

# Availability and Use of Instructional Materials in the Teaching and Learning of English Reading Comprehension Skills for Effective Communication in Public Primary Schools in Keiyo North Sub-County, Kenya

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### ABSTRACT

The inability of the pupils to read and comprehend in English language effectively remains a challenge to learners of English as a second language particularly at primary school level. This calls for early intervention in teaching through use of instructional materials that enhance high levels of retention. The purpose of this paper therefore was to establish the extent to which the instructional materials are available for use in the teaching of English reading comprehension skills in public primary schools. The Research Design used was descriptive survey design. 8 public primary schools were selected through purposive sampling. A total 16 teachers participated in the study. Information was collected using questionnaires and classroom observation checklist. Findings reveal that English language course books were the main resources available in the classroom in most schools with 14 out of 16 teachers indicating that they were available and adequate. This study suggests that the government should increase Free Primary Education Funding allocations to allow schools purchase a variety of teaching resources other than course books.

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### Introduction

Reading is the process of identification, interpretation and perception of written or printed materials. Comprehension is the understanding of the meaning of written materials and involves conscious strategies that lead to understanding (Tores&Constain, 2009).

The teaching and learning of reading comprehension skills calls for the use of appropriate teaching and learning materials. KIE (2002) recommends teachers to use reading materials like text books, newspapers, magazine cutting, supplementary readers, library books and charts to enrich their teaching. The shortage of instructional materials may lead to poor achievement in English as learners are not exposed to adequate reading materials (SACMEQ, 2008; Gathumbi et al. 2014).

Through this perspective, therefore, there was need to investigate on the availability of instructional materials such as English Course Books, Newspaper Cuttings, Supplementary readers, charts, dictionaries and internet materials.

#### Study Objectives

The objective of this paper was to assess the availability and use of instructional materials in teaching of English reading comprehension skills for effective communication.

#### Research Question

The following question grounded the study which instructional materials are available and used in the teaching and learning of English reading comprehension skills.

#### Related Literature

Effective learning of English reading Comprehension skills cannot be possible without access to instructional

resource materials. Instructional resource materials therefore, can be viewed in English learning comprehension skills as a medium which aids learners in clarifying or simplifying some concepts in the learning process (Twoli, 2006).

Mackey et al. (1979) cited in Ajideh (2003) draw several inferences in relation to the materials for the activation of background knowledge while Goodman (1976) states that reading is a selective process that involves partial use of available minimal language was selected from perceptual input on the basis of the reader's expectation. As this partial information is a processed, tentative decision as reading progress.

The use of appropriate instructional resource materials in English reading comprehension skills is important because they help hold the learners' attention and interest. The resources challenge help the learner to recall, analyze and synthesize what needs to be taught (Miller, 1990) as cited in (Murunga, 2013). This view is supported by Twoli et al. (2007) who observed that resource materials are aids that teachers use to assist learning and also increase interest of learners in the learning process.

#### Availability of Instructional Materials

Mutwol (2006) asserts that learning is strengthened when there are enough reference materials such as textbooks and teaching aids. Printed media in the form of newspapers and magazines can also be used to facilitate learning (Aggarwal, 2007). Teachers can work with pupils to prepare newspaper cuttings and prepare books that learners can read and exchange with their fellow pupils.

It is therefore the prerogative of teachers of English language to avail appropriate instructional resources during

their instructional practices (Minae, 2004). Some of the instructional resources that teachers can use to teach reading English comprehension skills are course books, magazines, newspapers, supplementary readers and the dictionary (K.I.E, 2002). The same idea is expressed by N’Namdi (2005) who further notes that teachers should be provided with all the resource materials they need to invite interest and stimulate their desire to reading English comprehension skills. Windsay and Knight (2007) hold a similar view that teachers need to provide learner with a variety of reading materials at different levels of difficulty and reflecting the teachers the interest and ability.

### Use of Instructional Materials

Children learn how to express themselves and follow the expressions of others as they read (Aggarwal 2007) further added that teaching reading comprehension skills without using book is like trying to learn how to swim without water K.I.E syllabus (2002) for lower primary classes states that at the end of the course pupils should have acquired ability to “communicate freely follow subject course and text-books and read for pleasure and enjoyment ”if this aim is to be achieved the teachers must expose children to a lot of reading materials within and outside the school.

### Study Design and Methodology

This study was carried out in Public Primary School within Keiyo North Sub-County in Elgeyo Marakwet County. The choice of Keiyo North Sub-County for the study was due to its low literacy levels in English language (Uwezo 2015) and like many others parts of the County its performance in English language as in many public primary schools at the Kenya National Examination level has been poor (KNEC report 2016).

The study employed descriptive survey design. This considered appropriate since it would allow the researchers collect quantifiable information from the sample (Kombo and Tromp 2006 cited in Ochera and Munyasi, 2013) the population from which the sample for this study was drawn consisted of 8 public primary school and 16 teachers of English language.

The researcher employed purpose sampling technique to obtain a representative sample of public primary school for this study. This technique was used because the researcher wished to include only those schools that perform poorly in English language at KCPE in Keiyo North Sub-County and Atlasian (2003) recommend at least 10% to 20% of the targeted Public Primary Schools were selected so that enough time would use to collect the data. This was a total of 16% out of 78 public primary school as shown in Table 1 eventually 30% of the sampled schools were selected by simple random sampling technique for classroom observation. The choice of 30% was based on Orodho (2008) recommendations. A total of eight school and eight lessons were selected for observation.

The total number of teachers handling English language at standard seven was 161 therefore 10% was 16 teachers. This number was divided among 8 schools that resulted to 2 teachers per school selected using simple random sampling.

Information was collected using questionnaires for teachers and classroom observation checklist. These research instruments were designed by the researchers in line with the research objective and research questions. The teachers’ questionnaires consisted of two sections; A and B. Sector A captured biographical information which was used to obtain teachers highest academic qualification, experienced in teaching the subject and training background.

Section B contained questions on the availability and use of instructional materials used to teach English reading comprehension skills. The observation checklist was used to get the kind instructional materials available in the classroom and how they were used. The researcher observed one English lesson from each of the sampled eight schools which lasted for a period of 35 minutes each.

To validate the test items, the questionnaire was discussed with educational research experts for their input and verification. A pilot study was conducted in one school in order to eliminate items that would have likely elicited no response. The Instrument was then amended accordingly after piloting. A test-retest strategy was to establish the reliability of the instruments. The questionnaires were administered within a period of two weeks. The responses to the questionnaires were assigned numeral values. to test the reliability of the tools the researcher used Cronbach’s Alpha. A Cronbach’s alpha of 0.86 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for the study.

**Table 1. Sample Table. Keiyo North Sub-County Grid size**

Division	Public Primary Schools	Sampled Schools
Kamariny	42	8
Tambach	36	8
Total	78	16

Source: Researcher (2017)

### Results and Discussion

The study involved 16 teachers out of whom 6 (37.5%) were primary one (P1) certificate holders, 5(31.25%) were holders of Diploma in Education Certificate 3 (18.8%) were Bachelor of Education Degree holders while 2(12.5%) were masters certificate holders.

This study therefore concludes that more than half (10) representing 62.5% of the teachers in the Sub-County have a diploma level of Education and above with these levels of training it is believed that the teachers possess sufficient knowledge on instructional practices key to teaching reading comprehension skills in standard seven in public primary schools.

### Availability of Materials Teaching English Reading Comprehension Skills

The research sought to investigate the availability of materials for teaching English reading comprehension skills in classroom. Table 2 presents the results.

These results show that English language course books were reported to be available and adequate by 14 teachers representing 87.5%.

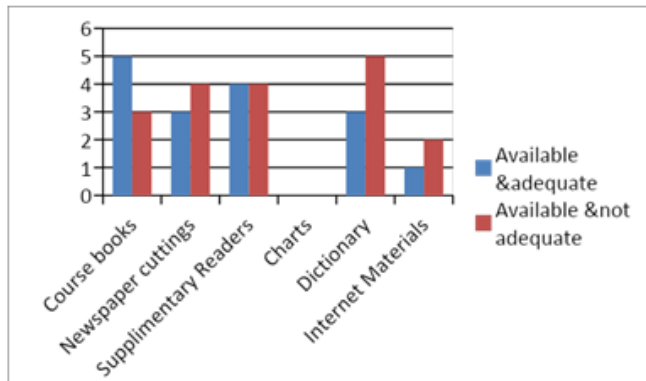
**Table 2. Availability of materials**

Instructional materials	Available and adequate f(%)	Available and not adequate f(%)	Not available f(%)	Results
English language books	14(87.5)	2(12.5)	0(00)	Available and adequate
Newspapers	2(12.5)	4(25)	10(62.5)	Not available
Supplementary readers	13(81.25)	3(18.75)	0(0.00)	Available and adequate
Charts	6(37.5)	9(56.25)	1(6.25)	Available and not adequate
Dictionaries	12(75)	3(18.5)	1(6.25)	Available and adequate
Internet materials	1(6.25)	2(12.5)	13(81.25)	Not available

Source: Researcher (2017)

This was followed by supplementary readers reported by 13 respondents representing 81.25%, dictionaries were used by 12 respondents representing 75%, charts then used 6 respondents representing (37.5%) newspaper cutting was used by 2 respondents representing 12.5% and internet materials used by 1 respondents representing (6.25%).

Thereafter the research sought to establish the availability of materials using classroom observation checklists represented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Availability of instructional materials.**

Data revealed a concurrence where English course books were the most available and adequate in schools 1,2,4,5 and 7 but were available and not adequate in the remaining schools.

It was also noted that supplementary readers was also available and not adequate in schools 2,3,4 and 7 and available not adequate in school 1,5,6 and 8. Dictionaries was available and adequately used in schools 1,3 and 4 only while in schools 2,5,6,7 and 8 were available and not adequately used in schools 2,5,6,7 and 8 were available and not adequately used newspaper cutting was available and adequately used in schools 1,5 and 7 and available not adequate in school 2,3 4 and 6 while it was noted that in school that In school 8 it was not available . It was also noted charts were used were available and adequate in schools 2, 4, 7 and 8 and available and not noted in school 1,3,5 and 6. There were no internet materials in majority of the schools observed vas the study recorded only 4 schools as available and adequate while they were no internet materials in majority of the school observed as the study recorded only school 4 as available and adequate while they were available and not adequate in 2 other schools namely school 1 and 6.

### Conclusion

The result of this paper on the adequacy and effectiveness confirm that most commonly used materials in the teaching of English reading comprehension skills is

English course books were available and adequate in class. This is due to heavy reliance on single handedly English course books and dominating lessons with “Talk and Chalk” which has not achieved desired results.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion there of it is recommended that besides course books and supplementary readers, teachers should also use newspapers cutting, magazines and internet materials in the teaching of English reading comprehension skills.

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