to use new vocabulary in written responses |
| Teacher models the use of new vocabulary in written |
contexts

| Writing is used as an extension of reading tasks | 
| Teacher continually monitors pupils’ comprehension and provides appropriate feedback | 
| Pupils evaluate the text: relevance, appropriateness | 
| Reflection phase | 

**Key**

1- observed  
2- Not observed
APPENDIX 2 Class 4 teachers of English interview schedule
1. How many years have you taught English in the primary school level? ........................................
2. How many years have you been teaching English in standard Four? ........................................
3. How many lessons do you allocate reading in a week for your standard Four class? ..........
4. What reading activities do you engage your pupils in during:
   i) Pre-reading phase .........................................................................................................................
   ii) Reading phase ..............................................................................................................................
   iii) Post-reading phase .....................................................................................................................
5. What influences your choice of these activities in each phase of the reading lesson?
 ...................................................................................................................................................................
6. a) Which reading activities do your learners seem to enjoy most during the reading lesson? ......
   b) Why do you think they enjoy these activities? .................................................................
7. a) Are there reading activities the learners don’t seem to enjoy during reading lessons? ........
   b) Why do you think they don’t enjoy these activities? .............................................................
8. At what stage do you test your standard 4 pupils in reading? ..........................................................
9. Do you ever give pupils reading homework to do while they are at home? ...............................Which type? ............................................................... ..........................
10. How do you involve parents/caregivers in monitoring the children’s reading while at home? .......................................................... ..........................
11. Do pupils in your class report having been assisted to do the reading homework by parents/guardians? .........................................................................................................................
12. From which reading materials do you draw your reading homework assignments?
.................................................................................................................................

13. a) Have you ever attended a reading instruction workshop lately?
.................................................................

b) When was it? .................................................. ........................................................................

14. Does the experience you gained from the training influence your choice of activities in a reading lesson? .................................................................
.................................................................................................................................
APPENDIX 3 Teacher’s questionnaire

I am a PhD student in Kenyatta university and wish to carry out a study on the instructional practices in the teaching of reading. Please assist by filling in the questionnaire as honestly as possible. All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Give detailed answers where possible.

Thank you

Instructions

For all items in number 1 place a tick (✓) against that which applies in your case

1) Demographic information
   a) Gender:
      Male [ ] Female [ ]

   b) Teaching experience
      Less than 5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ] 20 years and above [ ]

   c) Educational level
      Masters degree (M.Ed) [ ] Bachelor’s degree (B.Ed) [ ]
      Diploma certificate [ ] T.E Certification [ ]
      Secondary School Education (UT) [ ]
      Any other..........................Specify.........................

   d) English language teaching experience in standard 4
      0-5 Years [ ] 6-10 Years [ ] 11-15 Years [ ] 16-20 Years [ ]
      above 20 Years [ ]

Select the most appropriate answer by circling the correct letter for numbers 2, 3, 4 & 5

2) Which of the following statements best explain your understanding of the reading process and hence influence your choice of instructional activities in the standard 4 reading lesson?
   a) Reading is an active process of constructing meaning in which a learner incorporates text based information to his existing stock of knowledge in a given area.
b) Readers begin the reading process by analysing the text in small units and these units build progressively into larger units until meaning is extracted.

c) Readers construct meaning by using general knowledge of the world or of particular text components to predict what comes next in the text.

3) My instructional activities during a reading lesson are influenced by:
   a) Nature of my professional training in college
   b) In-service courses attended
   c) Teaching experience
   d) Learner responses/ behaviour

4) The nature of lesson objectives to be achieved in a reading lesson determines the instructional activities chosen.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

5) Learner’s reading ability greatly influences the instructional activities to be chosen for a reading lesson
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

6) How do you rate the importance of the following items according to their role in a reading comprehension lesson?

   Place a tick (√) after each reading item according to your rating using the following key:

   Key: 1-very important  2- important  3-Fairly important  4-Not sure  5-Not important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading items</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Grammar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Reading the text a loud</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Translating the reading text into Ekegusii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
f) Prior knowledge or background knowledge about the reading content

g) Understanding the connections of each paragraph

h) Guessing the meaning of words

i) Finding the main idea

j) Summarizing

k) Outlining

l) Retelling the text

m) Predicting the main idea of each paragraph

n) Monitoring reading comprehension

o) Asking questions to check Comprehension

p) Using the dictionary to get the meaning of new vocabulary items in the reading text

q) Making use of visual aids in a reading lesson

7) How do you rate the following items according to their importance in the choice of instructional activities during a reading lesson?

**Place a tick (√) after each reading item according to your rating using the following key: Key: 1-very important 2-important 3-Fairly important 4-Not sure 5-Not important**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading item</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner attitude towards reading</td>
<td>1  2  3 4  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s proficiency in reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner background knowledge of reading content</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s level of reading motivation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s challenges in reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s reading expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner’s approach to reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental expectations of their children’s reading progress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8) Please give a reason for each of the ratings made in 7 above
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................

9) Which of the following resources do influence your choice of instructional activities in a reading lesson?

**Select all that apply in your case by placing a tick (✓) on the appropriate column**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Tick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading series (basal readers, graded readers)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s newspapers/magazines</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials on the internet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s books (novels, collection of short stories)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials from other subjects</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials written by pupils</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s crossword puzzles</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s games</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10) For each resource selected in 9 above give reasons why and how it influences your choice of instructional practice during a reading lesson.

...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................

11 a) Do parents influence your choice of reading instructional practices during reading lessons?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

b) If the answer for number 11.a above is yes, explain briefly how they influence your choice of instructional practices in reading lessons.
12) What challenges do you face in your choice of instructional practice in teaching reading?

13) How do you cope with the challenges identified in 12 above?
APPENDIX 4 Headteacher’s Questionnaire

I am a PhD student in Kenyatta university and wish to carry out a study on the instructional practices in the teaching of reading. Please assist by filling in the questionnaire as honesty as possible. All information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Please give detailed answers where possible.

Thank you

A. Put (✓) in the appropriate box for all items in number 1

1) Demographic information
   a) Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
   b) Teaching experience
      Less than 5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ] 20 yrs [ ]
      above 20 years [ ]
   c) Educational level
      Masters degree (M.Ed) [ ] Bachelor’s degree (B.Ed)[ ] Diploma certificate [ ] P T.E Certification[ ] Secondary School Education (U T)[ ]
      Any other........................................ Specify........................................
   d) English language teaching experience in standard 4
      0-5Years [ ] 5-10Years [ ] 11-15Years [ ] 20 Years [ ]
      above 20 Years [ ]
   e) Number of years served as a senior teacher
      0-5 Years [ ] 6-10 Years [ ] 11-15Years [ ] 16-20Years [ ]
      above 20 Years [ ]

2) Select by placing (✓ ) against the expression that best describes your school’s implementation of the language of instruction policy in upper primary (std 4-8)
   a) English is used strictly for instruction in all subjects except in Kiswahili.........................
   b) English or Kiswahili is used whenever pupils are not able to understand a given concept....
   c) Teachers sometimes explain given concepts in the pupil’s first language.........................

3) The following statements represent a school’s reading support policies.
B. Select all that apply in your school (put (✓) against your choice)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School’s reading support policy statements</th>
<th>Choices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial reading lessons given to weak pupils in reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team teaching is usually practiced in this school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading taught within the timetabled time only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents partner with teachers to help improve their children’s reading abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents provide reading texts for their children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good readers are rewarded according the class level during the school’s reading competition day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents read for pupils during reading lessons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers tutoring provided for weak pupils in the school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C. For numbers 4 & 5 circle the alternative that best describes your choice

4) Your school’s assessment policy greatly influences standard 4 teacher’s choice of instructional activities in a reading lesson.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

5) Pupils’ co-curricular reading activities greatly influence a teacher’s choice of instructional activities during a reading lesson
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

6) Are parents sensitised on helping their children with reading while at home?
   Yes ☐  No ☐

7) What roles do the parents report to be playing in their learners’ reading development while at home?
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
   ...................................................................................................................................................
8) What challenges do your teachers face in the teaching reading in standard 4?

9) How do you cope with the challenges as a school?

10) Do the teachers of English in your school attend workshops in the teaching of English?

11) If yes, do the teachers implement skills developed during the workshops?
APPENDIX 5 Instructional resources checklist

Name of school...........................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variety (types of resource)</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Accessible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard four pupil’s course book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard four teacher’s guide book</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basal readers/ graded readers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s newspapers/ magazines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper cuttings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection of short stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material from other subjects</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials from the internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading materials written by pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading material written by the teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoon strips</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## APPENDIX 6 Budget

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Amount (Kshs)</th>
<th>Sub-total (Kshs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong> Proposal development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling and subsistence</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library &amp; Internet research (information gathering)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing 90 pages @ 20/=</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing 90 pages x 4 copies @ 10/=</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 90 pages x 8 copies @ 2/=</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding 8 copies @ 100/=</td>
<td>800</td>
<td><strong>117,640</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong> Defence and submission of proposal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing and printing 90 pages @ 30/=</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 5x 90 pages @ 2/=</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding 5 copies @ 100/=</td>
<td>500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing and printing 90 pages @ 30/=</td>
<td>2,700</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 5x 90 pages @ 2/=</td>
<td>900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding 5 copies @ 100/=</td>
<td>500</td>
<td><strong>8,200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong> Piloting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing instruments 14 pages @ 10/=</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 220 copies @ 2/=</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling and subsistence 10 days @ 3000/=</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recording device (video recorder)</td>
<td>49,000</td>
<td><strong>79,180</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong> Data collection and analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing instruments 14 pages @ 10/=</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 220 copies @ 2/=</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling and subsistence 60 days @ 3000/=</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data analysis</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td><strong>197,580</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E</strong> Thesis writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing and printing 2 x 300 pages @ 30/=</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 7 x 300 pages @ 2/=</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding 7 copies @ 200/=</td>
<td>1,400</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final report</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing and printing 300 pages @ 30/=</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopying 6 x 300 pages @ 2/=</td>
<td>3,600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binding 6 copies @ 500/=</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td><strong>40,200</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>442,800</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingencies (10% of total)</td>
<td><strong>44,280</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td><strong>487,080</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 7 Work plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Proposal development</td>
<td>Jan-October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Submission of the proposal to the department for examination and defence</td>
<td>November 2011-Jan 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Correction and submission of the proposal to the graduate School</td>
<td>February-2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data collection</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Piloting and review of research instruments</td>
<td>March –2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Sampling and visiting schools selected for study</td>
<td>April -2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Administration of research instruments</td>
<td>May- August –2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Data analysis</td>
<td>Sept-October 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Thesis write-up</td>
<td>November 2012 – October 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Submission of thesis for examination to school of education</td>
<td>November –2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Possible correction and final submission of thesis to graduate school.</td>
<td>April -2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Graduation</td>
<td>June-2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 8 Research Permit

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/02/819
Date of Issue 27th June, 2012

Applicant’s Signature

Location District Province
Kisii Central
Kisii County, Kenya

for a period ending: 30th October, 2012.

CONDITIONS
1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do so may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming, and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two (2) four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

GPK565433mt10/2011

(CONDITIONS see back page)