

**AN ANALYSIS OF LEARNER-PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING COMPREHENSION AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN VIHIGA DISTRICT
KENYA**

BY

WANJALA T. THOMAS

E55/CE/15340/05

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION, IN THE SCHOOL OF
EDUCATION OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

2016

DECLARATION

This thesis report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or institution.

THOMAS T.WANJALA

DATE

This thesis report has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

Sign _____ Date _____

PROF. AGNES .W GATHUMBI

Department of Educational Communication and Technology

Kenyatta University

Sign _____ Date _____

DR.SOPHIA M. NDETHIU

Department of Educational Communication and Technology

Kenyatta University.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family and friends.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors Prof. A. W. Gathumbi and Dr. Ndethiu S.M for their guidance and positive criticism during this study. My gratitude also goes to all the members of Educational Communication and Technology department of Kenyatta University and especially all the lecturers who spent their time teaching me.

My sincere appreciation also goes to the school principal's teachers of English in all the study school for their assistance during the data collection process. The principal's allowed me to conduct research in their schools and also provided a lot of support especially in the administration of the student's test in their schools. Teachers of English were very supportive and had even to shift their teaching schedules to facilitate the study. They played a crucial role in the dissemination of the English comprehension test to the learners and also duly filled the teacher's questionnaire.

I would also like to appreciate all my family members for their support, prayers and encouragement. Finally I would wish to recognize all my colleague students in the department of Educational Communication and Technology for their support and encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2: Statement of the Problem	6
1.3: Purpose of the Study	7
1.4: Objectives of the Study	7
1.5: Research Questions	8
1.6: Significance of the Study	8
1.7 Limitations of the Study	9
1.8: Assumptions of the Study	9
1.9 The Theoretical Framework	10
1.10 The Conceptual Framework	11
1.10: Operational Definition of Key Terms	13
CHAPTER TWO	15

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	15
2.0 Introduction.	15
2.1 Reading Comprehension.	15
2.2 Reading Approaches.	17
2.3 Schema Theory.....	18
2.4 Types of Schemata	19
2.5 Reading Comprehension Skills	20
2.6 Reading Comprehension Instruction	23
2.7 Gender and Reading Comprehension.....	26
2.8 Related Studies in Comprehension	28
2.9 Conclusion.....	36
CHAPTER THREE	37
METHODOLOGY	37
3.0 Introduction	37
3.1 Research Design.....	37
3.2 Area of Study and Population	38
3.2.2 Target Population	38
3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques	38
3.4 The Research Instruments	39
3.5 Validity and reliability of Instruments	41
3.6 Data Collection Procedures	41
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	44
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	45

CHAPTER FOUR.....	46
DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION	46
4.0 Introduction	46
4.1 Bio-data and qualification of English-literature teachers in the study.....	46
4.3 Teachers’ involvement in Professional growth activities.	48
4.4 Instructional problems students face when answering comprehension questions	50
4.5 Reasons for poor performance in English comprehension.....	52
4.6: Common mistakes by students in comprehension writing.....	54
4.7 Textbooks commonly used by teachers of English.....	55
4.8 Book-Student Ratio in Class	57
4.9 Instructional resources used in teaching English	58
4.10 Criteria used by teachers in selection of instructional resources	59
4.11 Techniques of Teaching English.	60
4.12 Problems encountered by Teachers of English while teaching English reading comprehension.	62
4.13 Student performance in comprehension test.	63
4.14. Student Bio Data.	64
4.15 Performance of the learners in the English Reading comprehension.....	66
4.16 Learner’s performance in word meaning skill.	71
4.17 Learners performance of words in context.....	72
4.21 Learners performance in Literal Comprehension.....	73
4.19 Learners performance in inference from single.	74
4.20 Learners performance in multiple strings.....	75

4.21 Learners performance in interpretation of metaphor.....	76
4.22 Learners performance in Finding Salient ideas.....	77
4.23 Learners performance in making judgment.	78
CHAPTER FIVE	80
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	80
5.0 Introduction	80
5.1 Summary of the study main findings.	80
5.2 Conclusions	82
5.3 Recommendation for action.	84
5.4 Recommendations for further research.	85
REFERENCES	86
APPENDIX I:	95
Appendix II: Letter to Heads of Schools	99
APPENDIX III: English Comprehension Test	100
APPENDIX IV: MARKING SCHEME – ENGLISH COMPREHENSION TEST	107
APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS	109
APPENDIX VI: RESEACH AUTHORIZATION LETTER	117

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Marks allocation in English Assessment at Secondary School--.....	2
Table1.2: Performance in English in KCSE Examinations Nationally from 2005-2010... 3	3
Table 1.3: Candidates Overall Performance in English in the years 2006-2010--.....	3
Table 3.1: Sampling grid for the study population in Vihiga District	39
Table 4.1: Distribution of teachers by gender ---.....	46
Table 4.2: Professional qualification of English and Literature teachers --.....	47
Table 4.3(a): Teacher’s involvement in professional growth activities for teachers	48
Table4.3 (b): Themes covered in professional growth activities for teachers	49
Table 4.4: Instructional problems encountered by students in answering comprehension questions	51
Table 4.5: Reasons for poor performance in English comprehension.....	53
Table 4.6: Common mistakes by students in comprehension writing	54
Table 4.7: Textbooks used by teachers of English.....	56
Table 4.8: Book – student ratio in class	57
Table 4.9: Utilization of print media by teachers in lessons.....	58
Table 4.10: Criteria used by the teachers in selection of instructional resources	59
Table 4.11: Techniques of teaching English comprehension	61
Table 4.12: Problems encountered by Teachers of English while teaching English reading	62
Table 4.13: The category of schools used in the research	64
Table 4.14 (a): Students’ Bio Data	65
Table4.14 (b): Distribution of students by Gender	66
Table 4.15: Performance of form three students from selected public schools in Vihiga District.....	67

Table 4.16: Performance of boys in English Reading comprehension.....	68
Table 4.17: Performance of Girls in English comprehension test.....	69
Table 4.18: Performance of the learners by Gender	70
Table 4.19: Learner’s performance in word meaning	71
Table 4.20: Learners performance in words in context.....	73
Table 4.21: The performance of the students on literal comprehension.....	74
Table 4.22: Learners performance of inference from single	75
Table 4.23: Learners ‘performance in inference from multiple strings.....	76
Table 4.24: Learners performance in interpretation of metaphor	77
Table 4.25: Summary of learner’s permanent in finding salient ideas	78
Table 4.26: Learner’s performance in making judgment.....	76

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Conceptual frame work showing relationship between the variables.....	12
Figure 4.1: Common mistakes by students in comprehension writing	55
Figure 4.2: Text books used by teachers of English	56

ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken with the aim of providing information on the levels of ability of the students of secondary schools on reading comprehension in English language in Vihiga District in Western Province of Kenya. It was meant to determine the factors that influence reading comprehension, the knowledge they have about reading comprehension skills, reading activities organized for their own reading development and problems they encounter in reading and answering questions in reading comprehension. Few studies have been carried out on the strategy students use to answer comprehension questions in English and comprehensions still present a number of problems to students at the KCSE level as evidenced in the final scores over the years. Vihiga district was selected for the study mainly because the schools from the district have consistently performed poorly in English at National examinations. The mode of answering questions in reading comprehension could be one of the factors contributing to this poor performance. In addition, the study investigated the relationship in performance between boys and girls in answering reading comprehension questions. A sample of six hundred and seventy eight (678) students and fifty (50) teachers in sixteen (16) randomly selected secondary schools were selected. Two main instruments were used in this study. The first was a reading comprehension passage for students to determine the problems they encounter. The second instrument was a teacher questionnaire to draw out some highlights about procedures and skills teachers use in teaching reading comprehension. The instruments were piloted and adjusted as necessary before the main study. The data from the main study was analyzed mainly using descriptive and basic statistics, which are the means, frequency distributions and percentages. The data was interpreted, discussed and recommendations made. The main findings from the study indicate that teachers experience limited reading materials in schools and this seems to impact on reading habits and competence of learner's comprehension. The overall performance as the comprehension test was rather average and in terms of gender the boys ($x=59.53\%$) performed slightly better than girls ($x=56.56\%$). The comprehension skills showed varying performance. The skills on word reading, word context, multiple strings, making judgment and metaphor interpretation were performed better than those on literal abilities, inference and salient ideas. The students showed some potential and with adequate support in resources and instructional techniques there can be improvement. Some recommendations were made for further studies especially in the area of further exploration of other comprehension skills such as those associated with cloze tests.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- C.P.E:** Certificate of Primary Education – Examination done after seven years of primary education. (1977-1985).
- K.C.P.E:** Kenya Certificate of Primary Education- Examination done after eight years of primary education.
- K.C.S.E :** Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education-Examination done at the end of four years of secondary schooling.
- K.I.C.D :** Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development – The national curriculum development centre.
- K.N.E.C :** Kenya National Examinations Council – The national examining body.
- L.T.M :** Long Term Memory
- M.O.E:** Ministry of Education.
- S. T. M.** Short Term Memory
- 8.4.4** Eight years of primary education, four years of secondary education and four years of university education (the current education system in Kenya since 1985)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

English language is the main medium of instruction in Kenyan secondary schools. This means that lack of proper skills in English language reading comprehension will inevitably affect the performance of other subjects in the school. This can even be extended further, that poor performance in English language is likely to have an impact on school leavers in their training or place of work (Mogaka, 2000). Performance in English has been linked to many factors, ranging from instructional procedures to resources (Kamau, 1996; Ndavi, 1982)

This study mainly focuses on a specific area in English language learning, mainly reading comprehension competence among secondary schools in Vihiga District. Local researchers, including Obondo (1984), Obuya-Deya (1980), Owino (1987), Wario (1981), and Wagesa (1985), concentrated on classroom reading instruction. This research aims at assessing the level of preparedness of students to independently read and answer English reading comprehension questions, and the quality of answers.

Answering questions is an important aspect in reading comprehension. It is crucial that the students acquire the minimum requirements for communicating on paper. Assuming that print is the medium of communication and learners are well prepared, there is no excuse for achieving poor grades in national examinations as a result of not being able to answer English comprehension questions properly. Unfortunately lack of knowledge and skills on how to answer questions on content, features prominently among factors that contribute to poor achievement in most of our schools. In the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) 2006 report on Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) English language examination performance (2007), many candidates gave stock answers to the questions,

answers that did not pinpoint nor illustrate the features in the reading comprehension given.

The candidates lifted sentences from passages which did not respond to questions adequately.

Reading comprehension in the English language presupposes the mastery of the reading process. This process enables a student to apply his/her knowledge of reading to situations in which he/she is asked to perform hence “performance referenced” (Baker, 1985:7).

In Kenya, the assessment of English at KCSE level is done using examination paper one (1), paper two (2) and paper three (3). The composition of the papers, marks allocation and percentages are displayed in table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Marks Allocation in English Assessment at Secondary School

Paper	Section	Mark	%
1	Functional skills	60	30
2	Comprehension	45	22.5
	Oral literature	20	10
	Grammar	15	7.5
3	Imaginative Composition Essays Based on Set Texts	60	30
	Total	200	100

As seen in table 1.1, comprehension draws a considerable amount of marks (45) and therefore plays a very instrumental role in the overall performance of English at the KCSE level.

The performance of English at K.C.S.E level nationally has really been wanting for the past few years and this could be due to learner – problems in the development of English language reading comprehension. This is clearly displayed in table 1.2

Table 1.2 Performance in English in K.C.S.E Examinations nationally from 2005-2010

Year	Mean Score %		Total Mean Score %
	Boys	Girls	
2005	42.86	42.92	42.94
2006	39.78	39.75	39.76
2007	39.74	39.65	39.70
2008	33.62	33.98	33.79
2009	39.33	39.18	39.26
2010	38.61	39.26	38.90

Source: Kenya National Examination Council

Table 1.2 reveals that there has been poor performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) in English language. The mean percentage in all the six years was below average (below 50%). The cause for the dismal performance calls for attention. The problem cannot be addressed unless the origin of the problem is established.

The breakdown of analysis of English K.C.S.E examination performance of candidates in the three papers offered in year 2006-2010 is shown in Table 1.3. It clearly shows a poor performance in English in KCSE Examinations Nationally.

Table 1.3: Candidates Overall Performance in English in the years 2006-2010

Year	No. of candidates	Mean score (Out of 200 points)	Mean percentage
2006	241,983	79.53	39.76
2007	273,004	79.40	39.70
2008	300,794	67.57	33.78
2009	335,415	78.42	39.21
2010	354,935	77.36	38.68

Source: Kenya National Examination Council.

A Summary of K.C.S.E examination report of the year 2006-2010 reveals the following:

- (i) Candidates were unable to grasp context, grammatical inaptitude and limitations of vocabulary.
- (ii) Most candidates gave stock answers to the questions, answers that did not pin point nor illustrate the features in the comprehension passage.
- (iii) Candidates lifted sentences from the passage which did not respond to the question adequately.
- (iv) Anything they were expected to deduce from facts given presented a problem.
- (v) Most candidates were unable to explain the meanings of the expressions as used in the passage.

The worst performed paper was composition and essays based on set books, paper 101/3. This paper requires that students construct syntactically correct sentences, which should pass the message across. The second poorly performed paper was 101/2. The paper comprises comprehension, literary appreciation and Grammar. The comprehension part in this paper, in the year 2006 -2010 National examinations was reported to have been poorly performed as compared to paper 101/1 which was fairly performed.

One possible reason for poor performance in English could be due to learner's lack of ability to respond to comprehension questions. The assessment of the passage ultimately assessed functional reading in accordance with Harris (1970:1). The assessment was undertaken in order to obtain the information necessary to tackle a specific problem, locate information quickly and efficiently, including ability to read texts swiftly and with understanding.

Ideally the assessment was "criterion referenced". This entailed rating the students against a predetermined standard of correct performance of some reading tasks. This was regardless of whether or not some, or all, or none of them is successful (Hughes and Porter 1983; Shipman, 1983)

The following skills are usually emphasized in a single comprehension passage:

- 1) **Understanding the Meanings of the Lexical Items.** Learners must be able to understand the demonstrative and comparative meaning of the lexical items in the text. According to Ellis (1984) the learner should be able to deduce meanings of new words.
- 2) **Understanding Grammatical Meaning.** The students must be able to understand structural meaning. Structural devices they must understand are:
 - a) Basic sentence structure of statements and questions.
 - b) Concepts of reason, result and contrast
 - c) Connecters.
 - d) Structural items.

Failure to understand the various structural signals in a text will result into a far more serious failure in understanding than will an inability to understand individual lexical items.

- 3) **Mechanical Skills.** These are skills that are involved in seeing the words as they are written and with the movement of the eyes from left to right across the page.
- 4) **Selection Skills.** These enable the reader to perceive the internal organization of a text (i.e. what is the introduction, development and conclusion in one text). Only when the reader has developed the ability to recognize the internal organization of texts will he be able to carry out the important tasks of selecting which information to use or to retain.
- 5) **Reasoning Skills.** It is not enough for one to understand each sentence in isolation. He/she must be able to understand the reasoning sequence or logic that unites the sentences into a whole. The student must be able to relate ideas and to deduce additional meaning from what is stated in the text.

- 6) **Evaluation Skills.** A good reader must not only be able to understand what he has read but also evaluate it, that is, to consider the ideas and information of the writer, critically and to be able to relate this to his own experience.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

This research examined the problems secondary school students face when answering questions in reading comprehension, and to determine which difficulties appear to account for the variation in performance. Owing to the, continuous poor performance of learners in English in national examinations, the language teachers have come to bear the blame from the press, politicians and the public at large (Daily Nation, March 8th 1997). The K.N.E.C 2006 K.C.S.E English language examination Report of 2007 stated that teachers, therefore, have to find ways that will help learners to be focused in their reading so as to encourage reading comprehension and recall of material read. This could have been the reason why the mean score of English as a subject did not improve at all in the 2007 K.C.S.E final examination results (Standard newspaper 29th February 2008). In the same newspaper, the Minister for Education urged “---teachers of the subjects to analyze the decline in performance and put mechanisms in place to enhance candidates performance in future.” The assumption is that the teacher of English is fully responsible and accountable for the learners’ performance in the national examinations. While this may be partly true, there are many variables that influence performance and especially when it comes to reading comprehension in English.

Despite the fact that English is taught from the first year of primary school in Kenya, many secondary school students are unable to answer English language comprehension questions effectively or efficiently. This lack of proficiency in answering English reading comprehension questions efficiently will definitely continue to make them not perform well at K.C.S.E examination level and beyond. This also translates to having slim chances of gaining entry into institutions of higher learning. Considering the role supposed to be played by education,

this is a cause of concern as the skills in comprehension are supposed to be applied in everyday life.

Research on the ability to answer reading comprehension questions has been overlooked in Kenya. As far as the researcher knows, limited work has been done on learner's ability to answer reading comprehension questions. This area needs to be thoroughly investigated as it forms part of the overall English grade at the K.C.S.E examination level so that this vacuum can be filled.

1.3: Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to make a general survey of the problems students face when answering English reading comprehension. Specifically, the study aims at investigating the areas of weakness in answering reading comprehension questions in English and academic performance, among secondary school students in Vihiga District. It further sought to determine how gender relates to reading comprehension ability of the student.

1.4: Objectives of the Study

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

- (i) To determine areas of weakness in answering reading comprehension questions.
- (ii) Identify the problems students face when answering reading comprehension questions.
- (iii) To isolate the main instructional problems facing secondary school teachers in teaching English reading comprehension.

1.5: Research Questions

The research sought to answer the following questions.

- (i) Which type of questions in English reading comprehension present problems to students?
- (ii) Which language skills hinder students from answering questions in English reading comprehension?
- (iii) What instructional problems do teachers encounter while teaching English reading comprehension?
- (iv) Is there a difference in performance between girls and boys in English reading comprehension?

1.6: Significance of the Study

The study sought to provide insights in areas of difficulty when answering English reading comprehension questions and make recommendations on possible appropriate remedies to be used by teachers to improve the understanding of learners at the secondary school level. Many students terminate their education at the completion of the secondary school cycle of education. Many of these are expected to join unskilled work force. They need to comprehend what they read such as, instructions, warnings, directions and how to perform a task, all of which may not be explicitly stated at the work place. This study will be useful to teachers of English at secondary school level, for they will be aware of skills that can guide their learners to attain better reading comprehension skills.

An awareness of the concepts the teachers have, as far as reading English comprehension is concerned, will be a step towards discovering what problems students face when it comes to answering questions in English reading comprehension. It is through this that it can be established whether teachers are conversant with what they have to teach and whether they are actually teaching it.

Teacher training institutions will gain from this study. Knowledge from this study can be used during training to bring about awareness in the reading comprehension instructional skills that need emphasis and problems to look out for during the training of teachers of English.

The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) will gain a lot from findings of this study in determining the modes of skills to test and how to award marks based on level of difficulty. Last, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) will gain information that can be used in the review of the syllabus in English.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

- 1 The research was carried out in Vihiga District, which is one of the rural Districts in Western Province of Kenya. Because of this, these results cannot be generalized for the whole country.
- 2 The sample comprised fifty (50) teachers and six hundred and seventy eight (678) students in rural schools. It was not possible to carry out research on a larger sample because of time and financial constraints.
- 3 The study concentrated on the factors that influence the answering of questions in reading comprehension, though there are other skills that can influence performance.

1.8: Assumptions of the Study

The researcher made the following assumptions:

- 1 Basic resource materials (books) are used by teachers to teach students to answer questions in an English reading comprehension lesson.
- 2 Students are exposed to English reading comprehension materials and are able to determine the main idea, note relevant details, determine cause and effect, establish sequence, drawing inferences and conclusions they are likely to encounter.

- 3 Students have been taught various methods of answering questions in English reading comprehension lessons in the lower classes of secondary schools.
- 4 Teachers of English are professionally trained.
- 5 English language teachers follow the same prescribed syllabus by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and hence the content is almost the same in all schools.

1.9 The Theoretical Framework

This study was directed by the interactive theory which assumes that when reading a text, one interacts with the relevant skills to make it possible to interpret the text (Stanovich, 1980). Such interaction emphasizes prior knowledge interest and expectations.

One of the primary modes through which students acquire information and knowledge in a formal learning situation is by reading prose texts. Such texts require that students comprehend and remember the meanings expressed in a text. Most examinations are academic in nature and require the candidates to remember and use numerous facts, principles, rules and procedures. Thus the ability to remember is crucial in determining a candidate's success in Kenya's education system.

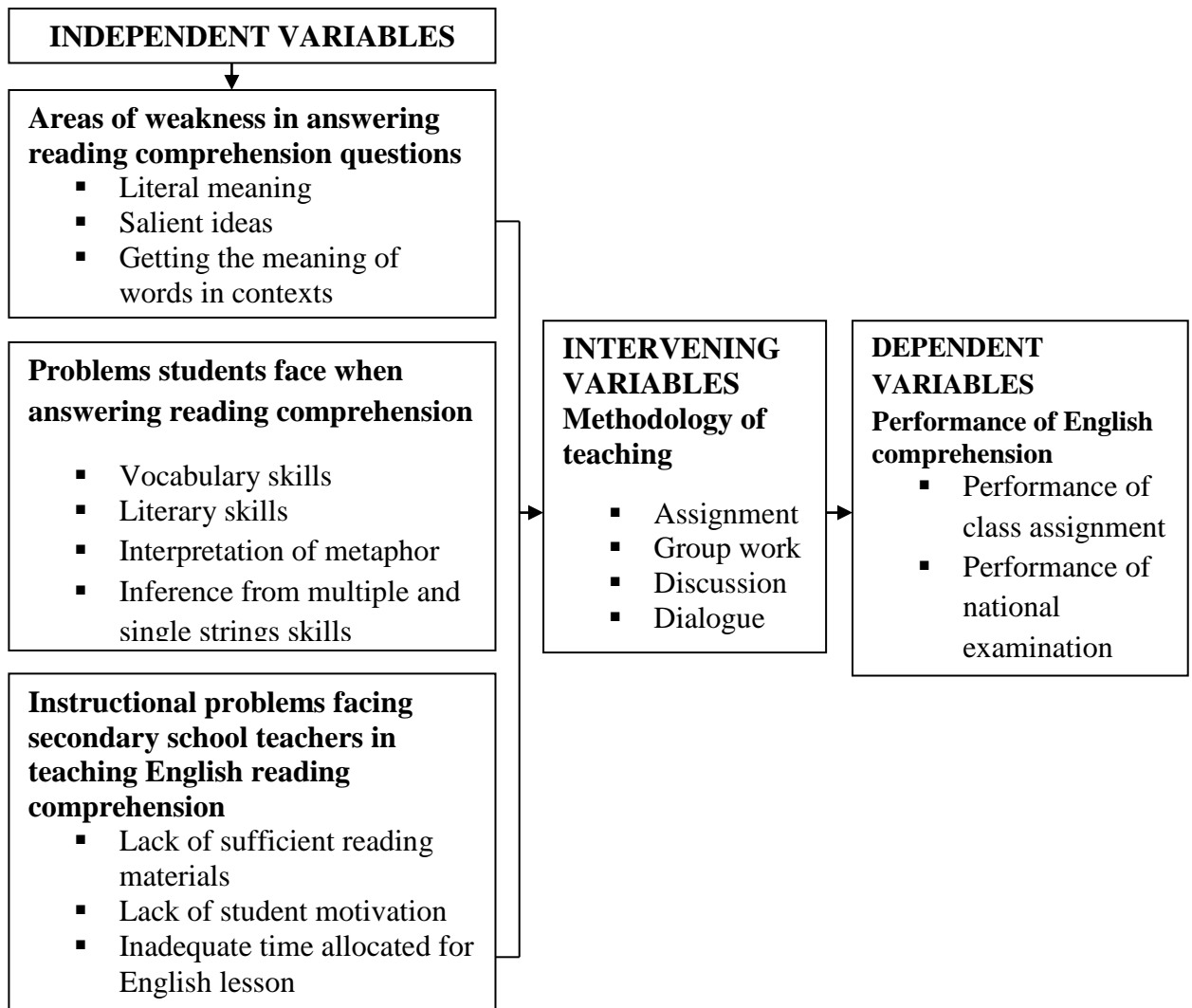
In order for a reader to efficiently extract information from a text, certain sub-skills need to have been acquired. First, the reader must be able to decode or recognize individual words. Secondly, the reader must be able to obtain the meaning of these words. This is referred to as lexical access and it relies on the fact that the reader has a meaning for the printed words in semantic memory. This meaning is stored by the reader as part of the language acquisition process. The particular meaning or shade of memory the reader accesses may be influenced by the context in which the particular word is found. The meaning of a sentence is, however, more than the sum of the individual meanings that make it up. Finally, a reader must have

knowledge of the syntax of a language. The reader must extract the syntactic relations which hold between words and relate the resulting information to his pre-existing knowledge systems.

1.10 The Conceptual Framework

Researchers have found that there is a relationship between poor reading comprehension and poor decoding skills (Golinkoff, 1975). Golinkoff and Rosinski (1976) found that learners who are poor at comprehending, possessed weak decoding skills and those who were good at comprehending seem to be capable of rapid and accurate word recognition and have automatized basic decoding skills. This formed a basis for the conceptual framework. The independent variables which were manipulated in the study included understanding a literal meanings, vocabulary skills and motivational aspects of learners.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework showing relationship between the variables



In fig.1.1 the conceptual framework illustrates that factors affecting the students' performance in English comprehension such as are defined by areas of weakness in answering reading comprehension questions, problems students faced when answering reading comprehension and instructional problems facing secondary school teachers in teaching English reading comprehension (independent variables). However, the effects of these predictors on the performance of students in English comprehension questions are being determined by the methods of teaching methodologies adopted by the teachers, whether it is assignment, group work discussion or dialogue.

1.10: Operational Definition of Key Terms

- Communicative Competence** - Knowledge and ability to use language for Structural, functional, social and interactional purposes, using norms that govern language in English language reading comprehension
- Reading Comprehension** - The skill of reading to extract knowledge or Reading with understanding of an English comprehension passage.
- Context** - The way a word is used in a sentence
- Decoding** Changing communication signals into messages in reference to sound and word identification in a English reading comprehension passage.
- English Language Skills** - Four basic skills of English namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing utilized during comprehension reading.
- Learning** - Is the process involving the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes from a teacher to a learner.
- Question** - A statement that requires an answer in a comprehension passage.
- Reading Comprehension** - The level of understanding of a passage or a text
- Reading Programme** - A scheduled series of learning experiences that have the objective of improving students' reading. These programs are expected to be part of the teacher's scheme of work.

- Selection** - Choosing instructional materials, which will accomplish the task of meeting the learning objectives of reading an English comprehension passage.
- Subjects** - The learners who are discussed or represented in one piece of reading of the English comprehension passage.
- Syntactic Information** - Knowledge derived from the pattern or structure of word order in sentences, clauses and phrases while reading an English comprehension passage.
- Teaching** - Refers to the transmission of knowledge, values, skills and attitudes from a teacher to a learner.
- Techniques** - Procedures and practices adopted by a teacher to direct the learner's activities toward an objective.
- Text** - A sequence of written material in prose form.
- Word Knowledge** - Involves understanding of the words, form and Meaning of the English comprehension passage.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction.

The purpose of the literature review in this chapter was to establish a foundation upon which the problem being investigated was rooted. The literature thus reviewed will form a basis for this study. This chapter mainly reviews key areas of reading as related to comprehension. It considers mainly the following; Reading Comprehension, Reading Approaches, Reading Comprehension Skills Comprehension Instruction, Gender and Reading Comprehension and lastly Related studies in comprehension.

2.1 Reading Comprehension.

Reading comprehension can be defined as the level of understanding of a passage or text. For normal reading rates (around 200-220 words per minute) an acceptable level of comprehension is above 75% (Pressley 2006). Proficient reading comprehension depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If words recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read.

A large part of academic learning occurs through reading. Reading is not only the ability of student to accurately and fluently decode words but also to gain meaning through the text that he or she reads (Sideridis, Mouzaki, Simos and Protopapas, 2006). Although the goal of the reading process is to extract meaning from text, many factors can impede a students reading comprehension, such as failure to strategically process information and appropriately use background knowledge while reading, lack of metacognitive awareness of learning, knowledge of vocabulary and common text structures. These challenges are even more significant for students.

Reading involves selecting relevant information to build a coherent representation of the meaning of the text. This is because text passages may contain various sources of irrelevant information. The reader has to hold only important information in the memory and set irrelevant or no longer irrelevant materials aside to prevent overloading of memory capacity. Irrelevant information may damage the maintenance of relevant information and thus its integration as well as the comprehension and memorization of text. It has therefore been proposed that poor comprehension performance may be attributed to inefficient inhibitory mechanisms (Carretti, Borella, Cornoldi and De Beni 2009). Along with a number of other factors, including the knowledge an individual has of the material read, the ability to monitor one's understanding of text and adjust reading strategies (Cornoldi and Oakhill, 1996) and working memory.

It is well known that the process of acquiring knowledge apart from notes given during a lesson, the student is supposed to supplement these by consulting additional texts. These texts not only reinforce the teachings in the classroom but also broaden the student's knowledge base. Students must be able to understand the texts they read to achieve academic success. The relationship between reading and academic performance cannot be over-emphasized. Balfour (2002) argues that students weak reading levels have serious implications for the following reasons (a) A poor ability to read and digest course material impacts negatively on students' performance and their self esteem. (b) An inability to read affects students' ability to follow written instruction be these in the form of essay questions or examination (c) An inability to read texts impacts negatively on the students' ability to model their own writing on them-conceptually, linguistically and structurally.

2.2 Reading Approaches.

Reading theories and models have undergone various stages of development over time. Under the dominance of audiolingualism from 1940 to 1960, reading was neglected. Reading was seen as a passive decoding process during the 1960's. Terms such as bottom-up, letter and word recognition theory, text-based, text driven or data driven have been used to describe models and theories that hold this view of reading. All these viewpoints claim that reading is linear in that readers recognize letters, transfer them to sound and then move on to decode the next letter. Later studies took a step further suggesting that after readers master the letter and word recognition skill, they attend to letters and words automatically. Thus meaning was built from the smaller to the larger units. Variables including grammar, vocabulary and syntax are the main focus of bottom-up theories and models .

In 1967 some of the main scholars in language such as Goodman (1973) and Smith (1975) have looked at language from a psycholinguistic point of view which means looking at reading in its natural state as an application of a person's general cognitive and linguistic competence. This means that with linguistic cues, readers can confirm or disconfirm their predictions and expectations that are based on their background knowledge and experiences. In this view, some concepts associated to it are top-down, comprehension theory, knowledge-based, reader-based, reader-driven, concept driven, or hypothesis driven (Frehan,1999).

Later in the 1970's Rumelhart (1977), Stanovich (1980) and Ullman (1980) propounded the interactive reading process. The model assumed that during reading, skills at all levels (higher and lower) are interactively available to the reader to enable him or her process and interpret the text. The interactive model incorporates the implication of reading as an interactive process-that is, the use of background knowledge expectations and content. It also incorporates motions of accurate and a rapid feature of recognition of letters and words, spread

lexical forms and the concept of atomicity in processing what does not depend on context for primary recognition of linguistic units (Carrel and Eisterhold, 1983).

All the sources of knowledge mentioned above, provide input simultaneously. The sources need to communicate and interact with each other, and the higher order stages should be able to influence the processing of lower order stages. Although focusing mainly on cognition and failing to take some crucial components such as social, affective or cultural factors into account, this view point has gained popularity since the emergency of schema theory in 1980's (Eskey, 1997).

2.3 Schema Theory

The concept of schema can be traced to Plato and Aristotle (Marshall, 1995). According to Bartlett (1995), used the term schema and conducted experiments to explore schemas as cultural constructs in memory, and this is the work most widely cited by schema theorists working in the cognitive era. The early use of the term suggested a transactional relationship between individual knowledge and cultural practice.

Contemporary conceptions of schema derive primarily from work conducted in cognitive science during the 1970's. Rumelhart and Ortony (1977) defined schemas as "data structures for representing the generic concepts stored in memory. They exist for generalized concepts underlying objects, situations, events, sequence of events, actions and sequences of actions" (P.101)

Schema theory was a major force in the development of reading models and had an important influence on research, particularly in relation to reading comprehension and learning. It provided researchers and teachers with a model for representing knowledge organizing experience.

2.4 Types of Schemata

There are three major types of schemata, namely, content schemata, formal schemata and linguistic schemata, which are closely related to reading comprehension.

2.4.1 Content Schemata

Content schemata refer to the background knowledge of the content area of a text or its topic. They include topic familiarity, cultural knowledge and previous experience in a determined field. Content schemata deal with the knowledge relative to the content domain of the text, which is crucial to understanding it. Content schemata can make up for the lack of language schemata and thus help learners understand texts by predicting, choosing information and removing ambiguities. They contain an understanding of the topic of the text and the cultural-specific constituents required to interpret it.

On the whole, familiarity of the topic has a direct influence on reader's comprehension. The more the reader knows about the topic, the more easily and quickly he gets the information on the text.

2.4.2 Formal Schemata

These are the organizational forms and rhetoric structures of written texts. They include knowledge of different text types and genres, text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of formality.

Formal schemata are described as abstract, encoded, internalized, coherent patterns of meta-linguistic discourse and textual organization that guide expectation in our attempts to underline a meaningful piece of language. Readers use their schematic representations of the text such as fictions, poems, essays and newspaper articles to help comprehend the information in the text.

2.4.3 Linguistic Schemata

Refers to the reader's existing language proficiency in terms of vocabulary, grammar and idioms. They are the foundation of other schemata. The linguistic knowledge plays an essential part in text comprehension. Without linguistic schemata, it is impossible for the reader to comprehend and interpret a text. Therefore the more the linguistic schemata a reader has in his mind, the faster the reader acquires information and the better the reader can understand the message in a text.

2.5 Reading Comprehension Skills

The development of reading comprehension skills is a complex process, because the construct of reading comprehension is inherently multi-dimensional. Effective reading comprehension is dependent on myriad of factors, which relate to the reader, the text and the act of comprehension itself (RAND, Reading Study group, 2002). To make meaning during the act of reading, the reader must read words accurately and efficiently, decode phonological and syntactic information, draw on vocabulary and background knowledge, remember what has been read, understand the purpose for reading the text to draw inferences at different levels of complexity, and effectively use metacognitive strategies (Sweet and Snow, 2003). Paramount to effective reading comprehension is the integration and accurate application of numerous component skills which can be assessed separately.

2.5.1 Vocabulary

Secondary students acquire about 3,000 new words per as they read numerous materials as part of content area and independent reading (Nagy and Herman, 1987). Simmons and Kameenui, (1990) say that the rate at which students acquire vocabulary varies tremendously. They say students with reading disabilities tend to have poor vocabularies because of their limited involvement with reading activities and the vocabulary gap between good readings and poor

readers increasingly widens over time. Vocabulary is fundamental in comprehending text (Nagy 1998).

Stahl (1986) identified three increasingly deep levels of processing vocabulary. The first level is called the association processing in which student's link their understanding of new words to a synonym or a specific context. The second is known as comprehension processing in which students apply associative knowledge of the word. The third level is called generation processing and involves students using their knowledge of the word by creating a novel synthesis of the new word and known information.

To promote comprehension, students need to develop an understanding of how words can be used across different contexts and be able to understand the meaning of the words quickly while reading. Thus the goal of vocabulary instruction is to help students develop and apply vocabulary knowledge across a variety of contexts and to increase their repertoire of strategies for figuring out new vocabulary as it appears in context (Carlisle, 1993).

2.5.2 Word Identification

The ability to identify or decode unknown words rapidly and accurately is an important prerequisite for reading fluency and comprehension (Moats, 1998). Many secondary students have become adept with these word identification skills and apply this knowledge to decoding long unfamiliar words. However many secondary age students with reading disabilities continue to struggle with word identification skills, which adversely affects their ability to read fluently and comprehend text (Moats, 1998). Secondary students with reading disabilities who have mastered basic word identification skills taught as part of beginning reading still may be unable to generalize the use of these strategies to decoding multi-syllabic words. These students can benefit from systematic problem-solving strategies for identifying difficult words (Lenz and Hughes, 1990)

Word identification strategies include contextual, phonetic and structural analysis skills (Lenz and Hughes, 1990). Contextual analysis is used to determine the meaning and pronunciation of unfamiliar words according to how they are used in a sentence or a paragraph. Contextual clues include graphic illustrations (eg charts, diagrams) and syntactic and semantic clues (i.e figuring out the meaning of the unknown word based on the sentence structure and the meaning of the surrounding words) (Johnson and Baumann,1984)

Phonetic analysis refers to students applying their knowledge of the orthographic code of language and phoneme-grapheme correspondences to decipher words (Stahl,1998). By analyzing letter-sounding relationships and blending them together parts or all of multi syllabic words can be deciphered. Structural analysis focuses on students recognizing novel units or affixes and applying the knowledge by breaking words a part to facilitate the systematic decoding of multisyllabic words (Lenz Hughes 1990).

2.5.3 Comprehension

Skilled readers monitor their understanding of reading as they read text and use strategies to promote comprehension and retention (Ward and Traweck, 1993). Comprehension Monitoring involves (a) understanding the purpose for reading (b) Distinguishing important information from less important information (c) Involving in self questioning about what is being read (d) recognizing and correcting problems when comprehension is inadequate (Baker and Brown, 1984).

Text comprehension involves the reader's ability to understand how the reading material is structured and to organize and remember important information./ Text structure refers to a cueing system about the way ideas are interrelated and about subordination of some ideas to others to convey meaning to readers (Weaver and Kinstich, 1991). There are different levels of comprehension.

2.5.3.2 Inferential Comprehension: Stepping away from concrete

It requires the readers to interact more with the text. For inferential comprehension to occur, readers are required to do more than simply recognize what an author has written on the page by “reading between the lines” to infer what the intended meaning of the text is and try to understand what the author is trying to say. Making references also requires readers to engage in a greater manipulation of the text by examining the relationships among the structural elements of the text, such as the main ideas and details, to help draw conclusions about the author’s intended meaning (Vacca et al:1987).

2.5.3.3 Evaluative Comprehension: taking the leap between the text and the world beyond

Evaluative comprehension takes into account readers understanding of what an author has written (literal comprehension) and what was meant by what the author wrote (Inferential comprehension) and apply those understandings of the text to some other practical or theoretical expertise. This critical comprehension requires divergent thinking and requires readers to analyze, synthesize, apply and evaluate the relevance of textual elements as they interpret the significance of what they are reading (Vacca et al, 1987).

2.6 Reading Comprehension Instruction

Comprehension instruction is an attempt to teach students how they think while they read. Traditional reading instruction focuses on reading comprehension of fiction, rather than expository text. (Gregg and Sekerers,2006). Studies on literacy have repeatedly highlighted the critical need for more reading comprehension instruction in content area classrooms yet teachers struggle to effectively incorporate the teaching of reading comprehension in their curriculum (Brozo, 2005) as they often lack knowledge about reading instruction. This stagnancy in classroom pedagogy may be in part related to the failure of educational research

to adequately investigate and promote the relationship between teacher professional development and the enhanced understanding and pedagogy of reading comprehension including the explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies. As teacher quality has come to be regarded as one of the most crucial variables in student achievements, there is need for effective professional development integrating reading compression.

Pearson and Gallagher (1983) recommended a “gradual release of responsibility model 1 for teaching comprehension strategies whereby student learning is carefully scaffolded by the teacher building from teacher directed learning towards independent use of the strategy. Adding flesh to this concept, Duke and Person (2002) developed a five-step model for the development of comprehension instruction which included (i) explicit description of the strategy (ii) teacher models the strategy in action (iii) collaborative use of the strategy in action (iv) Guided practice/reflection (v) Independent use of strategy.

When reading expository texts, instruction on the use of multiple strategies is required to produce significant results in reading comprehension and improved transfer effects. Swanson (1999) determined that a combination of strategy and direct instruction is most beneficial for reading comprehension instruction. Examples of effective components of reading comprehension strategy (RCS) instruction included modeling by the teacher of strategy steps (eg overt demonstrations through think-aloud models of strategy steps and procedures) and the use of strategy cues (eg explanation of benefits of the strategy, reminders to use the strategies).

An aspect of strategy instruction sometimes overlooked is metacomprehension and strategy awareness. Metacognition involves knowledge of ones thinking, using strategies to achieve goals, and evaluating ones own progress (LaJoie, 2008). It is also important to explicitly teach students how to determine when a particular strategy might be effective. This becomes critical for populations of students who characteristically do not maintain and generalize what they

learn. According to Ford (1992) there are four sources of self-efficacy information (a) mastery experiences (b) Modeling (c) Social persuasion and (d) effective body state information.

Comprehension strategy instruction (CSI) is based on the understanding that reading comprehension is an interactive, socially mediated and deliberate process involving the orchestration of cognitive strategies and the activation of personal schema in order to construct meaning. Several instructional strategies follow the schema theory. The most important implication of the schema theory is the role of prior knowledge in processing. In order for learners to be effectively able to process information, their existing schemas related to new content need to be activated. Correspondingly, teachers of reading have found that activating a learner's schema enables them to better process information they are reading. Therefore, many advocate teaching learners metacognitive strategies designed to activate one's schema before reading, such as reading the heading and the title, looking at visuals in the text, and making predictions based on the title and pictures.

Armbruster (1996) also encourages use of analogies and comparisons in order to draw attention to learners existing schema and help them make connections between existing schema and the new information. In terms of fostering student's problem solving ability, instructions should focus more on schema-building strategies, in particular strategies for building appropriate functional problem solving schema, as a foundation for problem solving ability (Price and Driscoll, 1997). In addition, instruction should use realistic familiar scenarios in teaching problem-solving rather than more conventional abstract contexts.

Palinscar and Brown (1984) developed a technique called reciprocal teaching that taught students to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for sections of a text. The technique had positive outcomes. Since then, the use of strategies like summarizing after each paragraph have come to be seen as effective strategies for building students' comprehension. The idea is

that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text (Pressley, 2006).

Today, most reading comprehension programs teach students explicit reading strategies using teacher direct instructions with additional student practice. Comprehension through discussion involves lessons that are “instructional conversation” that create higher-level thinking opportunities for students. The purpose of the divisions are to promote critical and aesthetic think about text and encourage full classroom involvement. According to Pressley, (2006) class discussion help students to generate ideas and new questions.

2.7 Gender and Reading Comprehension

There are numerous research findings, suggesting differential engagements in motivation for reading for boys and girls. Barrs (1998) cites a host of factors affecting boys’ literacy achievement including societal expectations, family influences; early experiences; peer group pressures and stereotyping; classroom contexts; parental expectations; behavioural issues and range of literacy materials offered by schools. Furthermore, boys and girls read for different purposes and these gender differences widen as they progress through school.

Gambell and Hunter (1999) suggest that these differences may be attributed to gender socialization in and out of the home. They argue that girls may be more frequently engage in literacy activities with their parents during the early years, prior to starting school, perhaps because of gender socialization that portrays reading as a female activity. Finally, it is suggested that young boys often prefer active and group activities, as opposed to passive and solitary activities such as reading. Although boys may receive comparable instruction from parents and teachers who assist them in learning the alphabet or understanding conventions of print, their engagement in intensive reading including discussion of character and plot, may be limited, compared to girls.

Halpern (1997) concluded that girls tend to outperform boys on tasks that rely on reading processes such as phonological and semantic skills and reading comprehension and suggest there may be a biological component that accounts for girl's superiority in reading . Alvermann (2002) stresses the importance of keeping adolescent's interests and need foremost in mind when planning a literacy curriculum for older children and of giving consideration to reading perceptions and levels of motivation. Explicit instruction on reading comprehension and study strategies and a wider range of reading resources are also encouraged.

Harris and Sipay (1975) suggest that girls are generally ready to read earlier than boys probably as a result of school related activities that girls experience to a greater degree prior to school entry. Dale (1998) also found out that although girls of ages seven to twelve years performed better in reading than boys of the same ages, gender was not a predictor of the rate of growth in reading comprehension at the 0.1 level of significance.

Downing (1977), in seeking to investigate cultural attitudes towards reading conducted a study with a cross-section of age groups from six years olds to adults, and divided these to six groups. Each group was presented with a series of twelve (12) drawings of stick figures, each to indicate whether the pictured activity was more suitable for a six year old boy or girl. In every subject group except six year old pupils there were significantly more responses of "girl" than "boy" to the drawing of the stick figure engaged in reading. He suggested that gender differences and reading achievement are more related to cultural expectations than to maturity.

Castle (1988) explained the differences in reading abilities of boys and girls as caused by the fact that seem to have a maturational lag which is further reinforced by their play activities which were visual-spatial in nature, while girls engaged play activities that were passively linguistically orientated. This was seen to be the detriment of their beginning to read skills.

These contradicting findings reflect the reality that there are many factors that influence gender performance in reading. Findings therefore vary depending on the population under study.

In rural Kenya, traditionally it was largely believed that it was more important to educate a boy than a girl. However, values in the past years have changed as the benefit of education even among girls have begun being evident. The difference in the performance of boys and girls in reading is therefore not expected to be significant.

2.8 Related Studies in Comprehension

As our society becomes more and more literate, reading has become an integral part of our lives. Faced with the print media, reading with comprehension aids us in a going about our-day-to-day affairs. Reading exposes us to new experiences. It helps scholars to study independently across the school curriculum. According to Owino (1987) routine work dictates that we read regulations, travel guides and manuals. The mastery of the reading process is a prerequisite for creating awareness to combat disease and ignorance.

It is necessary, thus to assess how effective our secondary school students are in reading with understanding, and no other stage in the school cycle is assessment more crucial than at the end of the secondary cycle of education. This is because as mentioned in chapter one, to many students secondary education is terminal.

In this study, it was necessary to assess English reading comprehension questions in the light of the above literature as a way of determining areas of weaknesses. A reading test will therefore be necessary as a means of determining with the same precision the extent to which the respondents can answer questions in the different areas.

According to Southgate, Arnold and Johnson (1981) answering questions in reading comprehension are aided by semantic cues from ones recognition of the words of the written

language and the knowledge of their meaning. It also uses cues from ones underlying understanding of the grammatical structure of the language.

They also explain comprehension is not a one way process with the reader merely trying to understand the authors meaning, but rather it is a two-way process, with the readers own background knowledge contributing as much to the understanding of the text as do the words of the author. Therefore the wider the reader's experience of texts the easier he can cope with different and unusual presentation formats.

For students to find reading and answering questions easy, maintain Fyfe and Mitchell (1985), they have to bring to the text the level of knowledge and experiences that writer assumes them to have. On the mode of presentation they say the reader has to be familiar with the chosen mode of presentation not least because this is likely to reflect the writer's purpose in writing.

Fyfe and Mitchell (1985) asserted that the principal component of most reading tasks undertaken in school in comprehension. They carried out a research to investigate "how pupils coped with sets of directions", among other things. In their research they tried to identify potential sources of the difficulties students face. They also collected detailed information about how children tackled their reading tasks, about the more common sources of difficulty inherent in reading tasks, about what made items easy or difficult. They studied upper primary and secondary students and their research was based at Aberdeen College of Education.

Among sources of difficulty, they found those involving coping with general statements coping with specialized vocabulary and those involving layout and incidental difficulties. For general statements, pupils found difficulty in judging how a general statement applies to a particular context. Pupils got bogged down by specialized vocabulary even if such vocabulary was irrelevant to the understanding of the text. Then also reproved that unusual layout of instructions and incidental problems like misreading caused difficulties.

Wario (1981) in an analysis of reading attainment and its relationship to some school conditions concludes that school buildings and materials, classroom condition, size and location of the school, availability of reading materials and library facilities, among others have an effect on reading attainment of the pupils. Wario does not, however, decline what he means by 'attainment' in his study, but it is possible to equate it with 'ability' which would mean the level at which the pupils can read with maximum understanding. The study also hardly gives any proof that experience of the teacher, methods used and provision for backward readers influence reading ability.

Obuya-Deya (1980) surveyed the effect of Certificate of Primary Education (C.P.E) English language comprehension testing on the development of reading ability in primary schools. His findings are that classroom teaching and testing practices tend to follow quite closely the pattern of the final examination have no relationship whatsoever with the reading levels of the children because they were difficult. He notes particularly the lack of assessment of the readability of the passages used in the classroom and in the examination; a factor which he thinks has serious negative impact on the reading habits of the primary school children. Obuya-Deya does not observe how these passages are being taught in the classroom in the lower primary level. The study also concentrates on one aspect of reading instruction that is comprehension.

Wagesa's (1985) investigation on the concept of reading held by secondary school teachers have brought to light what might be the case with primary school teachers as well. Latham (1968) argues that what a teacher thinks reading entails will determine the aims, methods and assessment techniques employed during the teaching of reading. According to Wagesa, 76% of his respondents have a narrow view of reading restricted to literal comprehension (answering factual questions) after passages have been read without further follow up activities based on those passages. Further research needs to be done in this area.

Relevant research that has been done in Kenya has mainly focused on the relationship between reading comprehension and academic performance in other subjects. Other local researchers, for example, Obondo, (1984) and Owino, (1987) have done research on classroom instruction and reading.

In addition, intelligence and gender have through a series of studies, emerged as significant variables that are related to ones reading ability. Stanovich et al. (1980) indicate a positive relationship between intelligence and reading comprehension though the magnitude varied with the age of the pupils. Gender differences have been identified in studies by Heilman (1961) and Dale (1974), both which favoured girls in reading comprehension abilities. It will be necessary to find out whether gender is also related to reading comprehension. A study establishing this relationship is particularly needed in the rural area where it appears that the education of girls is hampered due to social and cultural factors.

2.8.1 Problems Students Face when answering reading comprehension questions.

Longsombun (2009) conducted a study to investigate the English achievement of Prathomsuksa 6 students in Chonburi, Nonthaburi, Samutprakarn, Samutsakorn, and Prathomtani in Thailand and found that the students' reading ability was below the minimum criterion. In addition, Champaruang (1999), Purisodom, (2009), Thani (2009), and Yongsathien, (2009) carried out research studies to investigate the English achievement of high school students in Cyprus. They all came to the same conclusion and found that the students' reading ability was at a low level. Besides, Ponmanee and Sinsuwan (2011) conducted a study to examine the needs and problems in English usage of 60 graduate students in teaching Thai and social science compared with students in teaching English. Using questionnaires and a reading test as research instruments, it was found that students in all three fields of study needed all four English skills, and poor reading was the main problem of these students.

Additionally, it was found that Thai students have problems with vocabulary and sentence structure when reading texts, so they could not comprehend what they have read.

A study by Songsiri (2009) involving 12th-grade students found that their English reading ability was very disappointing. Students had poor skills in vocabulary, syntax, and grammar, and they lacked the ability to guess meaning from the context which was considered as the causes of the problems in skimming for main ideas, scanning for details, making inferences, finding the reference, restating, sequencing facts from opinions, and determining the author's mood and tone. Also, the results of a study conducted by Adunyarittigun (2012) found that the inadequate knowledge of language structure and vocabulary was the main cause of the participant's difficulties to predict the meaning in context. In addition, Chuenta (2012) found that problems in reading of the participants were inability to grasp main idea, inability to read quickly due to limited vocabulary, inability to summarize the text, and the lack of appropriate reading strategies. Similarly, Tanghirunwat (2013) found that Malaysian engineering students had problems with vocabulary of other technical fields, new vocabulary stemming from new technology, and technical vocabulary in the telecommunication field.

In addition, Reanjaroenusuk (2009) studied English vocabulary proficiency of 615 first-year university students from the Faculty of Medical Science, the Faculty of Arts, and the Faculty of Science. It was found that the three groups of the participants had vocabulary problems. Subphadoongchone (2010) found that the science students' mean score on the lexical guessing tests was low. This indicated that science students' vocabulary ability was not proficient. Furthermore, the results from questionnaire revealed that the problems in guessing meaning of words from context were derived from limited vocabulary knowledge and lack of grammatical knowledge.

Intarasombat (2012) studied the effect of vocabulary development of English reading comprehension. The subjects were 40 students in the science program. The instrument used in this study consisted of vocabulary test and reading comprehension test. Vocabulary test was used to measure the students' knowledge of vocabulary. Reading comprehension test was used to measure the students' reading comprehension. It was found that the students' mean score in the vocabulary test and reading comprehension test was low. This indicated that the students had limited vocabulary knowledge and this area caused them problems of English reading comprehension.

Mingsakoon (2013) studied vocabulary learning strategies of students in science and arts programs. The subjects were 129 students. There were 78 students from the science program and 51 from the arts program. Vocabulary test was also used to determine students' ability in vocabulary. It was found that the science students and the arts students used reading strategies effectively when reading texts. There was no significant difference in vocabulary ability between the two groups; however, the results of the study revealed that the students had vocabulary problems.

2.8.2 Instructional problems facing teachers in teaching English reading comprehension

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

real objects, handle them, move them about and even make them (Adeinigbagbe, 1997 in Ofodu, 2012).

The instructional resources function as stimuli and support for both the teacher and the learner in the teaching and learning process (Ogunnaike, 2000 in Ofodu, 2012). They are important in stimulating the learner's interest, piloting his/her attitude towards effective learning, especially among 9-11 year old pupils. Eshiwani (1986) argues that most African countries experience a shortage of qualified teachers at all levels. Classroom instruction is often given by unqualified or relatively poorly trained teachers. Provision of good instructional resources in such circumstances is likely to improve the quality of learning. This is because the instructional resources will help promote the sequencing of learning activities in the classroom and supplement the teacher's limited knowledge in the particular instructional environment. Anderson et al. (1985) argues that school books should be rich with important concepts and information. That is books for all grades need to contain adequate explanations, taking into account the skill level, knowledge and reasoning power of the reader.

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

Instructional materials also have a strong indirect path of influence on student learning through their effects on teachers' instructional orientations. Commercially produced instructional

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

Research on how children acquire early literacy skills has demonstrated that children gain crucial understanding about print and its relationship with oral language by being immersed in literacy rich environments (Katim, 1994, Kuby, Goodstadt-Killoran, Aldridge & Kirkland, 1999 cited in Keefe et al. 2010). Such environments display texts, pictures and graphics that are meaningful to the children in that setting. The materials offer the learners recurring opportunities to interact with books and other engaging printed materials either individually or in groups. The children's literacy knowledge and understandings emerge as they have meaningful and sustained interactions within literacy rich environments with other individuals who are literate models. In their study Neuman & Celano (2004) cited in Keefe et al. (2010), observe that children's ability to read is related to reading skill development. This ability in children is developed by adults within print rich environments that facilitate the development of literacy skills. This simply means that teachers working in poor print environments cannot be effective in developing children's literacy skills.

Books, papers, writing tools should be visible everywhere in the classroom so that children can see and use literacy for multiple purposes. Sleger (1996) in Lin Chia-Hu (2001) observe that children are likely to engage more in reading and writing activities in print rich environments.

Children will learn to construct their own literacy knowledge, reading strategies, learn to read and write naturally in this environment (Teale & Yokota, 2000 cited in Li, Chia-Hu, 2001).

However, as observed by N'Namdi (2005), the main problem in many rural areas is the lack of reading materials. This greatly affects the kind of reading learning classroom environments. It is then the teacher's responsibility in such situations to create/improvise as many of the materials as possible. The creation of reading materials can also be done by the learners with the teacher's guidance. After editing can become a part of the permanent collection of resource materials in the classroom. Oyetunde et al. (1986) in Adeniji et al. (2010), in their study single out lack of reading materials, poor preparation of teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all, poor home background and lack of adult readers as models as some of the critical impediments to effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension in the primary school grades.

2.9 Conclusion

The area of secondary school comprehension has not been seriously addressed. This study hopes to focus on the aspects of comprehension at secondary school level in a rural setting. Majority of research studies in this area have employed verbatim level questions requiring literal recall of specific facts in the associated passages (Anderson and Biddle, 1975; Frase, 1970). Such questions are likely to lead to rote learning of the entire passage. Each sentence is thus processed as a relatively discrete unit with the reader making little or no attempt to discern relationship among the various sentences of the passage (Richards and DiVesta 1974). This study therefore looked at the problems students face when answering English comprehension questions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses mainly on the methodology which was used in this study. Of importance was the population and sample selection, the choice of research instruments and their development, data collection procedures and an outline of methods used in the analysis and presentation of data.

3.1 Research Design

The study used a survey approach. The aim of the survey was to obtain a lot of information, which can be analyzed to draw patterns and comparisons (Bell,1993). Such a study aimed to obtain a variety of information from a representative selection of the population and sample.

The design was descriptive in nature. According to Best (1992), descriptive survey research studies have the following characteristics which suited the study.

- They use the logical methods of inductive-deductive reasoning to arrive at generalizations;
- They often employ methods of randomization so that error may be estimated when reserving population characteristics from observations of samples.
- The variables and procedures are described as accurately and completely as possible so that the study can be replicated by other researchers.
- They are non-experimental for they deal with relationships between non-manipulated variables in a natural rather than artificial setting. Since the events or conditions have already occurred or exist, the researcher selects the relevant variables for an analysis of their relationships.

3.2 Area of Study and Population

3.2.1 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Vihiga District, which is the Western part of Kenya. Apart from the poor performance in English, which was the concern of this study, the district has a good network of communication, especially the roads and this was a useful facilitation to the research process, especially in data collection.

3.2.2 Target Population

The population from which the sample was selected was composed of all the secondary schools in the District. The district has seventy six (76) secondary schools (Appendix I) and a total of thirty eight thousand (38,000) secondary schools students. The main focus of the population was the form three students and the teachers at that level. It was considered that form three students have good exposure to the main skills of comprehension and other related tasks such as modes of questions.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample was selected through a stratified systematic random sampling technique from a list of public secondary schools in Vihiga District, (See Appendix I). The schools were categorized into girls', boys' and mixed schools. From these three categories, schools per category were selected through stratified systematic random sampling, and used for the purpose of this study. This procedure gave each school an equal chance of being selected.

This procedure is supported by Gathumbi (1995) who states

This means that, the name of the schools in the three categories will be grouped separately and then three schools from each category randomly sampled through the "lucky-dip" method of sampling to avoid bias. In the "Lucky-dip" method of sampling, the same samples are put in one container and then the required sample is picked at random one at a time (Gathumbi, 1995 pg 24).

One form three average stream or class (40 students) in each school was purposively selected for the study. The form three students were used because they are expected to have acquired a sufficient command of the basic skills of English language to enable them communicate freely and to read a variety of literature for pleasure. The schools that were used were sampled from the list in Appendix I. The sampling also considered teachers of English in the classes selected. A total of fifty (50) teachers were used in this study. (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Sampling Grid for the study population in Vihiga District

Category of school	Total in District	Number of Selected schools	No. of Students	Number of Teachers selected
Boys	7	3	135	15
Girls	14	4	177	15
Mixed	55	9	366	20
Total	76	16	678	50

Sixteen schools were selected from the seventy six (76) schools through the simple random sampling procedure. This means that, name of schools in the three categories were grouped separately and then school from each category were randomly sampled through the “Lucky-dip” method. The number of schools selected per category was also based on the total number that exist in the district.

3.4 The Research Instruments

Two instruments were used in the study. One was the English Teacher Questionnaire (Appendix IV) and the second was a written English Comprehension Test (Appendix III) for students.

3.4.1 The Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher of English questionnaire was preferred because of its ability to quickly get information from a large population. It was, therefore, a faster way of obtaining data compared

to other instruments. It gave teachers freedom of response and also gave detailed data on their views on teaching reading comprehension and use of various teaching techniques. In addition, the questionnaire approach enabled the researcher to preserve respondents' anonymity which made it possible to elicit candid responses.

Mouly(1978) supports use of questionnaires when he observes that they allow greater uniformity in the way questions are asked and thus ensure greater compatibility in the responses. The researcher designed a four-section questionnaire for form three teachers to elicit information from a cross-section of instructional procedures related to comprehension lessons and resources.

Section one was to seek general information about teachers. Section two sought personal information about the teacher; section three dealt with the resources the teacher uses; lastly, section four dealt with the skills, and activities of teaching and learning English, and Comprehension in particular (Appendix IV).

3.4.2 Written Comprehension Test

The passage for the comprehension test for students was taken from the book titled. "The Effective use of Reading "by Lunzer and Gardner (1979: 46-48). The passage was titled "Greg". The passage was modified to be at the reading level of form three students by a teacher who is trained and teaching English in a secondary school.

The questions asked from the reading comprehension passage tested various reading skills namely: Comprehension, the ability to evaluate what has been read, inference, use of vocabulary, grammar, understanding of the language used, ability to reason and draw conclusions from the information given. The mode of testing involved asking students to read and answer questions on the selected comprehension passage (Appendix III).

3.5: Validity and reliability of Instruments

3.5.1 Validity

This study made use of content validity. Content validity is a measure of the degree to which data collected using a particular instrument; represent the content that the test is designed to measure.

The validity of the instruments commenced at the design stage. Expert opinion from the researcher's supervisors was sought to establish the validity of the instrument. The pilot study assisted in validating the instruments and in ascertaining whether the methodology and instruments provided the required data.

3.5.2: Reliability

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). This study intended to use measures of consistency to ensure reliability, split-half is a common method and was used to determine reliability. A spearman-Brown correlation was computed and an index of 0.7 was obtained in the piloting stage.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher first got a research permit from the Office of the President and the Ministry of Education offices. With these documents, he visited the selected secondary schools to request the head teachers for permission to carry out research in their schools. With the permission from the head teacher, the researcher proceeded to consult with the English language teachers and heads of English departments and discuss the details of the research. A research schedule was agreed upon within which data was to be collected. The researcher then established a rapport with the teachers and students of the sampled classrooms. This was done by visiting

the sample classrooms before the pilot and main data collection, and explaining to the teachers the purpose of the study. This aimed at creating security and a relaxed atmosphere during the exercise.

3.6.1: Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study for purpose of trying out the instruments. In pretesting the instruments, three convenient secondary schools were selected outside the sampled schools for the study. The researcher administered the study instruments on randomly selected teachers of English and to one form three class learners of English.

The purpose of the pilot was:

- To test the suitability of the instruments, thus to check whether there was enough coverage in terms of the range of information required
- To test whether there were identifiable ambiguities in the structure of the questions in order to make improvements
- To find out if there are possible impediments that would affect data collection process.

3.6.2: Main Study Data Collection

The English comprehension passage was administered to students where they were expected to read, interpret and follow a set of instructions and directions, as demanded by each question. Instructions for each question were explained clearly by the researcher. In principle, one student was asked to take one and a half hours for the test, but no student was told to stop after one and a half hours were over. This was to allow students to respond to all questions. However, it was noted how many were able to finish within the given time and which ones were unable to finish. This was useful in the analysis because it assisted us in finding out factors that influence the development of English language even from the slow readers. Students wrote their own names and the names of their school, to avoid a mix up in the scripts.

This also ensured that the students regard the exercise as a serious task. Some questions are close-ended like multiple-choice type, while others are open-ended like free response, discursive and others as indicated later.

According to Oller (1979:256), multiple-choice questions are easy to administer

It is the purpose of the multiple choices offered to any field of alternatives to trick the ill informed or less skillful learner. If the best succeeds in discriminating among the stronger and weaker students, it does so by decoying the weaker learners into misconceptions, half truths, and Janus-faced traps.

Even this being so, it can also be argued that open-ended items tend to produce a greater amount of reliable and valid variance. In light of this observation, it was decided to use both open and close-ended questions (Appendix III).

The questions were sub-divided into eight distinct groups, based on the skills expected of the students (Lunzer and Gardner, 1979).

1. Word meaning (W)
2. Words in context (Wic)- Deriving the appropriate meaning of an ambiguous words from the context in which it appears.
3. Literal comprehension (L)- Finding answers to questions when these can be obtained directly by reference to a phrase or a sentence in one text.
4. Drawing inferences from single strings (ISS)- A string is an uninterrupted sequence of words, usually a phrase or a short sentence. Questions in this category require the reader to draw an inference from such a sequence as opposed to deriving its literal meaning.

5. Drawing inferences from multiple strings (IMS) – These tasks are similar to ISS, save that the necessary information for making the inference cannot be found in one phrase but must be facts appearing in different parts of the text.
6. Interpretation of metaphor (M)- These questions require the reader to show an understanding or appreciation of meanings that are given indirectly by use of metaphor.
7. Finding salients or main ideas (S)-Self explanatory.
8. Forming judgments (J)- This category requires the reader to go beyond the text and offer an intelligent interpretation of ideas contained or implied in the text, in the light of his own knowledge of related matters.

The teacher questionnaire was administered to the form three class English language teachers after the test. I used personal delivery and collection of the questionnaires.

3.7: Data Analysis and Presentation

Raw data obtained from the field was coded, tabulated and descriptive statistics namely; means, averages, percentages, frequencies, range and standard deviations were computed. The final report presented the data in a descriptive form in this regard I found SPSS useful. This aided systematic reporting of data in essay form, supported by tables, frequency distribution percentages, histograms and other descriptive statistics. The researcher did not intend to use inferential statistics in any way since no hypothesis was tested. Conclusions and generalizations have been backed by descriptive statistics.

3.8: Ethical Considerations

The researcher applied for a research permit from the Government to carry out the research in schools in Vihiga District. This gave the researcher the authority to go to schools and interact with the teachers and students. Another ethical consideration included communicating the aims of the investigation to the respondents, being honest and establishing a rapport with the respondents. The researcher did not use undue influence to compel the respondents to participate in the research exercise. The researcher was responsible for the confidentiality of both the respondents and the data. Once data was obtained, the researcher honestly completed and reported the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents mainly the findings and the analysis of learner problems in the development of English language reading comprehension among secondary school students in Vihiga District. It also considers teacher-views related to learning English and in particular views on reading comprehension. The analysis focus was guided by the research questions and research instruments.

The method of analysis emphasized descriptive statistics and where possible inferential statistics were applied and assisted by SPSS. The data is presented using mainly tables and graphs. The analysis starts with the general characteristics of teachers of English language.

4.1 Bio-data and qualification of English-literature teachers in the study.

A range of teachers were involved in this study and a total of fifty (50) teachers were contacted to respond to the questionnaire (Appendix IV) some of the items in the questionnaire were specific to their subject but others required general information. Some of the general information concerned the bio-data and qualification of teachers.

4.1.1: Gender of teachers in the study

The teachers involved in the study indicated the gender as required by one of the items in the study.

Table 4.1: Distribution of teachers by gender

Gender	Totals	%
Female	22	44
Male	28	56
Total	50	100

The results show a fair gender balance of teachers with the males 56% just edging the females (44%).

4.1.2: Professional qualification of teachers in the study

The teachers of English and literature were asked to indicate their professional qualifications. This was useful as it was also to determine whether one was dealing with experienced or inexperienced teachers.

Table 4.2: Professional qualification of English and literature teachers

Professional qualification	Totals	Percentage %
M.Ed	01	02
B.Ed	41	82
B.A (PGDE)	04	08
Dip (Ed)	04	08
Total	50	100

The distribution shows that the majority of the teachers (41) in the study had a B.Ed degree while others were quite a minority in the study. Teachers with a B.Ed degree will have gone through professional training which emphasizes both the content and methodology. There were no untrained teachers (UT's) involved in the study. Generally, it can be said that the sample of teachers of English in the study had adequate educational background. This was because these teachers were taught the importance and strategies of teaching English language reading comprehension while they were training as teachers. It was expected, then that these teachers would be in a position to effectively teach English language reading comprehension when in schools.

4.3 Teachers' involvement in Professional growth activities.

The teachers' personal data covered professional growth activities for teachers. The researcher wanted to find out teachers' involvement in improving themselves professionally in English language (Table 4.3(a))

Table 4.3 (a) Teachers involvement in professional growth activities.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Attended seminars	33	66
Never attended seminars	17	34
Total	50	100

Most teachers (66%) had been involved in professional growth activities related to teaching English. This was through attending seminars and workshops, dealing with the teaching of English. A total of 34% had not been involved in any professional growth activities. This could be due to the fact that some teachers might not be informed about the value of participating in seminars and workshops. Kimani (1999) found out that majority of teachers seemed to be disinterested in participating in such activities. Another reason could be that not all schools administrations support their teachers financially and morally so as to attend these activities.

4.3.1: Themes covered in Professional growth activities.

Teachers of English enumerated a number of themes they have dealt with in the workshops and seminars, which they have been participating in. This information was obtained through the teachers questionnaires

Table 4.3(b): Themes covered in professional growth activities for teachers.

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Techniques of teaching	28	56
Improving performance of English in examinations	22	44
Reviewing of the curriculum	12	24
Techniques of teaching oral poetry	3	6
Tips on marking KCSE English papers	2	4
Teaching of oral literature	2	4
Effective teaching of set books	1	1

From table 4.3(b) we note that techniques of teaching English was the most common theme (56%) in the workshops and seminars attended by the teachers. A reasonable percentage of 44% of the seminars and workshops dealt with improving performance of English in examinations, 24% dealt with reviewing of the curriculum, 6% dealt with techniques of teaching oral poetry while 4% dealt with tips of marking KCSE English papers and teaching of oral poetry. Only 2% dealt with the effective teaching of the set books.

From the responses it appears that most emphasis is placed on techniques of teaching. This implies that instruction is the foundation of learning English (and any other subject). The instructional quality is reflected in performance and therefore the emphasis of both.

The following are the benefits of participating in workshops and seminars as highlighted by the teachers of English.

- Enable teachers to integrate language and literature, according to the stipulations of the syllabus.

- Providing teachers with a deeper understanding of modes of evaluation of their students so as to boost their overall methodology and hence student's performance in examinations.
- Equip teachers with new trends and skills of teaching the English language.
- Enabling teachers to learn about activities that facilitate a more participatory approach to teachings such methods would be brought about by suitable methods and approaches.
- Enabled teachers to improve in their selection of teaching and learning resources.

4.4 Instructional problems students face when answering comprehension questions

Teachers of English were asked to indicate the main problems they detect among students when answering questions related to comprehension. This information is summarized in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Instructional problems encountered by students in answering comprehension questions.

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of comprehension of the text	31	62
Lack of comprehension of the question	21	42
Misinterpretation of the questions	19	38
Poor reading skills	15	30
Sentence construction errors	15	30
Lack of vocabulary	13	26
Writing incomplete answers	13	26
Inability to isolate key points	12	24
Failure to give answers in complete sentences	11	22
Lack of reading resources	10	20
Unfamiliar comprehension passages	9	18
Lack of imagination	9	18
Lack of intrinsic motivation	8	16
Lack of enough time	8	16
Lifting information	7	14
Poor-student –teacher relations	7	14

Table 4.4 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of instructional problems students face when answering comprehension questions in English as highlighted by teachers in the questionnaires conducted in the research. A high percentage (62%) of the teachers indicated that lack of comprehension of the text as one of the major problems. Also high in percentage (42%) indicated lack of comprehension of the questions, 38% blamed misinterpretation of the questions while 30% indicated poor reading skills and sentence construction errors as some of the instructional problems students face when answering comprehension questions in English. Smaller percentage (26%) of the teachers felt that the learners lacked vocabulary and wrote

incomplete answers while 24% indicated that the learners had the inability to isolate key points.

Twenty percent (20%) of the teachers indicated that lack of reading resources was another instructional problem students faced when answering English comprehension questions while 18% felt that unfamiliar comprehension passages and lack of imagination by the learners were some of the instructional problems students faced. Sixteen percent (16%) of the teachers felt that the learners lacked intrinsic motivation and enough time to read comprehension questions in English. Fourteen percent (14%) of the teachers felt that the learners had a problem of lifting information and they also had poor student teacher relations as a factor contributing to instructional problems students faced when answering comprehension questions in English.

4.5 Reasons for poor performance in English comprehension.

Teachers of English enumerated a number of reasons they felt contributed to poor performance in English comprehension. This information was obtained from the teacher's questionnaires. Table 4.5 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the reasons for the poor performance in English comprehension.

Table 4.5: Reasons for poor performance in English comprehension

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of exposure to reading materials	34	68
Inability to infer	22	44
Poor reading habits	19	38
Poor attitude towards reading comprehension	19	38
Poor mastery of the English language	15	30
Lack of communication in English	13	26
Mother tongue influence	12	24
Poor instructional methods by the teacher	6	12
Difficult comprehension passages	6	12
Poor preparation by the student	5	10
Lack of concentration by students	4	8
Laziness	1	2

From table 4.5, we note that lack of exposure to reading materials was the most common reason (68%) from the responses given by the teachers. Inability to infer from the text (44%) came as the second, most common reason given. A total of (38%) felt that poor reading habits also contributed negatively and this shared the same platform with poor attitude towards reading comprehension which had 38% from the responses given. A modest percentage of (30%) of the teachers felt that poor mastery of the English language was a reason for poor performance in English comprehension. Twenty six percent (26%) of the teachers indicated that lack of communication in English by the learners contributed to the poor performance in English comprehension while 30% felt mother-tongue too had a role to play in the poor performance of English comprehension. A small percentage of (12%) of the teachers indicated that poor instructional methods by the teacher and also the use of difficult comprehension passages as a likely reason for the poor performance in English comprehension.

Ten percent (10%) felt that poor preparedness by the student was a contributing factor while 8% indicated lack of concentration by the students played a role in the poor performance of English comprehension. A minimal percentage of (2%) of the teachers indicated laziness among the learners as a reason for the poor performance of English comprehension.

4.6: Common mistakes by students in comprehension writing.

It was also found useful to explore the common mistakes by students in comprehension writing. Table 4.6 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the teacher responses as reflected in the questionnaires.

Table 4.6 Common Mistakes by Students in Comprehension Writing.

Mistake	Frequency	Percentage
Spelling errors	38	76
Sentence construction errors	38	76
Misconceptions	34	64
Poor tenses	31	62
Punctuation mistakes	21	42
Poor handwriting	3	6

Figure 4.1: Common Mistakes by Students in Comprehension Writing

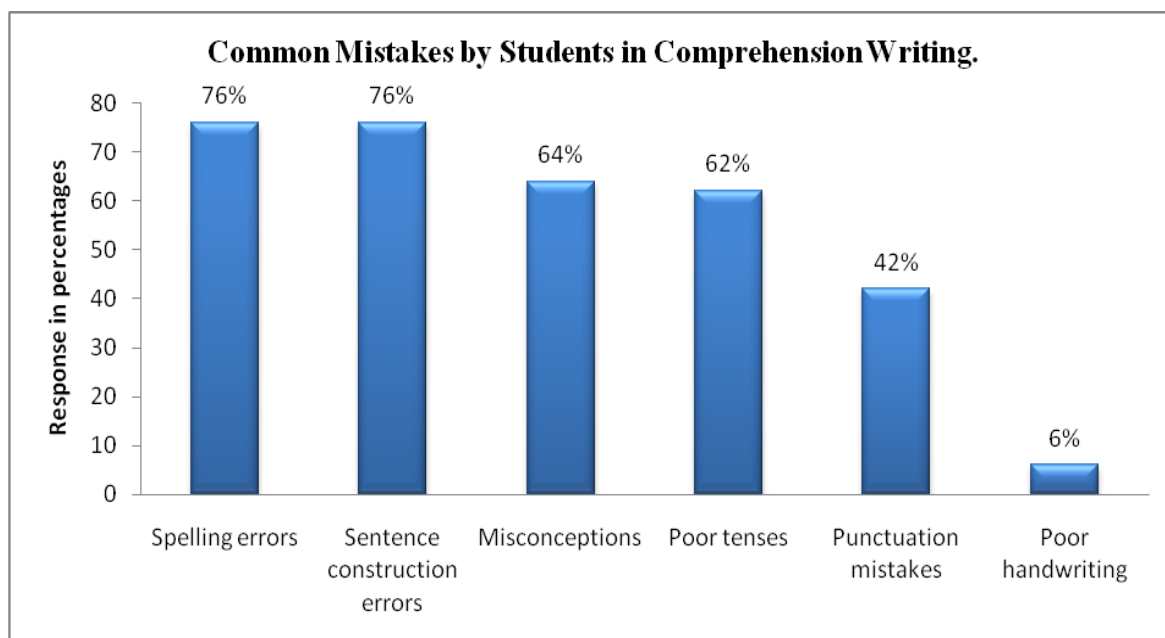


Table 4.6 shows that a large number of the teachers expressed that spelling errors (76%) and sentence construction errors (76%) took a larger part of the mistakes done by students in comprehension writing. Sixty four percent (64%) of them said that the students had misconceptions about the comprehension while 62% said the students had poor tenses. A modest percentage of (42%) of the teachers observed that learners had many punctuation mistakes while 6% felt poor handwriting contributed to student's poor performance in comprehension writing. These characteristics are also shown in figure 4.1

4.7 Textbooks commonly used by teachers of English.

The researcher was also interested in finding out textbooks commonly used by teachers. This information is presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Textbooks used by teachers of English

Textbook	Frequency	Percentage
Integrated English book 3	36	72
Head start English book 3	33	66
Excelling in English	23	46
Advancing in English	11	22
New horizons in English	8	16
Other texts	4	8

Figure 4.2: Textbooks used by teachers of English

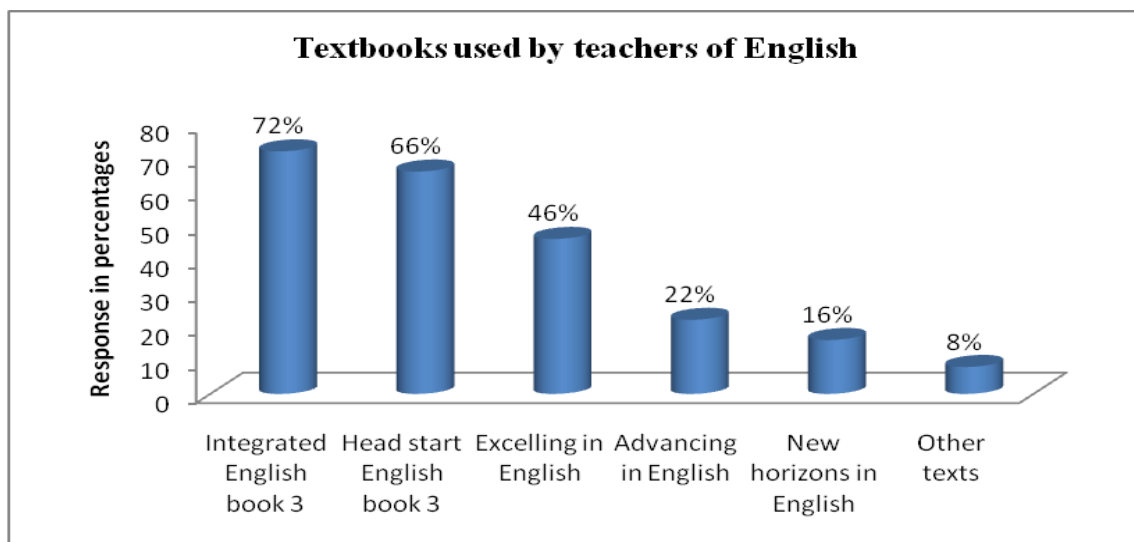


Table 4.7 shows frequency and percentage distribution of textbooks commonly used by teachers of English in form three. The results in the table shows that most teachers (72%) used the Integrated English book 3 by the Ministry of Education (2004). This is consistent with what Gathumbi (1995) found out in her research that the Integrated English books were being used in all schools. The situation has therefore not changed sixteen years later. The attraction to the text might be linked to the title which captures the content as an integrated subject. The fact it is also published by the Ministry, might also draw some interest. A large percentage of (66%) of the teachers used Head start English book 3, while 46% used Excelling in English

book 3. Some teachers occasionally used Advancing in English (22%) and new horizons in English (16%). The list was found to be limited which may mean that many teachers did not expose their learners to a variety of English comprehension materials.

4.8 Book-Student Ratio in Class

One of the items in the research questionnaire was to find out the average book-student ratio in class when teaching English Comprehension Reading. Instructional resources are not teaching substitutes and therefore must be used alongside various techniques of teaching in order to realize the lesson objectives. In relation to this the researcher through an item in the teacher's questionnaire sought to establish the frequency and percentage of the book-student ratio in class (table 4.8).

Table 4.8 Book –Student ratio in class

Book – student ratio	Frequency	Percentage
1-1	2	4
1-2	22	44
1-3	15	30
1-4	3	6
1-5	6	12
1-6	3	6
1-10	1	2

Table 4.8 shows that the common frequency and distribution of book-student ratio in form three is 1-2 and 1-3 at 44% and 30% respectively. Others range from 1-10. This has implications to reading and development of skills in English and by extension in comprehension. Similarly, N'Namdi (2005) found that the main problem in many rural areas is the lack of reading materials. This greatly affects the kind of reading learning classroom environments. Oyetunde et al. (1986) in Adeniji et al. (2010), in their study singled out lack of reading materials, poor preparation of teachers, lack of interest, poor libraries or none at all,

poor home background and lack of adult readers as models as some of the critical impediments to effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension in the primary school grades.

4.9 Instructional resources used in teaching English

The teachers' questionnaire looked at the instructional resources used by teachers of English. This item required teachers to indicate the availability and frequency of use of these resources in their lessons. Using a 4-point scale, the teacher was required to indicate the frequency of use of a particular instructional resources by checking if he/she used it frequently, occasionally, rarely or not at all in their lessons. The results are summarized in table 4.9

Table 4.9 Utilization of print media by teachers in lessons

Resource materials	Frequently used		Occasionally used		Rarely used		Not used	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Magazines	3	6	24	48	12	24	11	22
Pamphlets	3	6	12	24	17	34	15	30
Textbooks	50	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extracts	9	18	30	60	6	12	3	6
Class readers	7	14	18	36	12	24	9	18
Periodicals	1	2	3	6	8	16	26	52
Newspapers	12	24	20	40	12	24	4	8
Forms	1	2	12	24	17	34	15	30
Dictionaries and other reference books	38	76	8	16	3	6	-	-

The most frequently used media in secondary school in Vihiga District are no doubt textbooks (100%). Table 4.9 also shows that 76% and 24% of the teachers were using dictionaries and newspapers respectively. Most teachers (52%) never used periodicals in teaching English comprehension. Since majority of the teachers seem to confine themselves to textbooks as if they were the only media available for teachings, one is likely to argue that they are likely to acquire only limited knowledge and skills of improvising other cheap media such as

magazines. Mathew et al. (2012) also found that commercially produced instructional materials, for instance, dominate teaching practice in the United States available estimates indicate that 70 to 98 percent of teachers use textbooks at least weekly.

4.10. Criteria used by teachers in selection of instructional resources

Through the teachers questionnaire (Appendix IV) the researcher sought to establish the factors that teachers of English view as important in the selection instructional resources (table 4.10)

Table 4.10: Criteria used by the teachers in selection of instructional resources

Criteria	Important		Not important	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lesson objective	47	94	-	-
Nature of topics	42	84	6	12
Class size	37	74	13	26
Time	38	76	10	20
Cost	24	48	16	32
Availability of materials	39	78	5	10
Teachers guide	31	62	17	34
Level of learners	27	54	16	32
Illustrations	31	62	14	28
Variety and level of comprehension questions	26	52	24	48

Table 4.10 shows a large number of teachers rated most of the factors as important and worth considering when choosing instructional resources when teaching English language comprehension reading. Ninety four percent (94%) rated the lesson objectives as the most important factor a teacher of English should consider when selecting instruction resources, none felt the lesson objectives were not so important.

Eight four percent (84%) of the teachers felt nature of topics as being an important factor in the selection of instructional resources while 12% did not consider it an important factor. The number of students in the class (class size) was considered important by 74% of the teachers,

while 26% did not consider it an important factor in the selection of instructional resources. The time at the disposal of both the teachers and the learners was considered important by 76% of the teachers of English, while 20% considered it unimportant. Forty eight (48%) of the teachers indicated that the cost of instructional material was an important factor to consider when selecting instructional material for teaching English language comprehension reading, while 32% felt it was not an important factor.

Seventy eight (78%) of the teachers rated availability of instructional materials as an important factor to consider in selecting instructional resources, while only 10% did not consider it an important factor.

4.11 Techniques of Teaching English.

The frequency of use of various techniques to accompany resources when teaching English comprehension was one of the items in the questionnaire for teachers. Instructional resources must be used alongside various techniques in order to realize the lesson objectives. The researcher therefore sought to establish the frequency of use of various techniques of teaching. The results are summarized in table 4.11

Table 4.11: Techniques of teaching English comprehension

Technique	Often used		Occasionally used		Not used	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Dialogue	35	70	11	22	-	-
Music and song	2	4	34	68	8	16
Demonstrations	19	38	23	46	2	4
Role play	12	24	30	60	2	4
Dramatization	11	22	30	60	4	8
Use of resource people	7	7	5	10	32	64
Discussions	38	76	9	18	-	-
Assignments	40	80	6	12	2	4
Drills	9	18	23	46	11	22
Group work	32	64	15	39	1	2
Story telling	9	18	33	66	2	4
Field trips	-	-	17	34	28	56
Language games	7	14	28	56	12	24
Lecture method	9	18	28	56	9	18

Table 4.11 shows that the teachers of English used some techniques more than others when teaching English language comprehension reading. The use of assignments was the most often used (80%) while 12% used it occasionally. A paltry 4% never gave assignments. Seventy six percent (76%) indicated their students discussed quite often, 18% indicated that their students occasionally discussed while none of the teachers indicated that he/she had never asked their students to discuss when teaching the English language comprehension.

Majority of teachers (70%) indicated that they used dialogue as a technique, 22% indicated that they often used it. While none indicated failure to use dialogue. A large number of teachers (64%) also said that they often used group work as a technique, 30% indicated that they occasionally used it while 2% indicated failure to use group work. Thirty eight percent (38%) of the teachers used demonstration technique, 46% use it occasionally, while 4% never used demonstrations while teaching English comprehension.

Field trips, music and song, inviting resource people and language games were less extensively used techniques. None of the teachers often used field trips. However 34% use it occasionally while 56% indicated that they had never used field trips while teaching English comprehension reading. Four percent 4% of the teachers indicate that they often use music and song as a technique of teaching English comprehension reading. However 68% used it occasionally while 16% indicated that they had never used music and song while teaching English comprehension reading.

Sixty four percent (64%) indicated never having invited resource people in English to their schools. 10% indicated having occasionally invited them. Twenty four percent of the teachers had never employed language games while teaching English language comprehension, 56% occasionally used language games while 14% used them quite often.

4.12: Problems encountered by Teachers of English while teaching English reading comprehension.

Teachers of English listed a number of problems they encountered in teaching English reading comprehension. This information was given through the teacher's questionnaires.

Table 4.12 Problems encountered by Teachers of English while teaching English reading comprehension.

Problem	Frequency	Percentage
Lack or insufficient reading materials	38	76
Students not motivated	35	70
Time available is too little for effective reading	34	68
Classes are too big to be taught effectively	22	44
Not trained to teach English	3	6

Table 4.12 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the problems highlighted by the teachers of English in the teachers questionnaires conducted in the research. Most rated at 76% indicated lack of sufficient reading materials was a major problem. Most of the teachers (70%) indicated that the students were not motivated as another problem that affected the teaching of English reading comprehension. Many teachers also (68%) indicated that time available is too little for effective reading as a problem that impedes the teaching of English reading comprehension. Forty percent (40%) of the teachers indicated that the classes are too big to be taught effectively. Six percent (6%) of the teachers complained of not having been trained to teach English.

4.13 Student performance in comprehension test.

A test on comprehension was administered to the form three students in the selected schools of Vihiga District (Appendix III). The administration of the test was done by the teachers of English who had been briefed on the conditions and requirements. A part from the general requirement regarding test-writing in schools, one other important condition was that the test must be taken on the same day to avoid any possible leak. Teachers assured me of fulfilling this condition and this was also evident from the close schools I visited on that day. All papers were collected and marked by the researcher. The test comprised various types of questions and also demanded knowledge of some skills.

4.13.1 Contextual information

Contextual information covered factors about schools used in the research. Under the category of schools, we had boys, girls and mixed (boys and girls).

4.13. The category of schools used in the research.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	3	18.75
Girls	4	25
Mixed	9	56.25

Table 4.13. Shows the category of schools used in the research. Majority of the schools (56.25%) were mixed district schools. The least category of schools were the boys (18.75%) and the girl's schools (25%).

4.14. Student Bio Data.

A total of six hundred and seventy eight (678) students in form three (3) from sixteen (16) schools participated in the study. Table 4.14 shows the frequency and percentages of the students per school who participated in the study.

Table 4.14 (a): Students' Bio Data

Name of school	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Emusire high school	B	49	7.2
Gahumbwa secondary school	M	22	5.2
Goibei girls high school	G	51	7.5
Gavudunyi secondary school	M	42	6.2
Gisambai secondary school	M	35	5.1
Imusutsu secondary school	M	50	7.3
Jemovo secondary school	M	50	7.3
Kaimosi boys high school	B	42	6.2
Kaimosi girls high school	G	45	6.6
Kapsotik secondary school	M	37	5.4
Kaptik secondary school	M	50	7.3
Keveye girls high school	G	42	6.2
Losengeli secondary school	M	33	4.8
Munzatsi high school	M	47	6.9
Nyang'ori boys high school	B	44	6.5
St.Pauls Erusui girls high school	G	39	5.7
		678	100

(Gender Key: B=boys, G=girls, M=mixed school)

Generally, it can be said that most schools have normal class sizes of 40-50 students. The school with the largest number of students was Goibei girl's high school with fifty one (52) students while the school with the least was Gahumbwa secondary school with twenty two (22) students.

4.14.1 Gender distribution of students in the study.

The students involved in the study indicated the gender as required by one of the items in the study.

Table 4.14(b): Distribution of students by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	336	49.5
Male	342	50.5
Total	678	100

The numbers show a fair gender balance of students with 49.5% being females and 50.5% being males.

4.15 Performance of the learners in the English Reading comprehension.

Six hundred and seventy eight (678) form three students from sixteen (16) public secondary schools sat for an English comprehension test. The test lasted for one and a half hours (1^{1/2} hours). This information was obtained from the students scripts. The overall performance is presented in table 4.15.

Table 4.15. Performance of form three students from the selected public schools in Vihiga District

Code of school	Gender	Frequency	Mean percentage
A	B	49	63.49
B	M	22	61.9
C	G	51	60.1
D	M	42	59.1
E	M	35	55.5
F	M	50	53.1
G	M	50	56.2
H	B	42	54.5
I	G	45	57.7
J	M	37	50.1
K	M	50	53.4
L	G	42	54.9
M	M	33	56.7
N	M	47	71.5
O	B	44	64.1
P	G	39	59.9
		678	58.26

(Gender key: B- boys, G-girls, M-mixed school).

Table 4.15 shows most schools (9) performed below the overall mean of 58.26. The nine schools account for 56.25% of the schools that took part in the English reading comprehension test. A reasonable percentage of (43.75%) of the schools had a mean above the overall school mean, and they were seven (7) in total. School N had the highest mean of 71.5% while school O was the second best with 64.1%. A high school came third with 63.49%, school B (61.9%), C girl's high school 60.1%, P girls 59.9% while school D had a mean of 59.1% respectively.

The schools with the lowest mean were **K** secondary school (53.4%) , **F** secondary school (53.1%) and **J** secondary school (50.1%). Generally **I** would say that the performance in the English reading comprehension test was average.

4.15.1. Performance of Boys in English reading comprehension from selected schools in Vihiga District.

A total of three hundred and forty two (342) boys who accounted for fifty point five percent (50.5%) of the total population sat for the English comprehension test. The selected students came from twelve (12) different schools. The information has been presented in table 4.15.1.

Table 4.16 Performance of Boys in English Reading Comprehension

Code of school	Gender	Frequency	Mean
A	B	49	63.5
B	M	12	65.4
D	M	19	60.3
E	M	22	55.1
F	M	26	57.2
G	M	23	59.3
H	B	42	54.5
J	M	20	51.23
K	M	33	53.6
M	M	20	58.7
N	M	32	71.4
O	B	44	64.1
		342	59.53

(Gender key: **B**-boys, **M**-mixed school.)

Table 4.15.1 shows the performance of boys in the English comprehension test. The mean score was fifty nine point five three percent (59.53%). School **N** had the highest mean score of 71.4% while school **B** came second with 65.4%. school **O** came third with sixty four point one (64.1%), school **D** 60.3%, school **G** 59.3%, while school **M** had a mean of 58.7%.

Six schools had a mean score that was below the general mean of 59.55%. **G** secondary school had a mean of 59.3% while **F** secondary had fifty seven point two three percent (57.23%). **E** secondary school had a mean score of 55.1% while **H** boys school 54.5%. **K** secondary school had a mean score of fifty three point six percent (53.6%) while **J** secondary school had a mean score of 51.23%.

4.15.2 . Performance of Girls in English reading Comprehension form selected school s in Vihiga District.

There were three hundred and thirty six (336) girls who sat for the English reading Comprehension test. This was forty nine point five percent (49.5%) of the total population that sat for the test. The candidates came from thirteen (13) selected secondary schools in the district. This information has been summarily presented in table 4.17

Table 4.17 Performance of Girls who sat for the English Comprehension test

Code of school	Gender	Frequency	Mean percentage
B	M	10	58.4
C	G	51	60.2
D	M	23	57.9
E	M	13	55.9
F	M	24	49.0
G	G	27	53
H	M	45	57.7
J	M	17	48.9
L	G	42	54.9
M	M	13	54.7
N	M	15	71.6
P	G	39	59.9
		336	56.56

(Gender key: M-mixed school, G-Girls,)

Table 4.17 shows the performance of girls in the English Comprehension test where they attained a mean score of fifty-six point five six (56.56%). **N** secondary school had the highest mean score of seventy one point six (71.6%) while **C** girl's high school came second with a

mean score of 60.1%. **P** girls came third with a mean score of fifty nine point nine (59.9%) followed by **B** secondary with a mean score of 58.4%. **D** secondary school had a mean score of fifty seven point nine (57.9) and it was followed closely by **H** girls school with a mean score of fifty seven point seven (57.7%).

4.15.3 Performance by Gender in the English Comprehension Test among form three students of Vihiga District.

This research was also interested in finding out the manner in which the different genders would perform in the English comprehension test. Table 4.18 gives a summary of the performance of the English comprehension test as per gender.

Table 4.18 Performance of the learners by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Mean score
Male (Boys)	342	50.5	59.53
Female (Girls)	336	49.5	56.56

Table 4.18 shows that the males had a higher score of fifty nine point five three (59.53). This made them to be the better performers in the English comprehension test compared to the females who had a means core of fifty six point five six (56.56). These findings contrast with some previous research that suggests that females are better foreign language learners than males (Sunderland 2000). Gambell and Hunter (1999) also observed that female students tend to outperform their male counterparts in languages and these differences may be attributed to gender socialization in and out of the home. They argue that girls may be more frequently engage in literacy activities with their parents during the early years, prior to starting school, perhaps because of gender socialization that portrays reading as a female activity.

4.16 Learner's performance in word meaning skill.

In this study, the students were required to underline one meaning from those given on the right that is nearest in meaning to the given word. These were to be answered based on the passage they had read. The words were:

- (a) Vanish: Appear, fade, faint and end, disappear.
- (b) Composer: Conductor, pianist, bandsman, writer, violinist.
- (c) Mispronounced: Wrote wrongly, missed, spoke wrong, made fun of, spelt strongly.
- (d) Quay: Landing-stage, sea-shore, port, goods-yard, beach
- (e) Exercise Body: movements, practice-tests, stretching, running, skipping
- (f) Chord: Length of string, thin rope, piano keys, high notes, notes played together.
- (g) Scales: Climbs, musical term, weighing instrument, the covering on the skin of fish.

Table 4.19 gives a summary of the performance of the learners in word meaning.

Table 4.19 Learner's performance in word meaning.

Item	Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
(a)	0	1	0.1
(b)	1	6	0.9
(c)	2	16	2.4
(d)	3	41	6.0
(e)	4	145	21.4
(f)	5	209	30.8
(g)	6	171	25.2
(h)	7	89	13.1
Total		678	100.0

Table 4.16 shows the performance of the students in the area of word meaning. Out of the six hundred and seventy eight (678) learners who answered the questions, only 89 (13%) scored the maximum seven marks (7), while 171 (25.2%) scored six out of the seven questions. Two hundred and nine students scored five out of the seven questions therefore accounting for thirty

point eight percent (30.8%) of the students. One hundred and forty five (145) students scored four of the seven questions. This accounting for twenty one point four percent (21.4%) of the total number of students. Sixty four students (64) scored three marks and below out of the seven questions. This was nine point four percent (9.4%) of the total number of students.

The results from the table may mean that very little attention is given to teaching of vocabulary skills on words in context by the teachers. This may have contributed to the low performance in this skill. This seems to agree with Fyfe and Mitchell (1985) who noted that some teachers bore down learners with general vocabularies without considering them in the context.

4.17 Learners performance of words in context.

Smith (1973) observes that inferring meaning of words in a text is the most efficient way to determine the meaning of a new word. This technique is mainly acquired through wide reading and predicting, which is only accurate through wide exposure to correct language usage that would in turn build up the learners' vocabulary.

This study sought to establish the students' ability to place words in context. The questions from the passage were:

- i. Where is Bergen?
- ii. Who sent lobsters to Scotland?
- iii. Why did grandfather have a big funeral?
- iv. Where is the town was the Grieg's sail from Scotland?
- v. In what year did Alexander Grieg sail from Scotland?
- vi. How did Edward know that his mother listed whenever he practiced?

Table 4.20 Learner's performance of words in context.

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
1	7	1.0
2	16	2.4
3	100	14.7
4	270	39.8
5	229	33.8
6	56	8.3

Table 4.20 Outlines the performance of the learners as far as words in context are concerned. Out of the six hundred and seventy eight (678) students who sat for the English comprehension tests only 56 (8.3%) of the students scored the maximum 6 marks. Two hundred and twenty nine (229) students representing thirty three point eight percent (33.8%) scored five out of the six marks in getting words in context. Two hundred and seventy students scored four (4) marks out of total six (6) marks representing thirty nine point eight percent (39.8%). Fourteen point seven percent (14.7%) representing one hundred (100) students scored four out of the six marks. Sixteen (16) students representing two point four percent (2.4%) scored two (2) out of the six marks. Only seven students scored one (1) out of the six marks representing only one percent of the total 678 students. The overall performance can be rated as above average.

4.21 Learners performance in Literal Comprehension.

These questions sought to establish literal abilities of the learners when answering comprehension questions. The questions included.

- i. What did Alexander Grieg change his name to?
- ii. What do you think Edward did for a living when he grew up?
- iii. There was a smell of tar in town. What would tar be used for?
- iv. Not all men in Bergen could be fishermen. Name two other jobs, apart from fishermen and musician that a man might have done to earn a living.
- v. How is it possible to draw a line across the North Sea?

Table 4.21 gives a summary of the performance of the learners in getting the literal comprehension of the English Comprehension questions they were asked.

Table 4.21 The performance of the students in literal comprehension

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	15	2.2
1	218	32.2
2	196	28.9
3	139	20.5
4	68	10.0
5	33	4.9
6	9	1.3
Total	678	100.0

Table 4.21 shows that only one point three percent (1.3%) of the students scored the maximum six (6) marks in getting the literal meaning. 4.9% of the learners scored five marks out of the total six marks while ten percent (10%) of the learners scored four marks (4) out of the maximum score of six (6). Twenty point five percent (20.5%) of the learners scored three (3) marks out of the maximum six. Thirty four point four percent (34.4%) of the learners scored one mark and below out of the total six marks.

4.19 Learners performance in inference from single.

The researcher was also interested in finding out the learner's performance of inference from single.

To test the learners in inference from single, the researcher asked the students to use their own words to explain the meaning of:

- i. 'He found he got a richer sound'
- ii. 'Edward found the slow sad music very moving'

Table 4.22 Learners' performance of inference from single.

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	371	54.7
1	242	35.7
2	65	9.6
Total	678	100.0

The results in table 4.22 shows that most of the students (54.7%) failed to score a mark in inference from single. This indicates that the learners have a great deficiency in inferring meaning from single. Two hundred and forty two (242) students scored one mark out of the maximum two thus representing thirty five point seven percent (35.7%) of the students who sat for the English comprehension test. Only nine point six percent (9.6%) of the learners scored the maximum score of two (2) marks in this area of inference from single. Learners in general found this skill difficult.

4.20 Learners performance in multiple strings

The students were further tested in inference from multiple strings. To test this, they were asked to identify four words from the following list that they thought were most important to the story: Bergen, concert, teacher, piano, harbour, Scotland, funeral, Grieg, horizon, child. Table 4.23 gives a summary of the frequency and percentage distribution of the learner's performance in inference for multiple strings.

Table 4.23 Learners performance in inference from multiple strings

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	12	1.8
1	39	5.8
2	190	28.0
3	390	56.5
4	47	6.9
Total	678	100.0

The results in table 4.23 show that only forty seven (47) students representing six point nine percent (6.9%) scored the maximum four marks in inference from multiple strings. Three hundred and ninety (390) students score three out of the four marks thus representing fifty seven point five (57.5%) of the total number of students. One hundred and ninety students (190) representing twenty-eight percent (28%) of the learners scored two marks of the total four marks. Seven point six percent (7.6%) of the students scored one marks or less in inference from multiple strings. This indicates above average performance.

4.21 Learners performance in interpretation of metaphor.

The learner's interpretation of metaphor was also tested.

The following questions was employed to measure the students' interpretation of Metaphor 'Edward's mother was a good teacher and the boy grew up to be a famous man'. From what you know already and from what you have read in the story, decide which two of the following statements are true and underline them

- (a) Some famous musicians have had good teachers.
- (b) Good teachers make all their pupils famous.
- (c) Hard practice makes all the pupils famous.
- (d) Many famous musicians did not need a good teacher.'

In relation to this the researcher through an item in the student's English comprehension test (Appendix III) set to establish frequency of the learner's performance in interpretation of metaphor (table 4.24)

Table 4.24 Learners performance in interpretation of metaphor

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	146	21.5
1	458	67.6
2	74	10.9
Total	678	100.0

Table 4.24 shows that a majority of the learners did not score well in the interpretation of metaphor. One hundred and forty six students (146) representing twenty one point five percent (21.5%) scored zero (0) in this area of interpretation of metaphor. Four hundred and fifty eight (458) students scored only one (1) of the two (2) marks representing sixty seven point six percent (67.6%). Only seventy four (74) students scored the maximum of two marks which was only ten point nine percent (10.9%) of the students who sat for the English comprehension test. This shows below average performance.

4.22 Learners performance in Finding Salient ideas

The students were tested in the skills of finding the salient ideas in comprehension. The question was 'Using what you have learnt from the story about Grieg's home and family, underline three sentences from the six below which best seem to fit a story with a title. ' A Winter Evening at the Grieg's Home'.

- (a) Edward sat alone in the house with nothing to do.
- (b) The room appeared cosy and warm in the light of the oil-lamps
- (c) The house was soon to be filled with the sound of music
- (d) Edward's mother was baking in the kitchen the rest of the family sat reading.

- (e) The breeze from the window was very pleasant
- (f) The Grieg family sat by the log fire awaiting the arrival of their friends.

Table 4.25 Summary of learner’s performance in finding salient ideas

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	27	4.0
1	356	52.5
2	271	40.0
3	24	3.5
Total	678	100.0

The results of table 4.25 show that only twenty four (24) learners got the maximum three (3) scores representing three point five percent (3.5%). Two hundred and seventy one (271) learners scored two out of the three marks in finding salient ideas. This represented forty percent (40%) of the six hundred and seventy eight (678) learners. Majority of the students, three hundred and eighty three (383), representing fifty four point five percent (54.5%) of the learners scored less than one (1) mark out of the total three (3) marks. This is a clear indicator that it’s a major area that needs attention in the area of English language reading comprehension.

4.23 Learners performance in making judgment.

To measure their skill of judgment, the students were asked to pick out the two things, from the list provided, they thought had most to do with Edward learning to play the piano.

- (a) The weather
- (b) An interested mother
- (c) A rich family
- (d) Grandfather selling lobsters
- (e) The beautiful country side and the boats in the harbour

(f) A love of music

Table 4.26 gives a summary of the frequency and percentage distribution of the performance of learners in making judgment.

Table 4.26 Learners' performance in making judgment.

Marks scored	Frequency	Percentage
0	22	3.2
1	288	42.5
2	368	54.3
Total	678	100.0

The results in table 4.26 reveals that most students are good at finding judgment. Three hundred and sixty eight (368) learners scored the maximum two marks representing fifty four point three percent (54.3%) of the total number of students. Three hundred (300) learners representing forty five point seven percent (45.7%) of the learners scored one mark and below in making judgment. Performance in skills related to comprehension is varying. There are those which were on the poor or low performance and these included: literal meaning getting word in context, inference from single strings, metaphor interpretation and salient ideas. On the higher side in performance were: word meaning, multiple strings and making judgment. On the balance the performance is not good enough on comprehension skills. Most weakness seem to be related to reading skills which are highlighted by smith (1971) and Goodman (1969) in their theory of reading which emphasize in part that comprehension can effectively be attained if a reader can infer meaning in the context. This comes through practice and exposure to a variety of texts which seem to be lacking in most schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

After having stated the problem, reviewed the relevant literature, collected and analyzed data, the researcher found it imperative to summarize, conclude and make recommendations related to learner-problems in the development of language reading comprehension. The main focus of this study was to establish problems learners face when handling English Reading Comprehension. Descriptive statistics as well as qualitative data analysis were used to analyze the data. The data collected by the use of two research instruments namely a questionnaire for language teachers and an English Comprehension test for the learners.

5.1 Summary of the study main findings.

In Kenya, English is learnt and taught as a second language. It is also the medium of instruction in the schools. Fluency in the language is therefore essential in order to enable the students to perform better in most subjects. Proficiency in English is of much benefit to student when they leave school and communicate at profession, commercial, academic and daily transactions. English is one of the subjects in the secondary school curriculum that has continuously been performed poorly in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examination. The manner of teaching the subject and more specifically the teaching of English language reading comprehension may be one of the problems. The purpose of the study was to make a general survey of the problems students face when answering English reading comprehension questions. To accomplish this, three questions were formulated.

5.1.1 Questions in English reading comprehension that present problems to students.

The first question was intended to find out the tasks in English reading comprehension that present problems to students. The findings of the research showed that the questions that dealt with literal meaning, salient ideas, getting the meaning of words in context and inference from single strings showed a low performance in the English comprehension test. It is imperative to note that these types of questions play an important role if the learners are to pass their examinations because they are tested up to the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E) level. Questions dealing with finding judgment, word meaning and inference from multiple strings were performed fairly well.

Due to the importance of these questions in the understanding of English language comprehension reading, the researcher sought to find out techniques of teaching used by the teachers of English. It was found out that many teachers used assignments, group work, discussions and dialogue. However, chances are there that the learners are not closely monitored. Resource people who have the experience and can play a key role towards solving the problem of performance of certain questions were hardly used.

5.1.2 Language skills that hinder students from answering questions in English reading comprehension.

The second research question was meant to investigate the language skills that hinder students from answering questions in English reading comprehension. Language ability is an important factor that affects comprehension. Reading is a complex process and needs the learners to make effective use of skills and strategies in order to understand the texts. It is suggested that teachers need to reassess their classroom teaching and practices and to focus on reading activities to promote a higher level of reading skills. Indeed cooperation between the teachers

and the learners is needed to promote equal development in academic skills and language ability.

The findings from the research show that vocabulary skills, literary ability, interpretation of metaphor and inference from multiple and single strings skills were not well performed in the English comprehension test. It becomes almost impossible to perform well in English language reading comprehension if the students cannot grasp the skills required to perform the task.

5.1.3 Problems encountered by teachers of English while teaching English reading comprehension.

The third question sought to find out the problems that teachers of English face while teaching English reading comprehension. Many teachers complained of lack of insufficient reading materials was their major impediment towards teaching English reading comprehension. Most of the teachers also indicated that the students were not motivated and thus greatly affected the teaching of English reading comprehension. It was also noted by a number of teachers that time available for teaching English reading comprehension was insufficient therefore curtailing their efforts to effectively teach English reading comprehension.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following were the conclusions of the study:-

- The most common instructional problem teachers detected about learners were lack of comprehension of the reading comprehension passages they were provided with. It was also discovered that the learners did not comprehend the questions from the given English comprehension passages. Misinterpretation of questions from the comprehension passage and poor reading skills were also a major deterrent towards effectively teaching English reading comprehension.

- Though factors such as class size, number of students in a class, cost of material, teachers' guidance, level of learners and the variety and level of comprehension questions are important criteria when selecting instructional resources for the teaching of English language reading comprehension, many teachers indicated they were unimportant. Such a case is disturbing because it would be unproductive to attempt to teach a group of slow readers using printed materials only. This is because a majority may end up reading the English language comprehension passively. Consequently, such students end up developing negative attitudes towards reading and learning as a whole. Majority of the teachers (94%) felt that the teaching objectives were the sole most important factor to consider in the selection of instructional materials to teach English reading comprehension. Many teachers (84%) thought that nature of the topics were the most important factors to consider. Most teachers did not consider factors such as variety and level of comprehension questions and the level of the learners while selecting instructional resources in the teaching of English reading comprehension. Disregard of important characteristics related to selection of instruction resources to teach English language reading comprehension may lead to poor results.
- Though there were many problems that hinder the effective teaching of English reading comprehension, shortage of media is a serious issue. Little can be gained if more than three students share a textbook in a reading comprehension. Such was the case in many of the schools that took part in the research. No wonder teachers cited poor reading habits among their learners as one of the problems that hinder the effective teaching of English reading comprehension. A shortage of textbooks and support reading materials is a hindrance to effective teaching of reading comprehension because some students may not access the few textbooks that are available.

5.3 Recommendation for action.

Arising from the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- Language educators should take into consideration the differences between the two genders and promote equal learning opportunities in order to adjust the apparent differences between male and female students, with the aim of avoiding the possible gender gap in educational outcomes.
- School administrators and other agencies such as the Ministry of Education should place more importance on the development of skills of teaching English language reading comprehension by organizing frequent growth activities such as workshops and seminars. The theme of development of English language reading comprehension should be emphasized during such seminars.
- Teachers should choose reading assignments carefully to meet individual needs and interests. They should be made to understand the concepts and skills involved that they may know how to go about the work assigned. The students should therefore be told the purpose and relevance of the assignments.
- Teacher trainers should guide teacher trainees on how to effectively teach English language reading comprehension. They should be made to understand the effectiveness of instructional resources in teaching is a carefully planned process. The trainees should be able to consider a number of factors when one is selecting instructional resources.
- Students should be encouraged to read more informative texts as these types of texts are very important for academic and professional activities. Content familiarity can also significantly affect overall comprehension performance. Knowledge of text content can facilitate reading comprehension during the encoding/decoding process by providing a

knowledge structure to which readers can compare and fit pieces of incoming information, thus making it possible to assimilate text information without the need to consider all the words or phrases in the text.

- Reading aloud can be a useful diagnostic tool and can be built into class activities when new readings are introduced. Since students with a history of reading difficulties might be reluctant to read aloud in class. It is important to create a safe environment, trust and respect for all. Reading aloud also gives an opportunity to model active reading strategies (highlighting significant information, chunking or making brief summary notes on the margin).

5.4 Recommendations for further research.

- The limitations of this research suggest the need for future research to include other methods of comprehension measurements, such as written recall and cloze test. Further research may also include other factors, such as language ability, that can be examined simultaneously with content familiarity and gender.
- Future research may wish to replicate the present study in terms of theoretical and methodological approaches. The aim of the replications should not be primarily to find out whether the findings of the current study would be the same or not, but to understand how and where learner-problems in the development of English language comprehension originate.

REFERENCES

- Adams M.J and Collins, A (1979).** A Schema-theoretical View of Reading. in R O Freedle (ed.), New Directions in Discourse Processing (vol.2). Norwood. NJ: Ablex publishing.
- Adeniji, M. A. & Omale, A. (2010).** Teaching reading comprehension in selected primary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria. Library philosophy practice
- Adunyaritigun, D. (2012).** “An investigation of factors affecting English language reading success: A case study of an EFL college reader,” Thammasat Review, 7(1), 244-271
- Anderson,R.C. and Biddle, W.B.(1975).** On Asking People Questions about what They are Reading In G.Bower (Ed.) Psychology of Learning and Motivation, 9, New-York: Academic Press.
- Andre, T.(1979).** Does Answering High- level Questions while Reading Facilitate Productive Learning in Review of Educational Research. 49,2,280-318.
- Aulls, M.V. (1978).** Development and Remedial Reading in the Middle Grades. in: Froese, V. and Straw, S.(eds.) Diagnostic Monitoring of Skill and Knowledge (pp 27-50). Hillsdal, NJ Erlbaum.
- Baker, D.V. (1985).** Language Testing. London: Edward Arnold.
- Barret, A. (1968)** Reading and Comprehension. London. The British Council Printing and Publishing Department.
- Bauer, R.H. (1977).** Memory Process in Children with Learning Disabilities: Evidence for deficient rehearsal in Journal of Experimental child psychology, 24, 415-430
- Bell, J. (1993).** Doing Your Research projects. Second Edition. A guide for first time Researchers in Education and Social Science. Buckingham Open University Press.
- Best J.W. and Kehr, J.V. (1992).** Research in Education. New Delhi :Prentice Hall.

- Carrel, P.L. (1988)** Interactive Text Processing Implication for ESL/ Second Language Reading Classrooms, in Carrel, P, Devine J. and Eskey, D. (eds.), Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading. New York:Cambridge.
- Castle,P.(1988)** How to take Tests.Chicago:Rand MC Nally
- Champaruang, K. (1999).** English achievement of Mathayomsuksa 6 students (Language Program) in government schools in educational region 5. Unpublished master's thesis, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Chuenta, C. (2012).** Reading materials for graduate students in administration. Unpublished master's thesis, Khon Kaen University, Khon Kaen, Thailand.
Conditions. M.Ed. Projects, Nairobi University, Nairobi.
- Daily Nation, 8th March 1997.**
- Dale, C (1998)** Language Learning. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Dale P.(1974)** Teaching Them to Read. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Dooling, D. and Christiaansen, R, (1970).** Episodic and Semantic aspects of Memory for Prose, in. Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory, 3, 428-436.
- Downing L.(1977)** Reading:Foundations and Instructional Strategies. New York: The Dial Press.
- East African Standard 29th February 2008.**
- Ekwall, E. (1976)** Diagnosis and Remediation of the Disabled Reader, Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc
- Ellis, R. (1984)** Classroom Second Language Development. Oxford: Pergamon.
- Eskey, D.E. (1988)** Holding in the Bottom, an Interactive Approach to Second Language Reading. New York: Cambridge.
- Frase, L.T (1970).** Learning from Prose Material: Length of Passage Knowledge of Results and Position of Questions. Journal of Educational Psychology. 58,266-272

- Froese, V. and Straw, S. (1988)** (eds.). Diagnostic Monitoring of Skill and Knowledge (pp 27-50). Hillsdal, NJ Erlbaum.
- Fyfe, R. and Mitchell, E. (1985)** Reading Strategies and Other Assessment. Windsor, Berkshire: NFER-NELSON Publishing Company Ltd.
- Gathumbi, A.W, (1995)** “Verbal Discourse Events in a Bilingual Formal Setting: Instructional Procedures in ESL Classrooms in Kenya Secondary Schools”. Unpublished. PhD Thesis. University of Reading, Britain.
- Golinkoff, R M (1975)** A comparison of Reading Comprehension Process in Good and Poor Comprehenders. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 11,4,623-659
- Golinkoff, R M & Rosinki, R. (1976)**. Decoding, Semantic Processing and Reading Comprehension Skill, *Child Development*, 49, 252-258
- Goodman, E. & Burke. L (1972)** Reading Miscue Invertor. New York: Macmillan.
- Goodman, E.(1973)** Analysis of Oral Reading Miscues. In F. Smith (ed.), Psycholinguistics and Reading. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston.
- Goodman,P (1967)** Learning Comprehension. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books
- Gough, P.B. (1972)** One Second of Reading. In J.F. Karanaugh and I.A. Matongly (eds.), Language by Ear and Eye. Cambridge, MA; M.I.T press.
- Harris, A.J. (1970)**. How to Improve Reading Ability, 5th ed. New York: Longmans.
- Harris,C & Sipay G.(1975)** Developing Reading Skills. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.
- Heilman,D.(1961)** Teaching reading in High School. Indianapolis: BOBBS-Merrill co.
- Hughes, A.& Porter D. (1983)**. Current Developments in Language Testing. London: Academic press Inc ltd.
- Intarasombat, P. (2012)**. The effect of vocabulary development approach on Mathayomsuksa 4 students’ English reading comprehension. Unpublished master’s thesis, Khon kaen University, Khon kaen, Thailand.

- Kamau, J.W (1996).** ‘The Role of Science Teachers in Fostering Students’ Academic Language Skills: A Case Study of Selected Secondary Schools of Kikuyu Division. Kiambu District.M.ed Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Keefe, E., Copeland, S. & DiLuzzio, H. (2010).**Creating print rich environments to support literacy instruction: Quality literacy instruction for students with autism spectrum disorders. Shawnee mission, Kan: AAPC Textbooks.
- Keiras, D.E. (1979)** Modeling Reading Times in Different Tasks with a Simulation Model of Comprehension, Tuscon, AZ: University of Arizona.
- Kimani,P.M (1999)** “An Analysis of the methods and Resources used in the Teaching of History and Government in selected schools of Thika District”. Unpublished M.Ed Thesis, Kenyatta University.”
- Kinstch, W. (1974).** The Representation of Meaning in Memory. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- KNEC, (2000)** K.C.S.E Regulations and Syllabuses. GOK: Government Printer.
- KNEC, (2007)** The Year 2006 KCSE Examination Report. GOK: Government Printer.
- KNEC, (2009)** The Year 2008 KCSE Examination Report. GOK: GovernmentPrinter
- KNEC, (2011)** The Year 2010 KCSE Examination Report. GOK: Government Printer.
- Laberge, D. & Samuels S.J (1974).** Towards a Theory of Automatic Information Processing in Reading. Cognitive Psychology, 6,293-323.
- Latham, W. (1968)** “Are Today’s Teachers Adequately Trained for the Teaching of Reading?” In Melnik, A Merrit (eds.): Reading Today and Tomorrow. London: University Press
- Longsombun, A. (2009).** Achievement in English of Mathayomsuksa 6 students (Language Program) in government schools in educational region 1. Unpublished master’s thesis,

- Lunzer, E.& Gardner, K (1979)** The Effective Use of Reading London: Heinemann.
- Mathew, M.C & Grover, J. W.** (2012). Choosing Blindly: Instructional materials, Teacher effectiveness and the Common core. A report of the Brown center on education policy at Brookings Institution.
- Mingsakoon, P. (2013).** A comparative study of vocabulary learning strategies between Mathayomsuksa 6 students in science and arts programs at Hunkhapittayakom school, Chainat Province. Unpublished master's thesis, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Mogaka, D.O.(2000).** 'Teachers Instructional Behaviours and Learners' Participation in Secondary English Language Classrooms in Nairobi. M.Ed Thesis. Kenyatta University.
- Morrison, F.G, Giodarni, B & Nagy, J (1977)** Reading Disability: An Information Processing Analysis. Science, 196, 77-79.
- Mouly, G.J (1978).** Educational Research: The Art and Science of Investigation. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
- Mugenda,O.M & Mugenda ,A (2003)** Research methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Nairobi:Acts Press
- N'Namdi, K.A. (2005).** Guide to teaching reading at the primary school level. France: UNESCO
- Ndavi,C.(1982)** The Relationship between Schools, Teachers and English Language Course Books in Kenya Secondary Schools . M.A. Thesis London, University of London.
- Newman, A. (1979).** Later Achievements of Pupils under Achieving in First Grade. Reading Research Quarterly xix 3
- Obondo, M.A. (1984).** To identify and Evaluate the Existing Practices in Parental Involvement in the Teaching of Reading in Selected Primary Schools. M.E.D Thesis, Unpublished, Nairobi.

- Obuya-Deya, P.(1980).** A Study of the Relationship between C.P.E English Comprehension Testing and Classroom Practices in Standard Six and Seven in Kenya M.A Thesis. Unpublished Nairobi. University, Nairobi.
- Ofofu, G. O. (2012).** Assessment Techniques and English Language Teachers' Extent of Emphasis in Schools. *Research Journal in Organizational Psychology and Educational Studies (RJOPES)*, 1(2), 90
- Oller,J.W. (1979).** Language Tests at School.London:Longmans.
- Owino, R.F. (1987).** A Survey of the Teaching of Reading in English M.Ed. Project: Kenyatta University.
- Oyetunde, T. O. & Muodumogu, C. A. (1986).** Parents' involvement in their children's literacy development: findings and implications for building effective home-school partnerships. *Ilorin journal of education*. www.unilorin.ed.ng
- Oyetunde, T. O. & Muodumogu, C. A. (2007).** Parents' involvement in their children's literacy development: findings and implications for building effective home-school partnerships. *Ilorin journal of education*. www.unilorin.ed.ng
- Palinscar, A & Brown, R (1984)** Beginning to Read: Thinking and Learning. San Diego: Academic Press
- Polmanee, S., & Sinsuwan, P. (2011).** Needs and problems in English usage of graduate students in teaching Thai and social science compared with students in teaching English. Unpublished master's thesis, Chiang Mai University, Bangkok, Thailand.Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Pressley, M.(2006)** Reading Instruction that Works: The Case for Balanced Instruction. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Purisodom, C. (2009).** The English achievement of Mathyomsuksa six students in language programme in government schools, educational 3. Unpublished master's thesis, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Reanjaroen suk, P. (2009).** An Investigation into the English vocabulary proficiency in a natural science context of first year arts and science oriented university students. Unpublished master's thesis, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.

- Reder, L.M. (1979)** The Role of Elaborations in Memory for Prose. Memory and Cognition, 11, 221-234.
- Reed, K.S.(2000)** Cognition: Theory and Applications: Boston: Brooks
- Richards,J.P. & DiVesta, F.J.(1974).** Type and Frequency of Questions in Textual Material. Journal of Educational Psychology; 354-362
- Rosenshine E.(1980)** language. New York: Harcourt Brace
- Rummelhart, D.E. (1975)** Notes a Schema for Stories. In D.G Brew and A. Collins (eds.) Representation and Understanding: Studies in Cognitive Science. New York: Academic Press.
- Rummelhart, D.E. (1977)** Towards an Interactive Model of Reading in Attention and Hillsdale, N.J: Erlbaum.
- Schwartz, S. (1984).** Measuring Reading Competence. New York: Plenum Press.
- Shipman, M. (1983).** Assessment in Primary and Middle Schools. London, Canberra: Croom Help.
- Smith, F. (1971).** Understanding Reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. in: Rinehart and Winston.
- Smith, F. (1973)** Psycholinguistics and Reading. New York: Holts, Rinehart and Winston.
- Smith, F. (1975).** Comprehension and Learning. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winstone. In: Frose, V. and Straw, S.B.
- Songsiri, S. (2009).** *A case study English reading skills of grade 12 students*. Unpublished master's thesis, Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Southgate V, Arnold & Johnson (1981)** Extending Beginning Reading. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- Spiro, R.J. (1977).** Remembering Information from Text: The “State of the Schema” Approach. In R.C Anderson, R.J. Spire, and W.E Montague (eds.), Schooling and the Acquisition of Knowledge. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

- Spring, C. & Capps, C. (1974)** Encoding Speed, Rehearsal and Probed Recall of Dyslexic Boys. Journal of Educational Psychology, 66, 780 – 786
- Stanovich, K.E. (1980)** Intelligence, Cognitive Skills and Early Reading Progress. Reading Research Quarterly *xix*3
- Stein, N.L. & Glenn, C. (1979).** An Analysis of Story Comprehension in Elementary in R.O.Freedle (ed.), New Directions in Discourse Processing (vol.2). Norwood. NJ: Ablex.
- Subphadoongchone, P. (2010).** Lexical guessing in a scientific context: a case study of first-year Mahidol science students. Unpublished master's thesis, Mahidol University, Bangkok, Thailand.
- Tanghirunwat, C. (2013).** The reading difficulties faced by Malaysia engineering students in telecommunication industry in reading English technical textbooks and manuals. Unpublished master's thesis, The University of Malaysia Chamber of Commerce.
- Thani, J. (2009).** Achievement in English of Mathayomsuksa 6 students (Language Program) in government schools in educational region 10. Unpublished master's thesis, Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand
- Thorndyke, P.W. (1977).** Cognitive Structures in Comprehension and Memory for Narrative Discourse. Cognitive Psychology, 9, 77-110
- Torgeson, J.K. & Goldman, T. (1977).** Bases for Effective Reading. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press U.K: NFER
- Ulsin, J. (1980)** Foreign – Language Reading Research Recent Trends and Future Prospects. Journal of Research in Reading 3:
- Wagesa, B.P. (1985)** A Study of the Concepts of Reading Held by Secondary Schools Teachers of English Language in Bungoma District ,Western Kenya Unpublished M. Ed Project, Kenyatta University.
- Wario, H. (1981)** Reading Attainment and Its Relationship to Some School Conditions. M.Ed Project, Kenyatta University.

Wong, B. Wong, R. & Foth, D. (1977). Reading Tests in the Classroom. Windsor,

Youngsathien, P. (2009). *An achievement of learning English of secondary school students attending English curriculum in public schools in Cyprus Metropolis.*

APPENDIX I: Vihiga District Public Schools

NAME	TYPE
1. BUNYORE GIRLS	GB
2. EBUNANGWE SECONDARY	MD
3. EBUBAYI SECONDARY	MD
4. EBUSILOLI SECONDARY	MD
5. EBUSIRATSI SECONDARY	MD
6. EBWALI SECONDARY	MD
7. HOBUNAKA SECONDARY	MD
8. IBUBI GIRLS	GD
9. KILINGILI SECONDARY	MD
10. VIHIGA HIGH	BB
11. MUDAVADI GIRLS	GB
12. CHANGO SECONDARY	MD
13. CHAVAVO SECONDARY	MD
14. KEGOYE SECONDARY	GB
15. MADIRA GIRLS	GB
16. ST. CLARES MARAGOLI	GB
17. KERONGE SECONDARY	MD
18. VIGINA SECONDARY	MD
19. MASANA SECONDARY	MD
20. CHAVAKALI HIGH	BB
21. MBALE HIGH	BB
22. KEVEYE GIRLS	GB
23. BUKULUNYA SECONDARY	MD
24. CHANDUMBA SECONDARY	MD

25. DEMESI SECONDARY	MD
26. IGUNGA GIRLS	GB
27. WANGULU SECONDARY	MD
28. ST. PAUL MUSALIA	MD
29. RIVERSIDE HIGH	MD
30. BUSALI UNION	MD
31. MOI GIRLS VOKOLI	GB
32. BUGINA SECODNARY	MD
33. CHAMAKANGA GIRLS	GB
34. JEMOVO SECONDARY	MD
35. KIVAGALA SECONDARY	MD
36. LUSENGELI SECONDARY	MD
37. KAPSAMBO SECONDARY	MD
38. IKOBERO SECONDARY	MD
39. GOIBEI GIRLS	GD
40. NYANGORI HIGH	BB
41. TIGOI GIRLS	GB
42. ST. ANNE BUYANGU	GB
43. DR. DANGANA SECONDARY	MD
44. GIVOGI SECONDARY	MD
45. GIVOLE SECONDARY	MD
46. KAPSOTIK SECONDARY	MD
47. MUNZATSI SECONDARY	MD
48. MUSEYWA SECONDARY	MD
49. GISAMBAI SECONDARY	MD
50. GAVUDUNYI SECONDARY	MD
51. IVOLA SECONDARY	MD
52. GIMENGWA SECONDARY	MD

53. KAPCHEMGUM SECONDARY	MD
54. GAMALENGA SECONDARY	MD
55. EMUSIRE HIGH	BB
56. EBUSAKAMI SECONDARY	MD
57. EBUYALU SECONDARY	MD
58. EKWANDA SECONDARY	MD
59. ESALWA SECONDARY	MD
60. ESSABA SECONDARY	MD
61. EBUSIUBI SECONDARY	MD
62. EMANYINYA SECONDARY	MD
63. MUMBOHA SECONDARY	MD
64. EBUKANGA SECONDARY	MD
65. ESIBILA SECONDARY	MD
66. KAIMOSI BOYS	GB
67. SENENDE HIGH	BB
68. KAIMOSI BOYS	BD
69. ERUSUI GIRLS	GB
70. MUHUDU SECONDARY	MD
71. KAPTIK SECONDARY	MD
72. IMUSUTSU SECONDARY	MD
73. MAKUCHI SECONDARY	MD
74. ISHIRU SECONDARY	MD
75. SHAMAKHOKHO SECONDARY	MD
76. KIGAMA SECONDARY	MD

KEY:

GB GIRLS BOARDING

GD GIRLS DAY

MD MIXED DAY

BB BOYS BOARDING

BD BOYS DAY

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PROVINCIAL DIRECTOR'S OFFICE-WESTERN-KENYA

Appendix II: Letter to Heads of Schools

Kenyatta University

Educational Communication and Technology

Department

P.O. Box 43844-00100

NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am carrying out an educational research and your school has been selected to participate in this research. I humbly request you to allow me to use your school to carry out this research. The research will only require one teacher from the English Department to fill a questionnaire and also students from one form three stream will be required to seat for a comprehension test.

Information obtained from your school will be used purely for research purposes and will be treated in strict confidence.

Yours faithfully,

Wanjala Thomas

Department of Educational, Communication and Technology.

Kenyatta University

APPENDIX III: English Comprehension Test

Name of student _____

School _____

Class _____

Gender Male Female (tick one)

Time: 1hr 30 min.

Read carefully the following passage and answer questions that follow:

If you draw a line from the Shetland Islands to the north of Scotland, across the North Sea, it comes to the town of Bergen in Norway. Bergen is a fishing port, with a big harbour full of boats. You can see the masts showing above the roofs from every part of the town. Down on the quay the fisherman spread out their nets to dry. Close by is the fish market. The whole town smells of the sea, tar, and fish.

Two hundred years ago a man sailed across the North Sea to Bergen from Scotland. His name was Alexander Greig. He liked Bergen, and made up his mind to settle there. But he found that the Norwegians mispronounced his name. So he changed Greig-to-Greig, and then they said it the right way.

Alexander Grieg began sending lobsters to Scotland for people to eat. It was not long before he became rich, and the family moved into a big house. Soon the Griegs felt they were Norwegians rather than Scotsmen. Alexander's son and grandson both married Norwegian girls.

This grandson (another Alexander) was the father of the composer. He too lived in Bergen, and he carried on the family business. Both he and his wife were fond of music. Alexander could not play himself, but his wife was a fine pianist. She even took part in concerts in Bergen.

After they were married they set up house near the harbour. They had five children, three daughters and two sons. Edward was the younger of the two boys. He was born a little over a hundred years ago. He had large blue eyes and thick fair hair, and was a dreamy-looking little boy.

Edward loved looking at the boats in the harbour. He used to walk along the quays among the nets and the baskets of fish. Often he watched the boats out to sea and vanish beyond the horizon. If the weather was wet he had to stay indoors instead. One rainy day he thought he would like to try and play the piano. He started by playing one note, and then another with it to make a chord. All the time he listened very carefully to the sound. At first he only played with one hand. Then he found he got a richer sound by using both hands together.

His mother was very glad to hear him playing. Because she loved music so much, she had always hoped that her children would be musical. When he was six she decided he was old enough for piano lessons. She taught him many scales and exercise each day. He found these boring and used to hurry over them; it was much more fun to play tunes. But he knew his mother always listened while he practiced. She used to call out from the kitchen when he played a wrong note.

Once a week friends came to the Griegs' house to play and sing together. There were very few concerts in Bergen, so people had to make their own music. Edward's mother played the piano at these musical evenings. Edward was too young to join it but he sat in a corner and listened. He heard a great deal of music in this way.

When Edward was nine his grandfather died. The old man had been very important in the town, so he had a big funeral. His parents took Edward to it. An army band played a special march, and Edward found the slow, sad music very moving. In fact he remembered it for the rest of his life.

Source: Lunzer E and Gardner K (1979). The Effective use of Reading. London: Heinemann.

Questions

1. Underline one meaning from those given on the right, that is nearest in meaning to the given word. *Use the story to check your answers.*

(a) Vanish Appear, fade, faint, end,
disappear.

(b) Composer Conductor, pianist, bandsman,
writer, violinist.

(c) Mispronounced Wrote wrongly, missed, spoke wrongly, made fun of, spelt wrongly.

(d) Quay Landing-stage, sea-shore, port,
goods-yard, beach.

(e) Exercise Body-movements, practice-tests,
stretching, running, skipping

(f) Chord Length of string, thin rope, piano
keys, high notes, notes played
together.

(g) Scales Climbs, musical term, weighing
instrument, the covering on the
skin of a fish.

2. Where is Bergen?

3. Who sent lobsters to Scotland?
4. Why did grandfather have a big funeral?
5. Where in the town was the Grieg's sail from Scotland?
6. In what year did Alexander Grieg's sail from Scotland?
7. How did Edward know that his mother listened whenever he practiced?
8. What did Alexander Greig change his name to?
9. What do you think Edward did for a living when he grew up?
10. There was a smell of tar in town. What would tar be used for?
11. What did Edward's father do for a living?
12. Not all men in Bergen could be fishermen. Name two other jobs, a part

from fisherman and musician that a man might have done to earn a living.

13. How is it possible to draw a line across the North Sea?
14. Use your own words to explain the meaning of:
- (a) 'He found he got a richer sound'
- (b) 'Edward found the slow, sad music very moving'
15. Which *four* words from the following list do you think are most important to the story?
Underline the four you choose: Bergen, concert, teacher, piano, harbour, Scotland, funeral, Grieg, horizon, child.
16. Edward's mother was a good teacher and the boy grew up to be a famous man. From what you know already and from what you have read in the story, decide which two of the following statements are true and underline them:
- (a) Some famous musicians have had good teachers.
- (b) Good teachers make all their pupils famous.
- (c) Hard practice makes all the pupils famous.
- (d) Many famous musicians did not need a good teacher.

17. Using what you have learnt from the story about Grieg's home and family, underline three sentences from the six below which best seem to fit a story with the title 'A Winter Evening at the Grieg's' Home'.
- (a) Edward sat alone in the house with nothing to do.
 - (b) The room appeared cosy and warm in the light of the oil-lamps.
 - (c) The house was soon to be filled with the sound of music.
 - (d) Edwards mother was baking in the kitchen while the rest of the family sat reading.
 - (e) The breeze from the window was very pleasant.
 - (f) The Grieg family sat by the log fire awaiting the arrival of their friends.
18. From the following, pick out the two things you think had most to do with Edward learning to play the piano.
- (a) The weather
 - (b) An interested mother
 - (c) A rich family
 - (d) Grandfather selling lobsters
 - (e) The beautiful countryside and the boats in the harbour
 - (f) A love of music

APPENDIX IV: MARKING SCHEME – ENGLISH COMPREHENSION TEST

1. (a) Vanish -disappear
- (b) Composer -writer
- (c) Mispronounced -spoke wrongly
- (d) Quay-landing -stage
- (e) Exercise -practice-tests
- (f) Chord -notes played together
- (g) Scales -musical term (7 x 1)
2. It is a town in Norway (1 x 1)
3. Alexander Grieg sent lobsters to Scotland (1 x 1)
4. He had become very important/popular in the town (1 x 1)
5. Bergen (1 x 1)
6. In 1809 (1 x 1)
7. She would call out from the kitchen when he played a wrong note (1 x 1)
8. He changed it to Grieg (1 x 1)
9. He might have become a pianist/musician when he grew up (1 x 1)
10. It may have been used to-repair the quay^{√1} or construction of new ones^{√1}
/repair –boats^{√1} tarmac roads^{√1} Any (1 x 1)
11. He was a businessman, he managed the family business^{√1} /He sent lobsters to
Scotland just like Alexander Grieg.^{√1} Any (1 x 1)
12. –Repairing boats/nets
- Boat construction industry
- One would work as an army officer.
- Manufacture of musical instruments
- Road construction Any (2 x 1)
13. It is an imaginary line (1 x 1)

14. (a) A rhythmic/beautiful sound/an improved/quality sound
The sound was better than what he got initially (Any 1 x 1)
- (b) He was touched/the music appealed to his emotions (Any 1 x 1)
15. Bergen, piano, harbour, Grieg (1 x 4)
16. (a) Some famous musicians have had good teachers
(d) Many famous musicians did not have a good teacher (1 x 2)
17. (c) The house was soon to be filled with the sound of music
(d) Edwards mother was baking in the kitchen while the rest of the family
Sat reading
(f) The Grieg family sat by the log fire awaiting the arrival of their friends
(1x3)
18. (b) An interested mother
(f) A love of music (1 x 2)

APPENDIX V: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I am interested in finding out some problems students face in English comprehension. Your information will be appreciated and treated with confidence.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Please put a tick(✓) or fill in the required information in the spaces provided.

1. (a) Name of the school _____

(b) Type of school National []

 Provincial []

 District []

(c) This is a: Girls' school []

 Boys' school []

 Mixed school []

SECTION II: PERSONAL INFORMATION

2. Gender Male []

Female []

3. Are you a trained teacher? Yes []

No []

4. If yes, what is your highest professional qualification?

S.I [] B.ED []

Diploma [] M.ED/M.A []

Others (specify) _____

4. What is your area of specialization during training?

English and literature []

Literature []

English []

5. What subjects are you currently teaching?

English and literature []

English []

Literature []

Other []

6. (a) Have you been involved in professional growth activities such as English language seminars, workshops, and others in the last two years?

Yes []

No []

(b) If yes what was covered?

- i. Techniques of teaching ()
- ii. Improving performance of English in examinations ()
- iii. Reviewing of the curriculum ()
- iv. Others (specify)

(c) How has this helped you as a teacher of English?

- i.

- ii.

SECTION II: RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH

7. (a) What English comprehension textbooks do you mostly use to teach the

Form 3 class?

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

(b) Are these books recommended by curriculum developers?

Yes ()

No ()

(c) If the answer in 7 (b) above is No, how does that affect the execution of the lesson?

i. _____

ii. _____

(d) Do you have enough textbooks for every student in class?

Yes ()

No ()

(e) What is the average student – book ratio in class?

.....

-
8. Below is a list of English instructional resources which can be used in the teaching of reading comprehension of English in secondary schools. Indicate by ticking, the extent to which they are used
-

	Frequently used	Occasionally used	Rarely used	Not used
Magazines				
Pamphlets				
Textbooks				
Extracts				
Classreaders				
Periodicals				
Newspapers				
Forms				
Dictionaries and Other reference materials				

9. Select from the table below the criteria you use in the selection of instructional materials for teaching English comprehension? (Indicate with a tick).

Criteria	Considered	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely
Lesson objective				
Nature of topics				
Class size				
Time				
Cost				
Availability of materials				
Teacher's guide				
Level of learners				
Illustrations				
Variety and level of Comprehension questions				

SECTION III TECHNIQUES AND ACTIVITIES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH

COMPREHENSION

Indicate with the use of a tick (✓) how frequently you use each of the following techniques in the process of teaching English comprehension

Technique	Often	Occasionally	Not at all	Reasons for difficulty of use
Dialogue				
Music and song				
Demonstrations				
Role play				
Dramatization				
Use of resource people				
Discussions				
Assignments				
Drills				
Group work				
Story telling				
Field trips				
Language games				
Lecture method				
Others (specify)				

11 (a) What are some of the common problems students face when answering

comprehension questions in English?

I _____

II _____

III _____

12 What could be some of the reasons why English comprehension is poorly done?

I _____

II _____

III _____

IV _____

13 What type of mistakes do students make in other English comprehension writing?

I _____

II _____

III _____

IV _____

14 What approximate mark do your students mostly score in English comprehension?

0 – 15% [] 51 – 65% []

16 – 35% [] 66 – 80% []

36 – 50% [] Above 80% []

15 How many lessons do you allocate for English comprehension per week?

1 – 2

3 – 4

5 – 6

16. What major problem do you face in teaching English reading comprehension?

Lack or insufficient reading materials

Students not motivated

Not trained to teach reading

Classes are too big to be taught effectively

Time available is too little for effective reading.

17. Outside the class how do you assist the students acquire reading materials?

Organizing school library

Liaise with public library

Work in conjunction with school librarian

Don't assist

Others

specify

APPENDIX VI: RESEACH AUTHORIZATION LETTER

APPENDIX (VI)

RESEARCH PERMIT