AN INVESTIGATION OF WORD RECOGNITION SKILLS BY CLASS FOUR LEARNERS OF RUIRU MUNICIPALITY.

BY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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Abstract

This study was undertaken with an aim of providing information on word recognition clues applied during reading by class four learners from schools in Ruiru municipality in Kenya. Regardless of English language being taught from as early as class one in Kenyan schools, many learners advance and even end up leaving school without the ability and skills to read effectively and efficiently. In this study we attempt to determine word recognition skills used by class four learners with main focus being on the context clues they use, the extent to which they have mastered phonics and the function of structural analysis clues during reading.

Twenty children from public primary schools in Ruiru municipality were asked to read aloud as they were being tape recorded. Two texts were used to collect data for this study. In one text, twenty nonsense words were constructed by changing one or two letters in an English word such that they had the format and construction of English words. In the second one, a text was extracted from class five English text book. Their oral reading was tape recorded and then transcribed together with all the deviations, known as miscues, from the original text. These were marked; miscues were categorized and analyzed using Goodman's miscue analysis.

Findings from this study reveal that the learners utilize semantic clues in the context more than they do syntax. Phonic clues were also found to cause problems to the learners. As far as structural analysis is concerned, the findings show that readers inadequately utilize structural analysis to unlock unfamiliar words during reading. Recommendations on how to improve the existing situation are made and areas that need research are suggested.