INFLUENCE OF READING ACTIVITIES ON PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AMONG GRADE ONE PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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E55/OL/20070/2012

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MARCH, 2019
DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for certification. This research project has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data (including spoken words), graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited and referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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Supervisor

I confirm that the work reported in this research project has been carried out by the candidate under my supervision as a University Supervisor.

Signature ______________________ Date____________________

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband David Mutunga and children Samuel Kamuti and Simon Kivui.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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In addition, I thank my family members for their patience, assistance and encouragement which propelled me to carry on with the study regardless of the difficulties I encountered at certain stages up to the completion of my research project report. I do acknowledge Madam Mary Wairagu for proof reading my work. Above all, I thank God most sincerely for providing me with good health and energy to carry out my studies.
### ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>KICD</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(r)</td>
<td>correlation coefficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACOSTI</td>
<td>National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</td>
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<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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ABSTRACT

Reading activities are becoming a focal point in teaching pupils a new language especially English. Based on the studies that have attempted to show the influence of reading activities on performance in reading, it remains inconclusive that reading activities have significant influence on performance of the learners in English as one of the subjects learnt in lower primary schools in Kenya. There are inadequate studies on the influence of reading activities on performance of learners in reading in English in Grade One. This study sought to investigate the influence of reading activities on performance of learners in English among Grade One pupils in public primary schools in Kayole Zone of Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County. The first objective was to identify the reading activities used by teachers to teach English. The second objective was to find out the performance of learners on reading in English. The third objective was to determine the influence of reading activities used during teaching and learning processes on performance in reading. The fourth objective was to examine whether there were challenges experienced by teachers carrying out reading activities in English language or not. The fifth objective was to identify the strategies employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered as they use reading activities to teach reading in English. The study adopted the Vygotsky’s Language Development Theory.

The study employed descriptive research design. The target population was 180 teachers and 3600 Grade One pupils summing up to an overall target population of 3780 respondents in 20 schools. This study employed stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques to obtain a sample size of 241 respondents comprising of 36 teachers and 205 Grade One pupils. The researcher used questionnaires and performance tests to collect data. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively and presented in form of percentages, frequencies and means for all objectives and correlations between the objectives. Qualitative data was analysed by categorizing it into themes and presented in form of themes and verbatim quotation where necessary. The study findings revealed that reading activities identified include sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading. In addition, pupils perform better (mean of 3.52) in reading speed followed by interpretation of colour and shapes (mean of 3.51) and the least performance is in fluency (mean of 3.38). The study findings established that, sound reading activities and shape reading activities positively influenced performance of pupils in English. Also, word reading activities and colour activities did not significantly influence performance in English. The variation in influence was found to have been attributed to challenges encountered which are teacher and learner based. However, the challenges are addressed by school administration as well as teachers. The study concludes that not all reading activities significantly influence performance of the pupils. The study recommends that school administration and teachers should improve their strategies in improving delivery and performance of pupils in English.


CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. The chapter also describes the limitations and delimitations of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks and definition of operational terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Reading activities in teaching languages are becoming a focal point in teaching pupils a new language other than their mother tongue. According to Thomson (2012), other than teachers giving instructions and other language teaching strategies and techniques such as ‘repeat after me,’ vocabulary checks, error correction, drilling and translation, reading activities in language teaching are gaining wide popularity. Reading activities in language subjects are specific actions that are drawn from main language activities that include sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading (Maina, 2011; Odima, 2015; Sundqvist, 2005). Some studies also consider games as part of the language reading activities (Iribe Mwangi & Mutua, 2014).

According to Thomson (2012), reading activities are significant in language activities as they help pupils to get meaningful connections with language concepts thereby helping pupils to acquire or develop different levels of fluency, speed and interpretation of sounds, words, shapes and colours. The
combination of the reading activities enhances acquisition of language skills determined through performance of the learners yet the extent to which each activity contributes to the performance in reading activities is not documented. For purposes of this study, reading activities in English language was significant because there were limited studies showing the extent to which learners perform in reading activities in English language.

School curricula in English speaking countries are structured in English language and English is the language mostly used in teaching (Sundqvist, 2005). This begins from lower primary school where emphasis in reading is placed in reading activities. In this regard, reading activities in which pupils are taught about reading sounds and words or shapes and colour provide pupils with opportunity to perform in reading activities in which basic concepts of reading help pupils to read or interpret complex words and sentences as they advance. According to Maina (2011), performance in reading skills requires reading activities such as reading colour, reading sounds, reading shapes and reading words. The performance of the learners in the reading activities determines the extent to which the reading activities are delivered to the learners, yet this remained unexplored.

Despite the explanations on the influence of reading activities on reading skills, there were limited studies indicating the level of performance of the learners regarding different reading activities. For example, in Sweden, Sundqvist (2009) focused on the impact of out of school classroom activities such as games, on the proficiency of grade three learners in reading. In a similar study done in China among University students, Pearson (2004)
revealed that the reading skills acquired by students influenced the extent to which the students engaged in other language activities.

Some studies focused more on the relationship between general language skills and performance in other subjects and this has not provided much information on the extent to which learners perform in reading activities including challenges encountered and strategies employed. For example, in United States of America (Cimmiyotti, 2013) and in Turkey (Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmia, 2008) performance in mathematics was linked to reading, but actual measures were not provided. In Philippines, Imam, Mastura, Jamil and Ismail (2014) also linked reading activities to performance in science but the scores of the learners in reading and science were not used.

In Ghana, while Owusu-Acheaw (2014) attempted to establish the influence of reading habits on academic performance, the study did not demonstrate the performance of learners as a measure of reading activities. This indicates that while reading activities could be a habit or support reading, it is difficult to determine whether the performance in reading activities emanates from reading habits that could be significant in aspects of reading activities in language subjects. Thus, there is need to investigate level of performance of learners in reading activities in respect to challenges encountered and strategies employed to counter the challenges.

In Kenya, most studies done on languages focus more on general language activities and academic performance. Some of the studies isolated performance of pupils in reading after the pupils had been taken through
reading activities. For example, in Migori County, Achieng’ (2012) revealed that learners had low reading and writing skills in Kiswahili language. Onchera and Manyasi (2012) also revealed that limited exposure of learners to language activities reduces performance in reading. In Busia County, although Odima (2015) brings out the challenges that limit performance among children, the study did not link such challenges to performance in reading.

In Kiambu County, Maina (2011) observed that language activities had strong influence on performance of learners as almost half of the learners performed poorly in reading. In Machakos County, the study by Iribemwangi and Mutua (2014) pointed out that games activities support performance in language yet the study did not articulate specific performance area that are influenced by games as part of reading activities. In Narok, Mwoma (2017) established that boys slightly performed better in reading than girls in grade three. In Nairobi, Otieno (2010) found that there are conflicting practices with regard to language of early reading instruction and language use in the schools which limits performance in language. This indicates that performance of the learners in reading activities is not adequately explored.

In Nairobi’s Kayole Zone, there are inadequate studies demonstrating the extent to which reading activities influence performance of the learners in reading. Based on the studies that have attempted to show the influence of reading activities on performance in language, it remained inconclusive that reading activities in English have significant influence on performance in language especially reading activities. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the influence of reading activities on performance
of reading in English among Grade One children in Kayole Zone, Embakasi Sub-County in Nairobi County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The influence of reading activities on performance in English among children has not been demonstrated exhaustively. Many studies reviewed have attempted to show the influence of language activities on general language skills which include reading, writing and oral skills. As such, there are inadequate studies demonstrating the performance of the learners in reading activities in English. In Nairobi, learners in Grade One are taught reading activities yet assessment done in reading has not been analysed to determine the level of performance of learners in reading activities. It is therefore difficult for teachers and other stakeholders to ascertain the extent to which the pupils have acquired good reading skills. Thus, identification of suitable interventions in case pupils show poor performance also becomes difficult. This study therefore attempted to investigate the performance of learners in reading activities in English language among Grade One pupils in Kayole Zone, Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of reading activities on performance of reading in English language, identify the reading activities used to teach English, find out how learners perform in reading in English, examine challenges encountered by teachers when carrying out reading activities and identify the strategies employed in handling the challenges
encountered among Grade One children in Kayole Zone, Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

a) To identify the reading activities used by teachers to teach reading in English in Grade One.

b) To find out the performance of learners in reading in English.

c) To determine the influence of reading activities used during teaching and learning processes on performance in reading.

d) To examine challenges experienced by teachers when carrying out reading activities in reading in English language.

e) To identify the strategies employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered as they use reading activities to teach reading in English.

1.2.3 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

a) What are the reading activities used by teachers to teach English?

b) How do learners perform in reading?

c) How do reading activities influence performance of reading in English language?

d) What are the challenges encountered by teachers when carrying out reading activities in English language?

e) What are the strategies employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered as they use reading activities to teach reading in English?
1.3 Significance of the Study

Reading is one of the areas in language examined in Grade One and it offers a good indicator to parents, teachers and Ministry of Education officials on the extent to which pupils can read. The government, through the Ministry of Education is tasked with making policies thus the findings of this study may provide information for situational analysis required in formulating new policies in teaching languages or improving existing policies that support performance of learners in schools. The findings therefore, may help the Ministry of Education to identify causes of poor academic performance emanating from reading difficulties. It is from such findings that suitable interventions may be devised.

For teachers, the study findings may provide information required to improve their teaching strategies in reading activities. The study findings will help teachers in understanding the reading activities that support good performance in English. The study will also support teachers to understand the challenges that limit good performance and how such challenges can be addressed.

The study findings may provide information to parents on how they can be involved in supporting reading performance of their children. As parents are concerned with academic performance of their children, through this study, they may get to know weaknesses of their children as they get information from teachers hence devise measures to assist their children.
1.4 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations and delimitations:

1.4.1 Limitations of the study

This study had several limitations. The first limitation was the assessment tool that was used to measure performance of pupils in reading. The assessment tool for pupils’ reading abilities did not capture all the aspects related to language acquisition. However, the study included the main aspects of assessment of language such as fluency, reading speed, word recognition and shape and colour interpretation. Another limitation was that the study did not easily control other factors such as genetic and home factors that have been known to influence academic performance. In addressing this limitation, the researcher did not include home backgrounds into the study as well as personal or family history.

1.4.2 Delimitations

The study only focused on reading activities and performance in English language of Grade One pupils in Kayole zone in Embakasi Sub-County, Nairobi County. Thus, the study did not cover performance of the pupils in other language areas such as oral, writing and comprehension. The study only focused on impromptu tests and not formative or summative assessments. This is because impromptu tests helped in making instant observations unlike summative and formative assessments that take longer time and require monitoring of the children whose stay in the study was not assured. The study did not include private schools in Kayole zone.
1.5 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. All language activities related to reading were measurable through performance of the pupils in reading tests.
2. All the respondents were assumed to have given credible and valid information and were available during data collection.
3. The level of reading performance of pupils was assumed to be mainly associated with intensity of reading activities.

1.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by the following theoretical and conceptual frameworks:

1.6.1 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted Vygotsky’s (1962) language learning theory. The theory states that children acquire language not only through exposure to words but also on the interdependence between thought and language development. Vygotsky provides an understanding on the relationship between language acquisition or development and cognitive development of the learner (Hickmann, 2001). According to Vygotsky (1962), language is a social communication that transforms thinking and cognitive ability of an individual.

Vygotsky explains that basic elements of language which includes words and sounds should be meaningful to people and this is achieved through individuals’ thoughts. This indicates that interpretation of language is important to individuals. Given that people have different abilities to interpret
things including language, this links interpretation of language to the cognitive level of the individuals. Vygotsky emphasizes that speech forms a basis at which thoughts are made real. In respect to children, Vygotsky explains that children first consider language as a form of social interaction and later on the language becomes basis at which thinking takes place.

In children, language is partly acquired through school in activities such as reading. It is through school that assessment of their level of performance is done. In this regard, Vygotsky’s theory links language development and cognitive development hence the need to measure performance of the learners in reading activities. The teacher applies scaffolding to ensure that learners adjust their performance progressively through increase in intensity of the reading activities. According to Vygotsky, teachers support learners to improve performance independently from each reading activity then later the outcomes are merged.

Vygotsky’s theory indicates that learning language in children is heavily dependent on social contexts where knowledge and skills are mutually built or constructed. Vygotsky recommended that teachers should provide enough assistance, encourage private speech and self-regulation. In this context, the engagement of learners in the learning process is socially fulfilled when the learners are exposed or taken through reading activities. Teachers are therefore required to determine cognitive thinking level of the learners that will then guide the teachers on identifying suitable interventions to provoke the learner’s progressive thinking. This indicates that selection and application of reading activities to the learners should first be determined by measuring
cognitive thinking level of the learner. In this regard, teachers should begin with basic reading activities and through scaffolding, the intensity is increased. During the process, performance of the learner should be tracked to inform the level and intensity of interventions in reading activities.

In this study, Vygotsky’s theory provides an opportunity for identifying the reading activities that are suitable in supporting language development either through application of activities in sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading. In addition, the theory explains that language learning influences cognitive thinking and it is for this reason that this study will find out the performance of learners with regard to reading activities. Moreover, the theory explains the environment in which language learning occurs. To Vygotsky, language learning should occur mostly in a socially structured environment. In this regard, the environment can therefore be conducive or with challenges such as teachers not providing enough assistance. This study will therefore examine such challenges as well as the extent to which teachers address such challenges.
1.6.2 Conceptual Framework

In this sub-section a conceptualization of this study is presented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 1.1.

Independent Variables                                    Dependent Variables                                    Out Come

Reading Activities                                    Performance in reading                                    Educational and social progress
- Sound reading                                         - Performance scores in fluency, speed and interpretation
- Word reading                                          - Teaching methods
- Shape reading                                         - Availability of materials
- Colour reading                                        - Teacher competency

- Challenges in reading activities
- Strategies employed

Intervening Variables
- Teaching methods
- Availability of materials
- Teacher competency

Key

Study variables

Non-Study variables

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

(source: Katee J, 2017)

The Figure 1.1 shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Independent variables include reading activities, challenges encountered and strategies employed. The dependent variable is performance
in reading. This relationship is affected by intervening variables which include teaching methods, availability of materials and teacher competency.

One of the possible outcomes of this relationship high performance scores in reading which indicate that pupils have acquired good reading skills under conditions of few or no challenges and better strategies employed. Another possible outcome is social progress, an indication that pupils have acquired good reading skills and confidence to read and interact freely with peers and other people. These possible outcomes can lead to improved Educational and Social progress.
1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

**Reading** – This referred to the ability to recognise, identify, understand and interpret what is written, drawn or coloured.

**Performance in English** – This referred to the ability of a Grade One pupil to identify linguistic sounds, words, shapes and colours and the measure of fluency, speed, of reading and interpreting them.

**Reading activities** – Referred to activities carried out during reading in English in Grade One class, such as word reading, sound reading, shape reading and colour reading.

**Challenges** – Referred to problems and drawbacks that are likely to be encountered by teachers and learners during reading activities.

**Strategies** – Referred to techniques and methods used to improve teaching and learning of reading in Grade one.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the reviewed literature on the influence of language reading activities on performance as well as challenges and strategies employed. The chapter contains empirical review and summary of the chapter.

2.2 Reading Activities used by Teachers to teach Reading in English

Reading refers to the process of building meaning from the interaction between the person reading, the content for reading and the reading context (Wixon, Peters, Weber & Roeber, 1987). In this regard, reading is the outcome of interaction among various inter-phases that involves input units (symbols and words) processing units (motor skills, brain) and output units (comprehension).

Dadzie (2008) considered reading as the ability of comprehending words that are written for purposes of acquiring knowledge. This implies that children are required to read so that they can understand information that is written in books and charts or even electronic screens. Language learning in formal institutions is implemented through language reading activities. Language activities are sets of interrelated actions that are intended towards achievement of particular goals in language (Sundqvist, 2005). The main language activities include: oral activities (speaking and listening activities) reading activities and writing activities (Odima, 2015; Maina, 2011; Sundqvist, 2005). This study looked at reading activities.
Some studies also consider games as part of language activities (Iribe Mwangi & Mutua, 2014). The combination of the activities enhances performance of learners in language activities. Literature on performance in reading is measured through level of language skills acquired that include oral, reading and writing skills (Maina, 2011). By focusing on reading, this study acknowledges that performance in reading is measured from language activities such as reading colour, reading words (Maina, 2011). This implies that as teachers identify language activities, the activities should reflect actions related to reading of words or identification of shapes, colour and images. According to Maina (2011), performance in reading activities for preschool children involves levels of abilities in proper book usage, interpretation of objects, images and symbols. This study therefore investigated the reading activities that supported the levels of abilities in reading objects, images and symbols.

Given that reading is an individual’s ability to identify and interpret symbols, the individual, after being exposed to reading activities, acquires reading skills that make them different from others. According to Palani (2012), one of the skills acquired by learners is comprehension. Comprehension skills is considered as the ability and the art employed by the learner to get meaning out of words, symbols and images that are contained in the books or other surfaces whether electronic or not (Palani, 2012). This study therefore examined the performance of the learners in reading.

From another perspective, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) asserts that reading is significant knowledge transfer as pupils increase skills required in reading.
strategies. This implies that basic concepts and strategies in reading facilitate pupils to engage in reading of more complex words, statements, sentences and paragraphs. According to Deavers (2000), learners who are not taken through simple skills of reading in early life of learning, experience difficulties in future. The emphasis here is about reading habits in which pupils who develop reading habits are observed to acquire more reading skills that improves their comprehension and identification abilities. Thus, this study sought to identify the activities that support acquisition of reading by use of reading activities.

Reading comprises several elements that include vocabulary, word recognition, reading comprehension and reading rate (Karanja, 2015). According to Karanja (2015), for learners with reading difficulties, reading problems are observed to occur when the readers: omit words, syllables or sounds; insert extra letters, words or sounds; substitute words that look or sound similar; mispronounce words; repeat words and use improper inflection during oral reading. This indicates that pupils with reading difficulties do not have good reading skills such as fluency, word and letter recognition as well as proper inflection during oral reading. Therefore, this study sought to measure the performance of the learners in reading.

2.3 Performance in Reading by Grade one pupils
Performance in reading is dependent on the reading activities exposed to the learners. According to Schellekens (2011), although assessing performance of learners in reading is difficult to determine in class and in test situation, questions may be used to test the level of performance. Schellekens (2011) argues that the ability of the learners to decode words as well as the speed of
reading can be determined. However, the choice of words and questions that are used to measure the performance of the learners should be guided by the cognitive ability of the learner. This is because complex words should test the ability of the learners to combine different syllables and sounds while speed is linked to the ability of the learner to decode the words. It is for this reason that Schellekens (2011) emphasizes that sequence of processes should be followed hence the reading is not only complex for the reader but also the test setter.

In United Kingdom, Walter and Swan (2009) cast doubt on teaching reading activities such as skimming and scanning for second language learners in language classroom activities. According to Walter and Swan, testing the performance of the learners on the ability to scan and skim through paragraphs is an ineffective way. Given that the argument of Walter and Swan (2009) is focused on learners in middle and higher grades of learning, the same argument may not be applicable to Grade One pupils who are yet to learn complex words and sentences that form paragraphs.

According to Weir and Khalifa (2008), cognitive processing approach informs about the need of incorporating the cognitive abilities of the learners in deploying the language activities that will yield reading outcomes. Grabe (2009) supports Weir and Khalifa’s (2008) argument by indicating that regardless of the sub-skills applied, the same cognitive processes are involved. The implication is that performance is highly dependent on cognitive abilities of an individual. Thus, this study used the Vygotsky’s Language Development Theory to analyse the extent to which performance of pupils corresponded to the reading activities.
2.4 Influence of Reading Activities on Performance of reading in English Language

Many studies have associated reading habits with academic performance. For example, Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe (2012) established that reading habits are important building blocks in the performance of the learners in language activities. This implies that learners who have more reading habits have a higher marginal propensity of performance in language. This is well demonstrated by the fact that learners who repeatedly read same words and images have developed comprehension skills thereby retaining such words and images for longer time. Also, during repeated reading, the learners develop techniques of identifying and interpreting similar, related or complex words and images. However, the study done by Issa et al. (2012) focused on college students thereby contributing to the knowledge gap on the extent to which habits employed through language activities enhance performance in reading among Grade One pupils.

In China Pearson (2004) found out that University students performed highly in reading books in out of class learning as compared to performance in classrooms. The students were observed to read more of internet materials and game guides thereby performing better such as reading fast and identifying key words in the texts. The proficiency in reading was observed more in computer games as the students wanted to enjoy the game. Pearson (2004) concluded that students were more motivated outside their classrooms than during their classroom time. In this regard, games and internet act as motivating factors that improve performance, yet this has not been determined
in Grade One pupils, thus prompting the study to investigate how performance in reading is exhibited in reading activities in Grade One as pupils learn English.

Muter and Snowling (2009) provide a simple view of reading model that shows different patterns of performance. In the model, performance of the learners is determined by variations in language comprehension processes and word recognition processes. According to Muter and Snowling (2009), performance is good when there is good word recognition and good comprehension, or it is poor when there is poor word recognition and poor comprehension. This implies that, there are at least two possible outcomes of performance in reading activities: poor reading and good reading characterized by poor word recognition and comprehension skills as well as good word recognition and comprehension skills respectively. This study therefore investigated how reading activities influenced performance in reading among Grade One pupils.

A study done by Cimmiyotti (2013) in California revealed that there is a strong positive correlation (an r value of .67) between reading performance level and mathematics performance level. The findings imply that good reading ability is a prerequisite to good understanding of the mathematical problem hence easier to solve. Similar findings by Duru and Koklu (2011) observed that poor performance of students in mathematics was associated with poor reading skills characterized by lack of knowledge and skills to get meaning of symbols, signs and words used in Mathematics. Another study by Cromley (2009) revealed that reading comprehension correlated highly
(0.819) with proficiency of learners in science. Improved performance in mathematics has also been linked to good reading comprehension skills (Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola, & Nurmi, 2008). These studies dwelt on mathematics and science thus the need to find out the performance in reading activities relationship in English which may be a pillar to better comprehension.

In the study by Vilenius-Tuohimaa, et. al., (2008), students with good reading comprehension skills solved word problems in mathematics easily than students with poor reading comprehension skills. The reason for the low performance in mathematics is that students with poor reading comprehension skills struggle with reading the text thereby exhibiting poor decoding skills which limit logical reasoning. It is from this basis that Vilenius-Tuohimaa, et. al., (2008) strongly associate the students’ dismal performance in mathematics to other subjects.

Findings by Vilenius-Tuohimaa, Aunola and Numia (2008) are in concurrence with findings by Grimm (2008) who found that, problem solving, and data interpretation skills were associated with reading comprehension. In this regard, students with high level of reading comprehension showed high ability to solve and interpret mathematical problems. However, there still exists a literature gap on the extent to which such findings can be proved in the Kenyan primary school setting from the perspective of performance of the Grade One pupils as reflected by their performance in reading.
In the Philippines, overall students’ performance in reading comprehension and science was indexed at low mastery level (Imam, Mastura, Jamil & Ismail, 2014). Generally, four out of six reading skills such as understanding vocabulary in context, noting details, predicting outcome, and making inference made up the overall reading skills that positively correlated with science performance of students. The study concluded that although the strength of the influence was considered weak, students with high reading skills showed improvements in science than students with low reading skills. However, while the study by Imam et. al., (2014) shows the influence of reading skills on performance in science, there is no documented evidence showing similarities or differences in the findings of the study in other subject studies done among primary schools in Kenya.

In Ghana, Owusu-Acheaw (2014) found out that students with good reading habits can understand questions easily and express themselves better as opposed to those who neither have good reading habits nor reading skills at all. Although the study by Owusu-Acheaw (2014) did not measure the performance of the learners and tie it to reading habits, Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe and Adedeji (2012) argue that engaging in continuous reading considerably influences ones studying skills and subsequent academic performance. As the study by Owusu-Acheaw (2014) demonstrates that poor reading habits are perceived to influence poor academic performance, the poor reading habits are not shown to result from language activities. As such, this study focused on performance in reading activities.
Studies carried out in Kenya focused on different aspects of language and performance. The findings by Achieng (2012) indicated that, majority of pupils in Migori have low reading skills, grammar skills and writing skills. This was however in Kiswahili language but the current study will focus on reading skills in English. Onchera and Manyasi (2013) carried out a study in Nyanza on the acquisition of functional skills by students in secondary schools. The study revealed that teachers have different understanding of the functional skills they teach and that they give minimum support in the acquisition of these functional writing skills. As a result, this limited exposure of students to a variety of functional writing texts. The findings imply that, exposing learners to functional writing texts is a language activity that is necessary for the learners. The study touched on one of the language activities, but the concern of this study was not addressed, thus the need to have a study to assess performance of learners in reading activities in English.

Odima (2015) investigated the relationship between teaching English and acquisition of English language skills in primary schools in Busia County. By utilizing descriptive survey research design, the findings revealed that the process of teaching English language depended on the level of children’s acquired first language in which mother tongue supported the acquisition of language skills. Although the study brought out the challenges that limit acquisition of language skills among children, it did not link such challenges to specific language skills such as reading skills. Therefore, this study attempted to establish the influence of language reading activities on performance of the learners.
A study by Iribe Mwangi and Mutua (2014) in Machakos County on language games and language teaching, sought to investigate poor performance in language among class three pupils. The study utilised quasi-experiment research design where results from pre-test and post-tests were obtained and correlated. The findings revealed that, learners who used language games in class to learn Kiswahili performed better than those who did not. The study only attempted to generalize the performance of language thereby limiting the linking of games as a language activity to reading skills. However, the study does not articulate specific skills that are influenced by games as a language activity. The study only generalized the performance of language thereby limiting the link of games as a language activity to specific skills especially reading skills. Thus, there was need for a study on reading activities and performance of learners in lower primary schools.

According to a study by Otieno (2010), basic reading skills involve the ability to pronounce written words accurately and this requires appropriate teaching instructions in a language most familiar to the pupils. The study was carried out to investigate language practices in primary schools; the teachers’ perspective on both English and Kiswahili languages. The findings of the study revealed that, there are conflicting practices regarding language of early reading instructions and language use in the schools which have resulted from both English and Kiswahili being working recognized languages in Kenya. The study concluded that schools especially public and community schools in Nairobi are not able to adopt Kiswahili exclusively for reading instructions. The types of language activities also have a direct influence on the
performance of the learners whether in English or Kiswahili. This study therefore sought to bridge the gap by investigating the performance of learners after being taught reading activities.

In Narok, Mwoma (2017) in a study on ability of children in reading established that, boys performed slightly better than girls in reading in two subjects. Availability of reading materials whether at school or home were found to promote reading abilities of the learners. However, the study focused on grade three learners. This study will therefore focus on grade one learners.

2.5 Challenges Encountered in Teaching and Learning Reading Activities

Many studies have been done with a view of identifying challenges encountered by teachers and learners in reading. In Namibia, an investigation on reading difficulties in English as second language among grade three learners revealed that challenges in teaching and learning reading activities were both school and teacher related. According to Rauha (2011), the learners were insufficiently exposed to target language which then became a barrier to acquisition of reading skills in English. Another challenge is that, the teachers had no sufficient and quality time of attending to each learner’s needs due to high teacher to learner ratio. Other challenges included inadequate reading materials, inaccessibility of the library by learners and failure by learners to attend kindergartens where basic reading activities were taught. The study concluded that the challenges were significant barriers to learning. There was need therefore to investigate the challenges encountered by teachers and learners in reading activities in Grade One in Nairobi, Kenya.
In Uganda, the challenges encountered by teacher in the course of imparting reading skills to learners are policy and curriculum related. According to Medadi (2014), the policy and curriculum supporting reading has created disparities in teaching reading activities in rural and urban areas as well as private and public schools. In this regard, the teachers find it difficult to separate policy and curriculum requirements for learners who are classified as rural or urban or who switch between private and public schools. The concern is that the policy and curriculum requirements have allowed the learners to be taught in different circumstances. This indicates that learners are unlikely to perform yet they are exposed to the same curriculum. It is important to note that, learners should benefit from a harmonized curriculum thereby improving uniformity in learning. Thus, reading techniques and approaches should be uniform without any form of segregation.

In Kenya, Anyiendah (2017) carried out a study on challenges faced by teachers when teaching English in public primary schools. In the study, Anyiendah (2017) found that learners have limited time of practising English language. Another challenge is that due to incompetence of teachers, teachers frequently change language of instruction from English to other languages such as Kiswahili and mother tongue. Inadequacy of materials to support learning of English language was also cited as another challenge. However, while Anyiendah (2017) identified these challenges, the study did not focus on reading activities as one of the learning areas in English language. This study therefore investigated the challenges encountered by teachers and learners that hinder good performance in reading activities in Nairobi.
In the course of seeking to investigate the methods used by teachers to teach learners with reading and writing problems, Ogano (2012) found that the teachers had no training to support them in addressing the reading problem. However, the study focused on special needs learners in regular classrooms. This indicates that there is a possibility that teachers in the same regular classrooms face similar challenges in addressing reading challenges among learners without special needs. Thus, this study investigated the challenges encountered by teachers that limit good performance of learners in reading activities in Nairobi.

In Narok, Mwoma (2017) established that unavailability of learning materials whether at school or at home did not promote reading in grade three learners. In addition, Mwoma (2017) found that learners who did not receive adequate support from teachers and parents encountered challenges in reading. From Mwoma’s findings, it is imperative to indicate that absence of such challenges promotes reading and performance of the learners. This study will therefore examine whether there are challenges experienced by teachers carrying out reading activities in English language.

Other studies on challenges encountered by teachers and learners in English have focused on other aspects other than reading. For example, challenges encountered in listening and speaking activities have been identified in Lugari (Anusu, Barasa & Omulando, 2012). In Nyamira County, Nyang’au (2014) identified challenges encountered by learners in acquiring writing skills in secondary schools. This indicates that, performance in reading activities has not been assessed especially with focus in early years of primary school. This
study therefore attempted to examine the challenges that limit performance in reading activities among Grade One pupils in Nairobi.

2.6 Strategies Employed in Improving Reading Activities

Reading strategies have undergone transformation which is largely driven by different needs. Historical trends reveal that, reading was done in 1930s for learners to get meaning and this changed to skill development in 1960s where emphasis was placed on phonetics and decoding skills (Kemba, 2005). Kemba (2005) further explains that from the beginning of 1980s, further transformation took place in which an integrated approach that incorporated reading, writing, listening and speaking was adopted.

The rationale of this approach or strategy was to ensure that learners engaged in reading, acquired other skills from the same text. This indicates that when learners read, they should comprehend and master the spellings of the text as well as master the sounds of the text. The approach therefore ensures that out of reading, learners can acquire other skills. This implies that reading strategies are significant in acquisition of other skills.

In Ethiopia, a study was done to determine the strategies employed in improving reading. Although the study focused on middle primary school, the study found that there were teacher related strategies aimed at improving performance in reading. According to Teshome (2014), teachers attended in-service training as a means of improving their skills in teaching reading techniques to learners.
In Uganda, reading culture was effective in promoting performance in reading. According to Nalusiba (2010), reading activities were unplanned initially which was due to inadequate materials for reading. This was corrected by the need of promoting reading a culture characterised by provision of adequate reading materials. This indicates that, promotion of a reading culture is hinged on provision of adequate materials.

In Kenya, a study was carried out in Tigania on involving parents in the reading activities of learners. This has also been considered as a strategy in improving performance in reading among learners. In a study done by Murungi, Muthaa, Micheni et. al., (2014), it was revealed that teachers encouraged parents to listen to their children as they read as well as parents helping the learners in reading at home. Although the study did not explain the extent to which this strategy was effective, there was an attempt by many parents to support their children in reading. This study therefore examined the extent to which such strategies are effective in promoting good performance in reading activities in Nairobi.

Although Kulo and Omulando (2014) focused their study on secondary schools in Kisumu County, the study found that, reading activities supported learners to acquire other skills such as comprehension. The strategy employed is that teachers engaged learners more in reading as a means of activating their comprehension skills. This indicates that, giving learners more materials to read is a strategy that helps learners to acquire more reading skills. This study therefore focused on strategies employed by teachers in Nairobi to ensure learners in Grade One attain good performance.
2.7 Summary of Literature Reviewed

Studies reviewed have attempted to show the relationship between language reading activities and performance in reading. However, these studies present a glaring gap in relation to this present study. Most studies focused on secondary schools, whereas the focus of this study is on lower primary particularly Grade One. Also, while some studies have been in lower primary school, the focus was on other grades and not in grade one. In this regard, while in both levels of learning, learners are taught format, spelling, grammar and punctuation, much of the burden of teaching such as functional texts is at the lower primary where the foundation for such is laid. Therefore, there was need for documented evidence showing the extent to which sound and word reading in Grade One supports acquisition of functional reading skills. Also, studies have not conclusively linked language reading activities to performance of pupils in reading. This is especially true of Kayole zone where performance in reading in English is low. Thus, this study examined the influence by investigating the performance in reading activities among Grade One pupils in Kayole Zone.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter provides description on research design and methodology. The chapter comprises of research design, study variables, research methodology, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size. The chapter also comprises of research instruments, pilot study, data collection techniques, data analysis, logistical and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design
The study employed descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey supports the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data by use of questionnaires and interviews from a large population (Bogdan & Birklen, 2007). This enabled the researcher to collect in-depth data by use of questionnaires and performance tests. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected as questionnaires and performance tests used had questions that generated both qualitative and quantitative data. This research design also supported sampling of the participants of the study from a large population of teachers and children in Kayole zone.

3.2.1 Variables
This study has the following variables: independent, dependent and intervening. The main independent variable is reading activities, such as sound reading, word reading, shape reading, and colour reading, while secondary independent variables include challenges encountered and strategies employed. The dependent variable is performance of the learners. This
relationship is affected by intervening variables which include teaching methods, availability of materials and teacher competency. The outcome expected is Educational and social progress. Table 3.1 illustrates the variables of the study in respect to indicators and scale of measurement.

**Table 3.1: Variables of the study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Measurement scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Reading activities</td>
<td>Sound reading</td>
<td>Ordinal scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shape reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Colour reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges in reading activities</td>
<td>Teacher challenges</td>
<td>Ordinal scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies employed</td>
<td>Teacher based strategies</td>
<td>Ordinal scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learner based strategies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Performance in reading activities</td>
<td>Performance scores in fluency, speed and interpretation.</td>
<td>Interval scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Katee J., 2017

**3.2.2 Research Methodology**

This study employed mixed method research that supports both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Using quantitative research approaches, the researcher applied descriptive techniques at different stages of data analysis. Descriptive techniques ensure data collected is easily expressed in form of descriptive statistics such as frequencies and means. In addition, qualitative approaches ensure that data collected captures behaviour and attitudes of respondents. In this study, the levels in sound reading, word reading, shape reading, and colour reading were taken to determine the level of performance in reading activities exhibited among Grade One learners. This design assisted
in obtaining in-depth meaning from both quantitative and qualitative data. Thus, the researcher attempted to determine the performance of learners in reading activities.

3.3 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in Kayole zone, Nairobi County, Kenya. The area is one of the most densely populated and schools are highly constrained in terms of provision of teaching and learning materials. The few schools with high number of pupils enrolled in Grade One has also resulted into one teacher serving more than 60 learners against a recommended number of between 35 and 40 learners per teacher. The constraints on teaching and learning have therefore compromised outcomes in reading. This study therefore sought to determine whether reading activities influenced the performance of learners in reading in English.

3.4 Target Population

This study drew its population from all the public primary schools in Kayole zone. Private schools were not included since the issue under investigation was likely experienced in public schools where population of learners was high. Also, the teaching methods may differ. There are 20 public primary schools in Kayole zone with an average of 180 pupils per class distributed in three streams in lower primary (Sub County Education office, 2017). According to the Sub-County Education office (2017), each stream is handled by one teacher. The target population was drawn from all the 20 schools comprising of 180 teachers and 3,600 Grade One pupils summing up to an overall target population of 3,780 as illustrated in Table 3.2.
Table 3.2: Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade One pupils</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Katee J. 2017

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling of number of individuals was carried out to get the desired sample size. The following were sampling techniques and sample size of this study:

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

This study employed stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified sampling technique was used to select and group the respondents into two distinct groups of teachers and pupils. Purposive sampling was used to identify 18 schools out of 20 schools in the zone. This is because the two schools were used for carrying out piloting.

Two teachers were purposively selected from the 18 schools out of 20 schools in the zone, since two schools were already used during piloting. The two class teachers had first-hand information about the pupils. This implies that two streams of Grade One in each school were selected purposively based on the first two streams with the highest number of pupils. This yielded 36 teachers. For pupils, simple random sampling Table (Appendix IV) by Kathuri and Pals (1993) was used. According to Kathuri and Pals (1993), a target population of between 3500 and 4000 yields a sample size of 205. Thus, with a target population of 3600 pupils, the sample size was 205.
The Kathuri and Pals (1993) simple random sampling Table was used to obtain the sample size. Simple random technique was used to select the 205 pupils in 18 schools. This implies that all 18 schools got equal opportunity for children to participate. Thus, 11 pupils were randomly selected in two streams. One school which has two shifts got an addition of 7 pupils. The selection of pupils involved folding papers marked numbers one to six and blank ones which were put in a container for pupils to pick. Those who picked marked papers were included in the sample. The school was purposively selected because it had two shifts, that is morning and afternoon where papers were marked one to eight and the rest without marked numbers. Pupils picked the folded papers whereby those with papers marked numbers were included in the sample study.

### 3.5.2 Sample Size

In total, 259 respondents in 18 schools formed the sample size as guided by Kathuri and Pals (1993) sample size Table (Appendix IV). The actual sample size therefore comprised of 18 head teachers, 36 teachers and 205 Grade One pupils as illustrated in Table 3.3

**Table 3.3: Sample Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Population Frequency</th>
<th>Sampling technique</th>
<th>Sample Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Stratified and purposive</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade One pupils</td>
<td>3600</td>
<td>Simple random</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires and performance tests to collect data on independent and dependent variables. The intervening variables including teaching methods, availability of materials and teacher competency were held constant. The teachers were urged to maintain the teaching methods applied and available materials.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires (Appendix II) were used to collect data from teachers. Questions were both structured and unstructured so that both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The structured questions were used to generate quantitative data while the unstructured questions were used to generate qualitative data in line with study objectives.

The questionnaires for teachers contained six sections: A, B, C, D, E and F. Section A was used to collect background information of teachers while Section B was used to collect information on reading activities. Section C was used to collect information on performance of Grade One pupils in reading activities while Section D was used to collect information on influence of reading activities on performance in reading. Section E was used to collect data on challenges encountered if they existed while Section F was used to collect data on strategies employed in case challenges existed. This method of data collection was suitable because the teachers were given the questionnaires to provide responses during their free time. This did not interfere with their daily program of teaching hence giving them the opportunity to respond to the questionnaires at their convenient time.
3.6.2 Performance Tests

Standardised performance tests (Appendix III) for all pupils were also used to collect performance scores obtained in identifying and reading. The study adopted Uwezo test on reading in collaboration with lower primary syllabus formulated by Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The questions consisted of 10 questions on reading and identification of sounds, words, shapes and colour. The learners were given the tests just as other examination tests. Observations were done to make recordings on the aspects of time and speed as well as identification. Scores were awarded based on the performance of pupils in reading sounds, reading words, reading shapes and reading colour. Each question was allocated one mark.

3.7 Piloting

Piloting was done to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. This activity was carried out in two schools in Kayole zone. The two schools were randomly selected and were not part of the actual study sample. During piloting, four teachers were administered with teacher questionnaires for a period of two days in each school.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity of the questionnaire and performance test was determined by pre-testing them in two schools which were not in the sample. Questions were considered valid through obtaining the results expected to show the relationship of the variables under study. Questionnaires meant for teachers were written in simple language and were pre-tested to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation by respondents at the time of data collection. Any inaccurate
responses, inconsistencies or weakness that is noted during pre-test guarantees review of instruments for sustainability (Mulusa, 1990).

The validity of the instruments was established through consulting peers and experts. There was involvement of specialists especially lower primary trained teachers because they have know-how of the right content for Grade One reading in English. There was regular debriefing with the supervisor and comments were taken seriously. Peers helped to establish their content and construct validity to ensure that the items were adequately representative of the subject area under the study. The input from these people was used to improve on the content and construction of the instruments.

3.7.2 Reliability

In determining reliability of the instruments, the researcher used correlation coefficients. The split-halves technique of measuring reliability was used. According to Gay (1992) a correlation coefficient of at least 0.7 for the two halves was considered enough. In this study, the Spearman’s rank order Correlation Coefficient (r) was used. With a coefficient of more than 0.7, the instrument was considered reliable.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

Data collection involved two stages. The first stage involved data collection using questionnaires while the second stage involved data collection using performance tests. In administering the questionnaires, the researcher visited the sampled schools. Teachers were identified and issued with questionnaires and guided on responding to the questions. After administering the
questionnaires to the teachers, the researcher administered the performance tests to pupils with the assistance of the teachers. This is because teachers understand the pupils better and pupils are likely to feel at ease in the presence of people they know and may act naturally. The pupils were issued with the performance tests just like other examinations. Performance tests for pupils were used to collect performance scores obtained in identifying and reading. Thereafter, the questionnaires and performance test sheets were collected for data analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data collected was both quantitative and qualitative. The data collected by use of questionnaires on identification of reading activities in teaching of English, examination of challenges in reading activities in English and strategies employed by teachers of Grade One in handling challenges encountered in reading activities is qualitative and was analysed qualitatively. This entailed, categorizing it into themes and tracing the trends. The results were presented descriptively through themes and verbatim quotation where necessary.

The data collected to determine contribution of reading activities on performance in reading activities among Grade One pupils was partly quantitative. This was coded and keyed in the computer for purposes of analyses. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse each objective and results presented in form of frequencies, percentages and means. Inferential statistics (correlation analysis) were used to analyse the influence of reading activities
on performance in reading activities. The results of Pearson correlation analysis were presented as coefficients.

### 3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Logistical and ethical considerations were as follows:

#### 3.10.1 Logistical Considerations

For this study, approval was obtained from Graduate School office of Kenyatta University, research permit from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) was sought. Permission from the County Director of education to visit schools and an introductory letter to the head teachers was also sought. Pre-visits to the schools were done for familiarity with the school and respondents.

#### 3.10.2 Ethical Considerations

The researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and assured them of confidentiality of their responses and identities. The researcher adhered to appropriate behaviour in relation to the rights of the respondents such as the right to privacy in which the findings were considered anonymous. Before participation in the study, the respondents were informed of their right to participate or not. This ensured that those participating were not coerced hence gave information willingly. Also, all literature works used in this study were properly cited and acknowledged.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings of the study on influence of reading activities on performance in English among pupils of Grade One. The chapter identifies reading activities taught in English in Grade One. The chapter also presents findings on the performance of learners in reading activities. Presented also are challenges in reading activities in English language among Grade One pupils. The chapter finally presents findings on the strategies employed by teachers of Grade One in handling challenges encountered in reading activities in English language.

4.1.1 Return Rate

Questionnaires and performance tests were administered to 36 teachers and 205 pupils respectively. The return rate is illustrated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Return Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data collection Instrument</th>
<th>Administered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Return Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Questionnaire</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Tests</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 indicates that all questionnaires and performance tests were responded to. The return rate was therefore 100% which was suitable for data analysis. This was a pointer to a clear understanding of the items in the questionnaires and the ability of the respondents to appreciate the importance of participating in the study. This meant assurance of validity. In this regard, it is clear that there was enough sample data to be analyzed.
4.1.2 Background Information of Respondents

Background information of respondents was analysed and presented in Table 4.2 under the following demographics.

Table 4.2: Background Information of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Background Information</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Highest Academic</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5-9 years</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15-19 years</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in Table 4.2 indicates that most teachers (94.4%) teaching Grade One pupils are female and have Diploma as the highest level of education (41.7%) with teaching experience of more than 20 years (50.0%). The Table also indicates that in Grade One, boys (51.4%) are more than girls (48.6). The demographics formed the basis of intervening variables especially on competence of the teachers.

4.2 Findings and Discussion

This section presents findings and discussion of the study on reading activities, performance in reading activities and influence of reading activities on
performance. The section also presents findings on challenges encountered in teaching reading activities as well as the strategies employed to address the challenges.

### 4.2.1 Reading Activities

The first objective of this study was to identify reading activities taught in English in Grade One. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

#### Table 4.3: Reading Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Mean (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound reading activities.</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word reading activities.</td>
<td>4.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in word reading activities.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape reading activities.</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour reading activities.</td>
<td>4.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings in Table 4.3 indicate that reading activities identified include sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading. It was established that several reading activities were applied by teachers in 18 schools. The findings indicate that sound reading is applied by most teachers (mean of 4.72) followed by word reading (mean of 4.69), colour reading (4.11) and shape reading (3.94). From the findings, teachers engage pupils in sound reading, word identification, shape recognition, colour reading and identification. In the reading activities, the teachers stated that learners are expected to acquire language skills such as fluency, speed and interpretation.
The findings on reading activities reflect the constructs of reading defined by Wixon, Peters, Weber & Roeber (1987) that reading involves the interaction between the person reading, the content for reading and the reading context. Also, the findings on reading activities agree with Dadzie (2008) that reading supports comprehension of words that are written for purposes of acquiring knowledge. In view of these findings, this study indicates that reading activities among Grade One learners in Kayole Zone support the learners to build knowledge that will be applied not only in English lessons but also in other learning activities. Reading is a continuous process in learning for these learners as it is expected that the learners should read in other activities such as science and number activities where shapes and numbers are read and interpreted. In addition, the knowledge obtained in reading activities supports the learners in interpreting colours during science activities.

4.2.2 Performance of Grade One Pupils in Reading Activities

The second objective of this study was to assess the performance of learners in reading activities. Performance of pupils in reading activities in fluency, speed and interpretation was recorded from performance tests. On the scale of 1-5, the values 1 and 2 were low scores while 3 was average and 4 to 5 were high scores. The results from performance tests were also complimented by observation from teachers. Results from performance tests of pupils in reading activities in fluency, speed and interpretation was recorded and illustrated in Table 4.4.
Table 4.4: Performance of Pupils in Reading Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Mean performance of pupils (n=205)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fluency in reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.38</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale: 1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=fair; 4=good; 5=excellent

Findings in Table 4.4 indicate that there is variation in performance of pupils in fluency, speed and interpretation. The variation is also noted in the 18 schools. For example, School G has highest performance in fluency (mean of 4.64) while the least performing schools are B, H and N (mean of 3.00). The performance in reading speed is high in School G (mean of 4.73) while the least performing school is H (mean of 3.00). The performance in interpretation
of shapes and colours indicates that School G (mean of 4.82) has high performance while School M recorded least performance (mean of 2.82). Overall performance indicates that pupils perform better (mean of 3.52) in reading speed followed by interpretation of colour and shapes (mean of 3.51) and the least performance is in fluency (mean of 3.38).

Comparison of the performance of the pupils was complimented by observations made by teachers as illustrated in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Teacher Observation on Pupil Performance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Mean (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound reading activities.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word reading activities.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shape reading activities.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour reading activities.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings in Table 4.5 indicate that most teachers agree that performance of pupils in reading activities has improved. High performance is observed in sound reading by most teachers (mean of 4.44), shape reading (mean of 4.44) and shape or colour interpretation (mean of 4.44). The findings indicate that pupils require more support in word reading as observed by most teachers (mean of 4.33). These findings agree with findings in Table 4.4 in which pupils have average scores in fluency (mean of 3.38).

The improvement in performance observed in this study agrees with findings by Weir and Khalifa (2008) who established that, cognitive development of children is also observed in reading. Cognitive processing approach informs
about the need of incorporating the cognitive abilities of the learners in deploying the language activities that will yield reading outcomes. In this context, any level of participation or input of the learners in reading activities corresponds with cognitive ability hence measurement of the cognitive levels.

The improvement of learners in reading activities is also associated with support obtained from teachers. The increase in engagement by teachers ensures that learners continuously activate their innate abilities. This is similar to Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe’s (2012) findings who established that reading habits are important building blocks in the performance of the learners in language activities. Also, Mwoma (2017) established that support from teachers and parents as well as available learning materials improved performance of the learners in reading. Through involvement of learners in reading activities, teachers support the building blocks in language hence improved performance.

4.2.3 Influence of Reading Activities on Performance in Reading

The third objective was to analyse the influence of reading activities on performance in reading activities. This involved analysing the influence of reading activities on performance in reading activities. Perceptions of teachers on reading activities in relation to performance were also analysed. In addition, correlations between perceptions of teachers on reading activities and performance of pupils were obtained.

The findings on perceptions of teachers on reading activities and its influence on performance in English were analysed and presented in Table 4.6.
Table 4.6: Perceptions of Teachers on Reading Activities and Performance of Pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Mean (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuous engagement of learners in sound reading activities has improved their ability to read fluently.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The engagement of learners in word reading activities has improved word reading speed.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of shape reading activities in English lessons has improved the ability of learners to interpret different shapes.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The inclusion of colour reading activities in English lessons has improved the ability of learners to identify and read different colours.</td>
<td>4.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

Findings in Table 4.6 indicate that reading activities has improved performance of the pupils due to interventions made by teachers. For example, pupils are improving their performance in reading fluently as observed by most teachers (mean of 4.44) as a result of teachers making reading part of the major activities during learning. Also, teachers have increased engagement of pupils in word reading and interpretation of shapes and colours. These engagements have improved their performance in English as most teachers agreed.

Analysis on whether performance in fluency was related to sound reading activities was done and presented in Table 4.7.
Table 4.7: Correlation between Sound Reading Activities and Performance in Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Performance in fluency</th>
<th>Sound reading activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.354*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>146.078</td>
<td>8.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.716</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.354*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>8.556</td>
<td>14.889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.244</td>
<td>.425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Findings in Table 4.7 indicate that the performance of pupils in fluency is related to sound reading activities. With a Pearson Correlation coefficient of .354 at 0.05 significant level, there is significant relationship between sound reading activities and performance of the pupils in fluency. Also, with a positive Covariance of .244, performance in fluency is positively related to sound reading activities. These coefficients imply that, sound reading activities have significant influence on performance of the pupils in fluency. Some of the teachers stated that sounds help in formation of words while others stated that learners have extra time in the afternoons for further practice.
The association of sound reading activities to fluency was strongly attributed to building of confidence among the pupils. This finding agrees with Otieno’s (2010) who established that basic reading skills involve the ability to pronounce written words accurately and this requires appropriate teaching instructions in a language most familiar to the pupils. This explains the overall mean of 3.38 recorded among pupils. These findings support Vygotsky’s (1962) language learning theory that teachers apply scaffolding to ensure that learners adjust their performance progressively through increase in intensity of the reading activities. In this regard, continuous engagement of the learners in sound reading significantly improves performance of the learners in fluency.

Analysis on whether performance in reading speed was related to word reading activities was done and presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Correlation between Word Reading Activities and Performance in Reading Speed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Word reading activities</th>
<th>Performance in Reading Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>20.000</td>
<td>-5.333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.571</td>
<td>-.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.200</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>-5.333</td>
<td>179.190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>-.152</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings in Table 4.8 indicate negative correlation coefficient and covariance. With a correlation coefficient of -.200 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of -.152, it is evident that, word reading activities are not related to the performance in reading speed. These findings indicate that despite teachers noticing improved performance in reading speed, the improvement was not related to engagement of learners in word reading activities.

The teachers had stated that, emphasis placed on repetition of words and reading in a group enabled the learners to improve speed. The correlations however, show otherwise, and this indicates that there are some interventions that contribute to overall mean of 3.52 in reading speed among pupils. These findings support Vygotsky’s (1962) language learning theory that children acquire language not only through exposure to words but also on the interdependence between thought and language development. This implies that continuous engagement of the learners in word reading activities is not what improves performance in reading speed. In this regard, reading speed could be acquired through other social interactions outside their classrooms.

Analysis on whether performance in interpretation of shapes was related to shape reading activities was done and presented in Table 4.9.
Table 4.9: Correlation between Shape Reading Activities and Performance in Interpretation of Shapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Interpret</th>
<th>Shape reading activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>171.239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>.444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings in Table 4.9 indicate that there is positive correlation coefficient and covariance. With a positive coefficient of .024 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of .013, shape reading activities are related to performance of the learners in interpretation of shapes. However, while the shape reading activities positively relate to ability of the pupils to interpret shapes, the correlation is weak hence not significant. This is despite teachers stating that seeing of shapes (charts) by pupils relates to words and learners can identify with items in the environment.
The findings imply that despite improvement in interpretation of shapes (overall mean of 3.51), the performance is not largely attributed to shape reading activities. These findings agree with findings in the study by Grimm (2008) who established that ability to interpret shapes was associated with reading comprehension. In this regard, performance in interpretation of shapes could be associated with reading comprehension.

Analysis on whether performance in interpretation of colours was related to colour reading activities was done and presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Correlation between Colour Reading Activities and Performance in Interpretation of Colours**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Interpret</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Colour reading activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>171.239</td>
<td>-.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>-.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colour reading activities</td>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>-.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>.549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings in Table 4.10 indicate negative correlation coefficient and covariance. With a correlation coefficient of -.030 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of -.022, colour reading activities are not related to the
performance in interpretation of colours. These findings indicate that despite teachers noticing improved performance in interpretation of colours, the improvement was not related to engagement of learners in colour reading activities.

Reading colours is more of visual activity that utilises other learning activities other than language activity. In this regard, language activities contribute to acquisition of colour interpretation skills just as other learning activities such as science. In Kenya’s syllabus, science activities allow learners to acquire colour interpretation skills.

4.2.4 Challenges in Reading Activities

The fourth objective was to examine challenges in reading activities in English language among Grade One pupils. In this section, challenges encountered by teachers in teaching reading activities were identified and illustrated in Table 4.11. Also, challenges encountered by pupils during learning of reading activities were identified and illustrated in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Teacher Based Challenges in Reading Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Based Challenges</th>
<th>Percentage (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of continuous training in reading activities</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of instructional materials</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class congestion (many learners to be served by one teacher)</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum constraints such as time and frequency of teaching</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (low motivation)</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings in Table 4.11 indicate that teachers encounter several challenges in teaching reading activities. It was established that combination of teaching and learning processes does not guarantee high performance due to challenges encountered by teachers and learners. The challenges include lack of continuous training, lack of adequate instructional materials, many pupils served by one teacher, curriculum constraints and low motivation. The findings indicate that class congestion is the biggest problem as observed by 27.9% of teachers followed by curriculum constraints (25.0%). These findings imply that the challenges encountered by teachers limit effective engagement of learners in reading activities.

The findings on class congestion and inadequate materials agree with Rauha’s (2011) that teachers had inadequate time of attending to each learner’s needs due to high teacher to learner ratio. Other challenges included inadequate reading materials and Rauha (2011) concluded that the challenges are barriers to language development. In this regard, the challenges are barrier to effective delivery of reading activities thus limit good performance in English.

The findings on curriculum constraints that included less time and frequency of teaching agree with Medadi’s (2014) that policy in education and curriculum changes has put constraint on easy adoption of new teaching techniques in language activities by teachers. Delays in training teachers to administer the new techniques limit the delivery of suitable approaches in teaching reading activities. Also, the findings of this study on lack of continuous training agree with Ogano’s (2012) that teachers had no training to support them in addressing the reading problem.
Table 4.12 illustrates challenges encountered by pupils.

**Table 4.12: Pupil Based Challenges in Reading Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil Based Challenges</th>
<th>Percentage (n=36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of reading materials</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision problems</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing problems</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (lack of concentration)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings in Table 4.12 indicate that pupils encounter several challenges in reading activities. The challenges include lack of reading materials, vision problems, hearing problems and lack of concentration. More than half of the teachers (54.2%) stated that lack of reading materials is the biggest problem followed by other problems such as lack of concentration (33.3%). These findings imply that challenges encountered by the pupils limit their ability to read fluently with speed.

These findings disagree with Karanja’s (2015) findings on learners with reading difficulties that reading problems are observed to occur when the readers: omit words, syllables or sounds; insert extra letters, words or sounds; substitute words that look or sound similar; mispronounce words; repeat words and use improper inflection during oral reading. This indicates that pupils with reading difficulties are not necessarily linked to reading skills such as fluency, word and letter recognition as well as proper inflection during oral reading.
4.2.5 Strategies Employed

The fifth objective was to identify the strategies employed by teachers of Grade One in handling challenges encountered in reading activities in English language. This is illustrated in Table 4.13 below.

**Table 4.13: Strategies employed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies Employed by School</th>
<th>Strategies Employed by Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training of teachers</td>
<td>Peer teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introducing new and effective learning materials.</td>
<td>Use of smaller groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of the individualised education programme</td>
<td>Spelling games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing class congestion (building more classes and employing other teachers)</td>
<td>Teacher innovation in making new materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher spending more time with learners with reading problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.13, schools have employed different strategies that include improvement of capacity of teachers through training of teachers. Findings indicate that in response to the challenges encountered, several strategies have been put in place to continuously improve delivery of reading activities and performance of pupils in English. The schools also improve capacity of the learners by introducing new and effective learning materials and building more classrooms. Teachers also employ several strategies that include learner friendly teaching methods such as peer learning, competition and other learner centred methods.
Findings in Table 4.13 indicate that, schools support teachers in continuous training. One of the teachers stated that, “we have started attending mwongozo training that supports effective teaching of learners under the new curriculum”. Also, the new curriculum has enabled the schools to introduce new and effective learning materials. These new materials have simplified instruction that support effective and efficient delivery of reading activities. Schools have also encouraged teachers to apply the individualised education method so that learners acquire reading skills in respect to their needs. Another strategy applied by the respective schools is building of more classrooms and employing teachers as a means of improving the teacher to pupil ratio.

There is also indication that teachers have employed several strategies to improve delivery of reading activities and performance of pupils in English. The strategies include peer teaching, use of smaller groups, engagement of learners in spelling games as well as reading competition. The teachers have also engaged in improvising reading materials as well as identifying weak pupils with a view of guiding them in sound reading, word reading and colour as well as shape interpretation.

The finding on use of spelling games agrees with findings of Iribe and Mutua (2014) that games are part of language activities. In this regard, use of games support pupils in fluency, reading speed and interpretation of shapes and colours. Also, these findings support Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe’s (2012) that learners who are engaged more in reading activities through their peers, reading competition and high interaction with their teachers have a higher
marginal propensity of performance in language. This is well demonstrated by
the fact that learners who repeatedly read same words and images have
developed comprehension skills thereby retaining such words and images for
longer time. Also, during repeated reading, the learners develop techniques of
identifying and interpreting similar, related or complex words and images.

These findings are in concurrence with Vygotsky’s (1962) language learning
theory that provides recommendation on effective delivery of language
teaching. Vygotsky recommends that teachers should provide enough
assistance, encourage private speech and self-regulation. In this situation,
teachers are encouraged to apply scaffolding to ensure that learners adjust
their performance progressively through increase in intensity of the reading
activities. According to Vygotsky, teachers are expected to support learners to
improve performance independently from each reading activity then later the
outcomes are merged. This indicates that overall performance in English
should be achieved after teachers independently teach pupils on sound
reading, word reading, shape interpretation and colour interpretation.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter provides summary and conclusion of the study on: reading activities taught in English in Grade One, performance of the learners in reading activities, influence of reading activities on performance of reading, challenges encountered in reading activities and strategies employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered in reading activities.

5.2 Summary of Findings
This study sought to answer five research questions. The first research question was on what the reading activities are used by teachers to teach English in Grade One. The second research question was on how learners performed in reading. The third research question was on how reading activities influence performance on reading in English language. The fourth research question was on what challenges are encountered by teachers in carrying out reading activities in English language. The fifth research question was on what strategies are employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered as they use reading activities to teach reading in English.

On first research question, the study finding established that reading activities identified in public primary schools in Kayole Zone of Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County include sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading. The study finding also established that teachers increased intensity of reading activities to enhance performance of the pupils. This was evident in all the 18 schools in the study. The engagement of pupils in the
reading activities is expected to support pupils of Grade One in Kayole zone to acquire language skills especially fluency, speed and interpretation.

On the second research question about performance of Grade One pupils of public primary schools in Kayole Zone of Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County in reading activities, the study finding established that schools registered different performance scores. Overall performance indicated that pupils perform better (mean of 3.52) in reading speed followed by interpretation of colour and shapes (mean of 3.51) and the least performance is in fluency (mean of 3.38). The teachers also observed that the pupils had improved their performance in reading activities.

On the third research question about influence of reading activities on performance in reading activities in public primary schools in Kayole Zone of Embakasi Sub-County Nairobi County, the study finding established that the role of the teachers in sound reading activities was correlated with performance in fluency. It was established that with a Pearson Correlation coefficient of .354 at 0.05 significant level and covariance of .244, there is significant influence of sound reading activities on performance of the pupils in fluency. The study finding also established that with a correlation coefficient of -0.200 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of -0.152, word reading activities are not related to the performance in reading speed.

The study finding also established that a positive coefficient of .024 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of .013, shape reading activities are related to performance of the learners in interpretation of shapes among Grade
One pupils in Kayole zone. The study finding also established that with a correlation coefficient of -0.030 at significant level of 0.05 and covariance of -0.022, colour reading activities are not related to the performance in interpretation of colours.

On the fourth research question about challenges encountered, the study finding established that Grade One teachers in Kayole zone encountered several challenges that include lack of continuous training, lack of adequate instructional materials, many pupils served by one teacher, curriculum constraints and low motivation. The study finding also established that pupils encountered several challenges that include lack of reading materials, vision problems, hearing problems and lack of concentration.

On the fifth research question about strategies employed, the study finding established that schools in Kayole zone employed several strategies that include training of teachers, introducing new and effective learning materials, support of the individualised education programme, and reducing class congestion (building more classes and employing other teachers). The teachers also employed several strategies that include peer teaching, use of smaller groups, spelling games, flash cards, teacher innovation in making new materials, teacher spending more time with learners with reading problems and reading competition. The strategies were therefore both teacher-based and learner-based.
5.3 Conclusion

In view of the study findings, this study concludes that teachers of Grade One pupils in Kayole zone engage pupils in sound reading, word identification, shape recognition, colour reading and identification. The study also concludes that on the scale of 1-5, the mean performance of the pupils in English is above average. In addition, sound reading activities influence significantly the performance followed by shape reading activities while word reading activities and colour reading activities do not significantly influence performance of pupils in English. The influence of reading activities on performance is attributed to challenges that limit the delivery of reading activities and acquisition of reading skills for the teachers and pupils respectively. The performance of pupils in English is therefore not guaranteed unless challenges are reduced or eliminated through strategies employed by teachers and the school administration. The findings of this study cannot therefore be generalised to other areas unless the area has similar conditions as Kayole zone.

5.4 Recommendations

This study makes the following policy recommendations and recommendation for further studies.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

On performance of the learners, the government, through the Ministry of Education should improve syllabus for Grade One by providing more resources to support reading activities. School administration should increase supplies of teaching and learning materials. This will reduce the challenge on
inadequate curriculum materials in reading activities. Also, parents should support learners acquire language skills through monitoring their reading at home. Parents should encourage the learners to engage more in reading activities by taking them to reading competitions during holidays and other social places for children.

On challenges experienced by teachers carrying out reading activities in English language, school administration should support teachers in attending more in-service training that will help improve their skills and knowledge in delivery of the content on reading activities.

On strategies employed by teachers in handling challenges encountered as they use reading activities to teach reading in English, teachers should engage weak pupils more during extra time to improve their reading skills. This can also be complimented by encouraging peer learning for the learners to acquire confidence required in reading fluently with speed.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Studies

This study recommends that further studies should be done to ascertain the contribution of the identified reading activity on performance of pupils in other subjects.
REFERENCES


Uwezo Learning Assessment on Literacy and Numeracy, 2014 (Kenya).


Dear Respondent,

I, Jenniffer Katee, a master student at Kenyatta University am carrying out an academic research to investigate performance in reading activities among lower primary schools in Kayole Zone, Nairobi County.

Kindly, you have been selected to participate in this study by filling in this questionnaire. You are therefore assured of confidentiality as the study is intended for academic purposes only. Your consent confirms participation in the study.

Yours sincerely,

Jeniffer Y. Katee.
Kenyatta University.
Appendix II: Questionnaire for Teachers

Instructions:
Kindly provide your responses in the brackets and spaces provided by giving a tick [✓] or writing respectively. As your responses shall be treated confidentially, please DO NOT write your name or contacts anywhere on this questionnaire.

Section A: Background Information of Teachers

1. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

2. Highest academic qualification:
   Master [ ] Bachelor [ ] Diploma [ ] Certificate [ ]

3. Teaching experience:
   0-4 years [ ] 5-9 years [ ] 10-14 years [ ] 15-19 years [ ]
   Above 20 years [ ]

Section B: Reading activities

What is your opinion on the following statements based on the scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree:

1. List the reading activities that you use to support performance of learners in reading.
   a) ............................................................
   b) ............................................................
   c) ............................................................
   d) ............................................................

2. What is your opinion on the following statements based on the scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA):
My English lessons involve sound reading activities.

My English lessons include word reading activities.

During English lessons, learners participate in word reading activities.

My English lessons plans include shape reading activities.

I include colour reading in my English lessons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My English lessons involve sound reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My English lessons include word reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During English lessons, learners participate in word reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My English lessons plans include shape reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I include colour reading in my English lessons.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section C: Performance of Grade One children in reading activities

What is your opinion on the following statements based on the scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>UD</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most Grade One children have performed better in sound reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Grade One children have performed better in word reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Grade One children have performed better in shape reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Grade One children have performed better in colour reading activities.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section D: Influence of reading activities on performance in reading

What is your opinion on the following statements based on the scale of 1-5 where 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Undecided (UD), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA):
Continuous engagement of learners in sound reading activities has improved their ability to read fluently. Give reason(s)………………………………………………

The engagement of learners in word reading activities has improved word reading speed. Give reason(s)………………………………………………

The use of shape reading activities in English lessons has improved the ability of learners to interpret different shapes. Give reason(s)………………………………………………

The inclusion of colour reading activities in English lessons has improved the ability of learners to identify and read different colours. Give reason(s)………………………………………………

Section E: Challenges in reading activities

1. What teacher-based challenges are encountered by teachers in teaching reading activities?
   
   Lack of training in reading activities [ ]
   
   Lack of instructional materials [ ]
   
   Class congestion (many learners to be served by one teacher) [ ]
   
   Curriculum constraints such as time and frequency of teaching [ ]
   
   Others [ ] (please explain) ……………………………………………

2. What are learner based challenges that limit teaching of reading activities?
   
   Lack of reading materials [ ] Vision problems [ ] Hearing problems [ ]
   
   Others [ ] (please explain) ……………………………………………

Section F: Strategies Employed

1. What strategies have been devised by the school to counter challenges encountered by teachers and learners in reading activities?
   
   …………………………………………………………………………
   
   …………………………………………………………………………

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2. As a teacher, what strategies have you employed to counter challenges encountered by teachers and learners in reading activities?

THANKS
Appendix III: Performance Tests for Grade One Pupils

Instruction:

Please administer a standard test to the learners and record their performance on sound reading, word reading, shape reading and colour reading.

1. Identify the following sounds (10 marks)
   a   b   c   d   e   f   g
   a   e   i   o   u
   oo  ee  th   ng   er   ur

2. Read the following sounds (10 marks)
   a   b   c   d   e   f   g
   a   e   i   o   u
   oo  ee  th   ng   er   ur

3. Identify the following words (10 marks)
   Boy                                           Cup
   Cat                                           
   Dog                                           
   Chair                                         
4. Read the following words (10 marks)

Boy
Cat
Dog

5. Identify the following shapes (10 marks)

6. Read the following shapes (10 marks)

7. Identify the following colours (10 marks)

8. Read the following colours (10 marks)

9. Rate the fluency in reading on the scale of 1-very low, 2-low, 3=fair, 4-good, 5-very good. (5 marks)
10. Rate the reading speed on the scale of 1-very low, 2-low, 3=fair, 4-good, 5-very good. (5 marks)

11. Rate the interpretation ability on the scale of 1-very low, 2-low, 3=fair, 4-good, 5-very good. (5 marks)

12. Rate the confidence level on the scale of 1-very low, 2-low, 3=fair, 4-good, 5-very good. (5 marks)

Total score ______________ out of 100 marks
### Appendix IV: Simple Random Sample Size Table

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<td>136</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>100000</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = population;  S = sample size

Adapted from Kathuri, N. J & Pals, D. A (1993)
Appendix V: Kenyatta University Research Authorization

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710801 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: E55/OL/20070/2012
DATE: 5th February, 2018

Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR KATEE JENIFFER YUMBYA – REG. NO.
E55/OL/20070/2012.

I write to introduce Ms. Katee Jeniffer Yumbya who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for M.Ed degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies.

Ms. Katee Jeniffer intends to conduct research for a M.Ed Project Proposal entitled, “School-Influence of Reading Activities on Performance in English among Standard One Pupils in Primary Schools Nairobi County, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL
Appendix VI: NACOSTI Research Authorization

Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/18/77738/21401

Jeniffer Yumbya Katee
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Influence of reading activities on performance in English among standard one pupils in primary schools Nairobi County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending 26th February, 2019.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a copy of the final research report to the Commission within one year of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

Godfrey P. Kalerwa MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.
Appendix VII: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MISS. JENNIFER YUMBAYA KATEE
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 8387-300
NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

on the topic: INFLUENCE OF READING
ACTIVITIES ON PERFORMANCE IN
ENGLISH AMONG STANDARD ONE
PUPILS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS NAIROBI
COUNTY, KENYA

for the period ending:
26th February, 2019

Permit No: NACOSTI/P/18/77738/21401
Date Of Issue: 27th February, 2018
Fee Received: Ksh 1000

Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation
CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming, and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.

CONDITIONS: see back page
Appendix VIII: Approval By County Commissioner Nairobi

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/18/77738/21401

Date: 27th February, 2018

Jeniffer Yumbya Katee
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Influence of reading activities on performance in English among standard one pupils in primary schools Nairobi County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending 26th February, 2019.

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GODFREY P. KALERWA
GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:
The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.
Appendix IX: Approval By County Director of Nairobi

Republic of Kenya
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

Telegram: “SCHOOLING”, Nairobi
Telephone: Nairobi 020 2453699
Email: rce@nairobi@gov.com
When replying please quote

Ref: RCE/NRB/GED/1 VOL. 1

REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI REGION
NYAYO HOUSE
P.O. Box 74629 – 00200
NAIROBI

DATE: 1st March, 2018

KINOTI KIOSORA
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

We are in receipt of a letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation regarding research authorization in Nairobi County on “Influence of reading activities on performance in English among standard one pupils in primary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya”.

This office has no objection and authority is hereby granted for a period ending 26th February, 2019 as indicated in the request letter.

Kindly inform the Sub County Director of Education of the Sub County you intend to visit.

C.C

Director General/CEO
Nation Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NAIROBI

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