

This study investigated a problem that constantly plagues secondary school textbooks in general and physics texts in particular. This is the problem of language and vocabulary as used in textual materials. Research findings have shown most science textbooks are not easy to read. This problem is one of the many reasons why science, especially the physical sciences, has come to be one of the most difficult areas of study in primary and secondary schools.

In this study a number of books normally used in secondary school physics instruction were subjected to tests using readability formulae. The results show that on the average these books are indeed difficult to read. There was a good agreement between these readability measures and what most workers, whose work was reviewed in this study, have said about the difficulty of the sciences and the readability of the science texts.

Apart from the language problem, the study also investigated the extent to which illustrations have been used in these textbooks - the reason being that illustrations, when properly used may lead to the improvement of the readability of texts.

This study ends with a discussion on the use of readability formulae and the problem of reading in general. A number of recommendations and suggestions for further research close the study.