INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES USED TO ENHANCE READING COMPREHENSION AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS: A STUDY OF STAREHE SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND EDUCATIONAL MEDIA, MOI UNIVERSITY

MAY 2015

DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at finding out the reading comprehension instructional strategies adopted by Class 3 primary school teachers and how the between the strategies the teachers used and the pupils' comprehension ability. The specific study objectives were to: establish Class 3 teachers' awareness of reading comprehension instructional strategies; find out strategies used by teachers; and to establish the relationship between these strategies and pupils' comprehension ability. The study adopted the pragmatic philosophical paradigm and was based on Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory, Gill's Transactional Strategy Instruction, and Pearson and Gallagher's Gradual Release of Responsibility Model. The study adopted mixed research design and targeted Class 3 teachers and pupils in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews and a comprehension test. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative procedures (content analysis). Pearson's Product Moment correlation statistics was used to find out the relationship between the teachers' choice of reading comprehension instructional strategies and the pupils' comprehension ability. The findings revealed that teachers have limited awareness of reading comprehension instructional strategies. They admitted not being aware of most of the instructional strategies and did not use the strategies systematically and consistently in their instruction. Most teachers did not have specific strategies to assist pupils with reading difficulties and emphasised more on fluent reading rather than pupils' comprehension abilities. Most teachers taught comprehension based on the activities in the course books. Where they used aspects of some comprehension strategies, this appeared to be the result of cognition, especially borrowing from their experiences when they were pupils in primary school. The most used strategies were use of prior knowledge and prediction. The study found that there was a strong positive correlation between the teachers' choice of instructional strategies and the pupils' comprehension ability. Teachers from well performing schools tended to use more instructional strategies than those from poorly performing schools. The study recommends review of the pre-service teacher training curriculum to incorporate teaching of comprehension instructional strategies to teacher trainees, conducting in-service programmes and training of English course books developers on how to integrate the comprehension instructional strategies in the pupils' and teacher's books.

DEDICATION

To the late Prof Stephen Lubega who introduced me to the possibilities of language, and

to all language educators who have to wrestle with the challenges of teaching reading.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF APPENDICES

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ELL   English Language Learner

KCPE   Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KICD   Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

KIE   Kenya Institute of Education

KNEC   Kenya National Examinations Council

NASMLA   National Assessment System for Monitoring Learning

Achievement

NRP   National Reading Panel

PIRLS   Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

PISA   Programme for International Student Assessment

PTE   Primary Teacher Education

SACMEQ   Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education

Quality

TSI   Transactional Strategy Instruction

UWEZO   A Kiswahili word for '*ability*'

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following are the operational definitions of these terms whenever they are used in this study:

Awareness	Knowledge about the existence of comprehension strategies and comprehension instructional strategies.
Class 3	Primary school Grade 3/Standard 3. Typically for children of 8 years.
Comprehension	The process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interactions and involvement with written text.
Comprehension strategy	Techniques about how to construct meaning from text based on the reader's purpose, task and text demands, and situational context.
Comprehension instructional strategies	Techniques and practices adopted by teachers to facilitate the process of empowering learners to construct meaning from written texts.
Instruction	The process of planning and presenting learning experiences in teaching reading comprehension.
Research-based strategy	These are comprehension instructional strategies that have a record of success that is both trustworthy and valid. There is evidence that when such practices are used with learners, they are expected to make gains in comprehension ability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, limitations of the study, justification for the study, significance of the study, assumptions and theoretical and conceptual framework.

1.2 Background to the Study

Few would argue that learning to read is the most important accomplishment of a child's early elementary school experience (Strickland et al., 2002). According to Alfassi (2004), reading is a complex cognitive activity that is indispensable for adequate functioning in society and the ability to read and understand a simple text is the most basic skill that pupils need in lower primary school (Classes 1 to 3). Gove & Cvelich (2011) argue that reading is the foundation for other learning activities and that "children who fail to read in the first few grades of school are handicapped in later grades because they must absorb increasing amounts of instructional content in print form" (Gove & Cvelich, 2011, p. 2). Aspects of successful reading in this case include phonemic awareness, phonics and vocabulary study, fluency and comprehension which are foundational skills required to facilitate comprehension; the most important goal in reading (NRP, 2000; Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007). However, instructional approaches designed to develop or improve the fundamental skills of reading do not directly improve comprehension, rather

they are one step removed and impact skills other than comprehension, which in turn impact comprehension (Roberts & Duke, 2012).

Research studies have emphasized the importance of early grade reading especially by Class 3 given that after the elementary grades poor readers remain poor readers while good readers remain good readers. By as early as the third and fourth grades, poor readers generally perform well below their peers and are unlikely to catch up (Juel, 1988; Good et al., 2002; Smart et al., 1996). At this point, it becomes increasingly difficult to incorporate beginning reading instruction into the classroom setting. It was found that 74 percent of pupils who were poor readers in third grade remained poor readers in ninth grade and 88 percent of those who were poor readers in first grade remained poor readers in fourth grade. Similarly, 87 percent of those who were good readers in first grade remained good readers in fourth grade (Gettinger & Lyon, 1983; Gellert & Elbro, 1999; Smart, Sanson, & Prior, 1996). Lyon (1998) argues that when a student has difficulty learning how to read, it not only affects the student's overall education, but may also affect his ability to lead a fulfilling and productive life. Perfetti, Landi and Oakhill (2005) noted that there are numerous reasons why many students have difficulty achieving proficient reading comprehension skills, which requires students to fluently decode and then understand what they are reading.

Comprehending depends upon a number of different thinking processes within the reader. These include word-level processes like the ability to identify words quickly, accurately, and effortlessly (Adams, 1990) and knowledge of the meanings of keywords. Also important are comprehension strategies (Pressley, 2000, 2002b). Such strategies can be

described as special knowledge of *how* to comprehend what readers consciously use as they attempt to understand what they read (Anderson, 1987; Snow, Corno, & Jackson, 1996). Readers' general knowledge of the world and specific knowledge of the topic about which they are reading play a critical role in the comprehension process (Alexander & Judy, 1988).

There are several reasons why comprehension instruction needs to become an integral part of instruction. First, learning from texts is an important part of the process of learning in virtually all subject areas. Second, when hands-on learning is combined with text-based learning, students learn more than they do if reading is not an integral part of the learning process (Anderson, 1998; Anderson & Guthrie, 1999). Third, there is strong evidence that students can be taught reading comprehension strategies and that such instruction is effective at improving their understandings of the texts they read (Duke & Pearson, 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2000; Pearson & Fielding, 1991; Pressley, 2000; Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta-Hampston, & Echevarria, 1998). Unfortunately, there is also strong evidence that comprehension instruction does not occur in many classrooms (Durkin, 1978/1979; Pressley, 2002a). For instance, after conducting a yearlong observational study of 10 fourth and fifth-grade teachers (all of whom were considered very good teachers by their districts), Pressley and his colleagues concluded, "In general, students were provided with opportunities to practice comprehension strategies, but they were not actually taught the strategies themselves nor the utility value of applying them" (Pressley, 2002c, p. 241).

Block et al., (2009) and NICHD (2000) observed that combinations of instructional activities and strategies are generally more effective than one method used to the exclusion of others. Indeed, when classrooms are observed, evidence reveals that effective teachers use a variety of strategies and types of lessons (Connor, Morrison, et al., 2009; Wharton-McDonald, Pressley, & Hampston, 1998). Moreover, with emerging evidence, it has become unlikely to find one single method of instruction that is optimal for all students. The goal of reading instruction therefore is to help students acquire the skills "that enable learning from, understanding, and enjoyment of written language" (Torgesen, 2002, p. 9).

NICHD (2000) notes that that explicit instruction of comprehension strategies associated with gains in reading comprehension and reading more generally include predicting, questioning, monitoring, highlighting, summarizing, using context clues, retelling, using prior knowledge, comparing and contrasting, and sequencing ideas (Block et al., 2009; NICHD, 2000; Pressley & Wharton-McDonald, 1997). Thus, instruction is described across three dimensions focusing on; the content of the reading instruction, including phonological awareness, word decoding and encoding, text structure, vocabulary, and comprehension; who is managing or focusing the students' attention on the learning activity at hand, the teacher or the student individually or with peers, and grouping (i.e., whole class, small group, individual; Connor, Morrison, et al., (2009).

Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007) observe that there are 4 types of approaches to improving the reading success of non-struggling readers in the elementary grades: reading curricula; instructional technology; instructional process programs; and

combination of curricula and instructional process. The observation here is that instruction plays an important role in improving comprehension ability.

Pearson (2012) explains that comprehension can only be observed indirectly through assessment or asking the reader to explain their experience with the text. This may explain why some teachers assume that assessing comprehension amounts to teaching it. Teacher cognition therefore plays a major role in determining classroom instruction. It is not enough in comprehension instruction research to only train the teacher on how to teach but also it is equally important to find out what the teacher knows, believes and thinks about comprehension instruction. Barasa (2005) recommended that there is need to carry out investigations into the actual pedagogical activity in the classroom to ascertain how English is currently being taught. Although he recommended this for secondary schools, the same argument can apply to primary schools. This study investigated what the teachers actually do in the classrooms, their awareness of comprehension instructional strategies and the influence of use of these strategies on pupils' comprehension ability.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The significance of comprehension reading instructional strategies in improving learners' ability has been acknowledged in many studies (NRP, 2000; Linan-Thompson & Vaughn, 2007, Roberts & Duke, 2012, Cvelich, 2011). The need for instructional strategies is also supported by theoretical arguments like the principles of scaffolding and zone of proximal development in the social cognitive theory. An analysis of the Kenya primary teacher education training curriculum, the primary school English curriculum, and the course books for teaching English in primary schools do not reveal an explicit

training of teachers or guidance on how to use comprehension instructional strategies. This poses a problem in terms of whether teachers are aware of such instructional strategies and how they actually teach reading comprehension. The present study sought to investigate if teachers are aware of the comprehension instructional strategies and attempted to establish how they appropriate and use them.

In the last ten years, Kenya has experienced heightened interest in reading abilities of lower primary school pupils. Several reading achievement studies have revealed that many pupils are unable to read at grade level (Wasanga et al. 2010; UWEZO, 2010, 2011, 2012; RTI 2011). The government has expressed interest in addressing this challenge (MOEST, 2013). Among other interventions, one approach to improving pupils ability in reading is to build the capacity of teachers on effective instruction. However, beyond the research studies that have revealed low achievements in reading comprehension, there are no studies, known to the researcher, on the instructional strategies teachers use to teach reading comprehension. This study sought to find out the instructional practices adopted by teachers with a view to providing policy makers with a platform from which to plan interventions through teacher capacity building.

Borg (2003) identifies teacher cognition as an important dimension in language teaching. He argues that "teachers are active, thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices by drawing on complex, practically-oriented, personalised, and context-sensitive networks of knowledge, thoughts, and beliefs. The researcher also sought to establish if there is any relationship between the practices teachers adopted and pupils' ability in reading comprehension.

Primary schools in Starehe Sub-County are varied in terms of pupils' achievement in English. Duke et al. (2011) say that research evidence has proved that teachers and the instructional strategies they adopt determine students' comprehension achievement regardless of the students' characteristics, like home background and social economic status. Whereas there are many factors that contribute to this, like family background and school leadership, it would, therefore, be useful to find out if teachers in the poorly performing and well performing schools use similar or different instructional practices and the relationship between the instructional practices and pupils' ability in reading comprehension.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the instructional strategies used by primary school teachers in enhancing pupils' reading comprehension ability.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

a. Establish Class 3 teachers' awareness of the instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

b. Find out the instructional strategies used by Class 3 teachers to teach reading comprehension.

c. Establish the relationship between Class 3 teachers' use of reading comprehension instructional strategies and their pupils' comprehension ability.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focused on the teachers' awareness of comprehension instructional strategies and the use of such strategies in classroom instruction. The study also focused on the relationship between the use of comprehension instructional strategies in Class 3 and their influence on pupils' ability. The study restricted itself to the reading comprehension instructional strategies such as setting purposes for reading, previewing and predicting, activating prior knowledge, monitoring, clarifying and fixing, visualizing and creating visual representations, drawing inferences, self-questioning and thinking aloud and summarizing and retelling that research suggests are the most beneficial to teaching developing readers at elementary grades (Duke& Pearson, 2002; NRP, 2000).

The geographical scope of the study was Starehe Sub-County of Nairobi County. Nairobi County is one of the 47 counties of Kenya. It is the capital city of Kenya and has a population of about four million people. Nairobi County was founded in 2013 on the same boundaries as Nairobi Province, after Kenya's 8 provinces were subdivided into 47 counties.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

One limitation was in terms of the number of schools and classes sampled and the amount of time the researcher spent observing the classroom instruction. The researcher observed 3 lessons for each of the 6 teachers in the 6 sampled schools. The researcher would have benefited from more observations but time and resources could not allow. The researcher countered the possible effects of this by ensuring that the classroom

observations were intensive through tape recording of the lessons to ensure a rich source of data.

This was a correlational case study and although the findings allowed the researcher to see important patterns in terms of teachers' awareness of comprehension instructional strategies and the relationship between choice of instructional strategies and pupils' comprehension ability, this kind of study does not allow making causal claims. However, studies that show causal relationships may benefit a lot from this study especially in identifying important variables in comprehension instruction.

1.8 Justification for the Study

Johnson (2006) says that there is need for research that captures the complexities of who teachers are, what they know and believe, how they learn to teach and how they carry out their work in diverse contexts throughout their careers. Roberts and Duke (2012) note that there is little research on effective comprehension instruction conducted in primary grades. This study was interested in finding out teachers' awareness of comprehension strategies and how they use them in class. The findings of this study may provide useful insight into the practices teachers are using to teaching reading comprehension. These findings could form the basis of future studies that would focus on interventions. The findings may also provide the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development with useful insights into the extent of the challenge teachers are facing in teaching reading comprehension and the need to include reading comprehension strategies in the pre-service teacher training curriculum. It may also make a contribution to the growing demand for such research on comprehension instruction strategies which may lead to

recommendations on ways of ensuring that teacher are well prepared and equipped to teach English comprehension. Research may also provide pupils and students with knowledge of the strategies used in reading comprehension.

Recent findings in economic growth accounting research reveal that it is the quality of a school system, measured by the cognitive skills attained by the student that primarily contributes to a country's economic growth (Hanushek & Woessman, 2009). A country's performance on international learning assessments, covering reading, math, science, accounts for 64% of the variation in economic growth trends over decades. A 10% increase in the share of students reaching basic literacy translates into a 0.3 percentage point higher annual growth rate for that country (Hanushek & Woessman, 2009). Research into reading is therefore very important to ensure learners acquire the necessary literacy skills to enable them contribute meaningfully to the country's socio-economic development. It is this consideration that prompted the researcher to focus on reading comprehension instruction as a critical aspect of improving literacy.

There appears to be global consensus among educators that reading comprehension ability is an important indicator of education quality and achievement. Global and regional monitoring tools of learning achievements include reading comprehension assessment as an important indicator of quality education. Examples of such monitoring studies include Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) is an international non-profit developmental organisation of 15 Ministries of Education in Southern and Eastern Africa that decided to work together to share experiences and expertise in developing the capacities of education planners to apply scientific methods to monitor and evaluate the conditions of schooling and the quality of education, with technical assistance from UNESCO' International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). The organization carries out assessments in literacy and numeracy as the key indicators of education quality. Hungi & Thuku (2010) reporting on the assessments commented that the teaching of reading needs to be improved a lot. This calls for a good understanding of the current strategies teachers are employing to teach reading.

There are several reading intervention programmes targeting lower primary school currently being carried out in Kenya. The focus of these interventions is improving decoding and fluency. Roberts and Duke (2012) note that instructional approaches designed to improve other aspects of reading do not directly improve comprehension. NRP (2000) points out that comprehension needs to be strong focus in the early years of schooling. The current study is, therefore, very important in proving knowledge on teachers' awareness of comprehension instructional strategies and the relationship between their choice of strategies and pupils' ability. This knowledge is useful in planning interventions in reading instruction.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The current study is significant as it provides information to teacher training institutions on need to adequately equip trainees with comprehension instructional strategies providing more practical experiences to their trainees emphasising on the application of instructional strategies in classroom situations to prepare them adequately to teach pupils. The study may also provide school administrators with information on the determinants of pupils' comprehension abilities which may be useful in helping them to come up with strategies to improve comprehension instruction. The information obtained may also assist school administrators in the supervision and evaluation of the comprehension instruction process in their schools. The study findings are also significant as they may provide teachers with information on the various comprehension instruction strategies that can be used to improve pupils' comprehension abilities.

The study findings may also provide information to the Primary Teacher Education (PTE) curriculum designers on the various comprehension instructional strategies to include in the PTE curriculum. It may also provide information to the basic education curriculum designers on the comprehension strategies to include in the Class 3 primary school English curriculum. The study findings may also provide information to examiners on what to consider when setting comprehension tests as well as what to consider when marking English comprehension. The findings may also provide information to authors on how to develop course books that promote use of instructional strategies effectively.

This study may make a contribution to the understanding of the comprehension instructional strategies that teachers are currently using and the extent to which they influence comprehension learning among primary school pupils. This may go a long way in enhancing teacher competence in comprehension instruction in addition to making them more efficient thus ensuring that pupils get the best instruction leading to improvement in their comprehension skills.

This study may make a contribution in not only revealing teachers' beliefs about comprehension instruction, but also the classroom strategies they adopt. The research findings may provide valuable information on the pedagogical practices adopted by teachers in Kenya to teach comprehension. In general, this study may provide some understanding on theory and practice of teaching reading comprehension.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the assumptions that:

a. Class 3 teachers plan and teach reading comprehension as required by the KICD syllabus.

b. Class 3 teachers assign specific time on the English scheme of work for teaching reading comprehension. This facilitated classroom observation by the researcher.

c. Class 3 teachers are aware of the need to use reading comprehension instructional strategies.

d. Class 3 teachers are using reading comprehension instructional strategies.

1.11 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Theory is important to the social researcher because it provides a backcloth and rationale for the research that is being conducted. It also provides a framework within which social phenomena can be interpreted (Bryman, 2008, p. 6). This study was informed by Vygotsky's (1978) Social Cognitive Theory, Transactional Strategy Instruction (Gill, 2008) and the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). These provided the study with the necessary principles and model to investigate teachers' awareness of comprehension strategies and how they use them in classroom instruction. The researcher used the three models because none was adequate to guide the research on its own. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provided the framework for the instructional process, particularly scaffolding and the zone of proximal development. The Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI) provided the comprehension instructional strategies that were the basis for the classroom observation and teacher interviews, while the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRR) Model provided an explicit description of the process of using the instructional strategies.

1.11.1 Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory

Vygotsky's Social-Cognitive Theory emphasizes that teaching and learning are highly social activities and that interactions with teachers, peers and instructional materials influence the cognitive and affective developments of learners (Kim & Baylor, 2006). The theory holds that learning takes place when learners interact with each other. Learners negotiate meanings with people in the environment, and they achieve goals through interacting, both explicitly and implicitly, with the teacher, peers, materials, and

atmosphere embedded in the context. This theory was important to this study in providing the principles to investigate how teachers plan comprehension instruction to integrate the social and cognitive dimensions of learning.

Vygotsky's theory emphasizes that while adults may learn independently, children require mediation from others before they can learn on their own. He called this process of moving from being mediated by others to learning independently *scaffolding*. Within *scaffolding*, he identified an optimal point where learning takes place and called this the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The concepts of scaffolding and ZPD were useful in this study as the researcher investigated how comprehension instruction facilitates the gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the learner.

The theory was central to this study because it provided the framework for the instructional process, particularly scaffolding and the zone of proximal development and recognises the importance of mediating the learning process. The theory also emphasizes that learning takes place through interactions with teachers, peers, and instructional materials which helped the researcher to conceptualize the nature of interactions to expect during learning. The theory is also applicable to this study given that comprehension instruction strategies under investigation are transferred to learners through classroom interaction between pupils and teachers, between pupils and pupils, between pupils, learning resources and the classroom environment.

1.11.2 Transactional Strategy Instruction (TSI)

According to Gill (2008), meaning is created in the transaction between the reader and text. Meaning is, therefore, neither subject, object nor the interaction of the two. Instead it is a transaction; something new and different from any of its inputs and influences. Meaning resides within the transactional zone as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Model Comprehension

SCC

Transaction

Meaning happens here
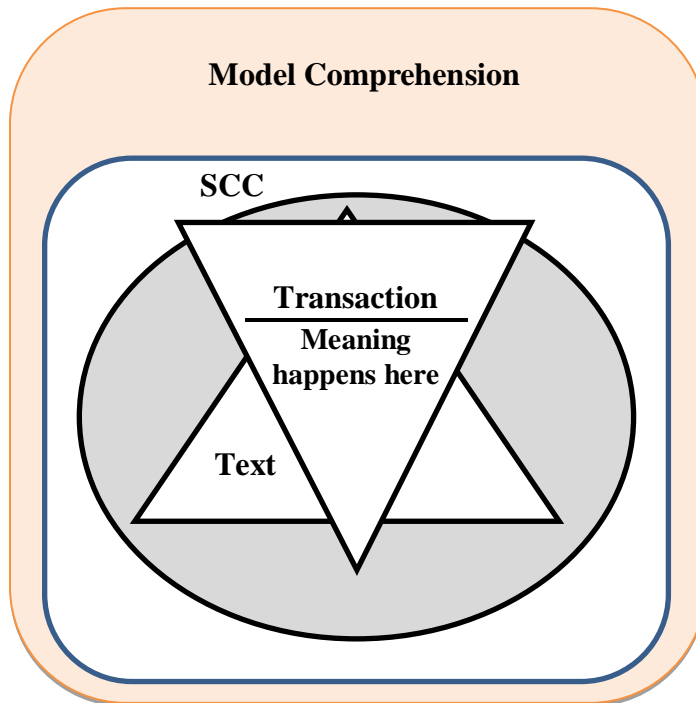
Text

Figure 1.1: TSI Comprehension Instruction Model

Key: *SCC: Social Cultural Context*

Source: Gill (2008)

TSI is based on the premise that because each reader brings different experiences to a reading experience, each reader takes away a different meaning. The implication of this on comprehension instruction is that since different learners will take different things from a text, the teacher should provide opportunities to activate pupils' prior knowledge.

One way of doing this is through asking questions that allow for a variety of interpretations. Further, the teacher should provide opportunities for pupils to express the meaning they make out of the written text. This could be in the form of graphic organizers, retelling and summarizing. These are some of the instructional strategies that the researcher sought to find out if teachers are aware of and if they use them in teaching comprehension.

Gill (2008) points out that in TSI readers adopt either an efferent or an aesthetic stance as they read. She defines reading from an efferent stance to mean reading to take away information, while reading from an aesthetic stance is done for the experience of it. She further explains that a student's stance can influence his or her comprehension. For example, when students read a text during a comprehension test they may adopt an efferent stance, but if they are reading the same text for pleasure they may adopt an aesthetic stance.

The underling theory in TSI is that students should learn to coordinate use of a complex repertoire of strategies. Teachers introduce, model and scaffold the use of a variety of strategies including prediction, visualization, use of prior knowledge, summarizing, identifying and adjusting to purpose, thinking aloud, question generation, identification of important information and active interpretation of text. Students are also taught to use metacognition (Gill, 2008). The model also emphasises the need for teachers to use multiple instruction strategies in order to enhance pupils' comprehension abilities. This model was important to this study because it provided the comprehension instructional strategies that were the basis of the class observation and teacher interviews.

1.11.3 Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Duke, Pearson, Strachan & Billman, (2011) argue that the model of reading comprehension instruction that is best supported by research should include instruction in specific comprehension strategies and opportunities to read, write and discuss texts. They suggest that these should include the following components: An explicit description of the strategy and when and how it should be used; teacher and/or student modelling of the strategy in action; collaborative use of the strategy in action; guided practice using the strategy with gradual release of responsibility and independent use of the strategy.

These components align well with Vygotsky's scaffolding and ZPD concepts and principles. The teacher is expected to take the initial responsibility of mediating the learner, but gradually the learner becomes independent. In this model as teachers move from the teacher roles of modelling and direct instruction to scaffolding and guided practice and onto facilitation and participation, they release more and more responsibility to students for completing key tasks. The importance of this model to the study was not restricted to its emphasis on the critical role of using instructional strategies in teaching reading comprehension, but also the process of introducing the strategies to the pupils, modelling the strategies and then gradually empowering the pupils to use the strategies independently. Comprehension instruction is therefore a process of empowering pupils with comprehension strategies that they should be able to apply independently to make meaning from different types of written texts. At the end of Class 3, this is the kind of reading comprehension competence that all pupils should have if the language policy of

using English as the medium of instruction is to be successful. A diagrammatic representation of this model is outlined in Figure 1.2.
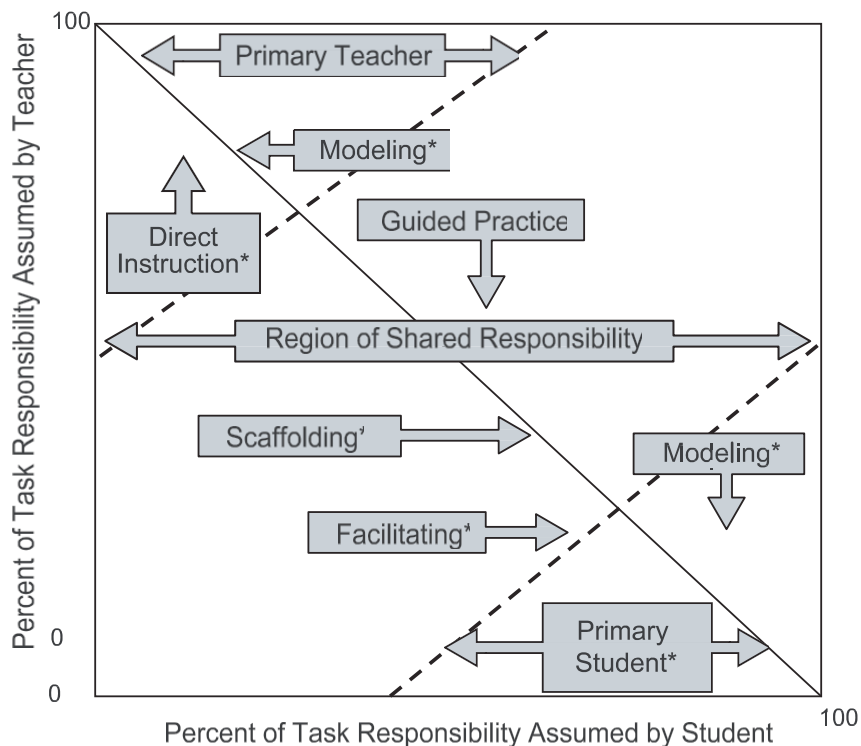
Figure 1.2: Gradual Release of Responsibility Model

Source: "The Instruction of Reading Comprehension," by P.D Pearson and M.C. Gallagher, (1983), *Contemporary Educational Psychology,* 8(3), 317-344.

1.11.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework presents a summary of the use of reading comprehension instructional strategies and their influence on pupils' comprehension ability. The study variables are as presented in Figure 1.3.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐  ┐
│   Comprehension Instructional Strategies     │  │
│   • Use of prior knowledge and prediction    │  │    Independent
│   • Summarisation or Retelling               │  │    Variables
│   • Use of graphic organisers                │  │    (Input)
│   • Code-focused instruction                 │  │
│   • Use of the text structure                │  │
│   • Use of questions                         │  ┘
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐  ┐
│                 Scaffolding                   │  │
│   • Classroom interaction (Transactional      │  │
│     Strategy Instruction TSI Comprehension    │  │
│     Instruction Model)                        │  │    Process
│   • Pupils' interaction with teacher, other   │  │
│     pupils and the texts (Vygotsky's social   │  │
│     cognitive theory)                         │  │
│   • Gradual release of responsibility         │  │
│     (Gradual Release of Responsibility Model) │  ┘
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐  ┐  Dependent
│        Pupils' Comprehension Ability          │  │  variables
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘  ┘  (Output)
```

Figure 1.3: Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study investigated reading comprehension instructional strategies used by Class 3 primary school teachers. They include use of prior knowledge and prediction, summarisation or retelling, use of graphic organisers, code-focused instruction and use of the text structure. Through the process of scaffolding, which involves classroom interaction as advanced by Vygotsky's Social Cognitive Theory, readers' interaction with the texts under the Transactional Strategy Instruction Model and transfer of responsibility to pupils under the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model, pupils will be equipped

with knowledge of comprehension strategies which ultimately determines their ability in reading comprehension.

1.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the present study. It included the statement of the problem, justification for the study, significance, objectives and research questions of the study. The theoretical and conceptual framework of the study was also presented and meanings of the key terms used in the study were explained. The next chapter is a review of literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the study. First, is a review of general literature on reading comprehension instruction followed by a review of related studies on comprehension strategies used by teachers, teacher preparedness to teach comprehension and the impact of use of instructional strategies on comprehension ability. The chapter concludes with a summary of the literature reviewed.

2.2 Kenyan Language Policy

Since independence, the Government of Kenya has appointed several Commissions and Task Forces to advice on the education system in the country. These include: The Kenya Education Commission of 1964, commonly known as the Ominde Report; The Report of the National Committee on Educational Objectives and Policies of 1976, commonly known as the Gachathi Report; The Presidential Working Party on the Second University of 1981, commonly known as the Mackay Report; The Report of the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and Beyond of 1988, commonly known as the Kamunge Report; The Report on the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya of 1999, commonly known as the Koech Report; and the Report of the Task Force on Aligning Education and Training to the Constitution of Kenya and Kenya Vision 2030 of 2012, commonly known as the Odhiambo Report. Except the Ominde Report, all the other commissions and task force reports recommended that:

- Mother Tongue, or language of the catchment area, be used as the medium of instruction from Class 1 to 3;

- Mother Tongue be taught as a subject from Class 1 to 3;

- Kiswahili be taught as a compulsory subject from Class 1;

- English be taught as a compulsory subject from Class 1;

- English be used as the medium of instruction from Class 4.

The Ominde Report had recommended that English be used as the medium of instruction from Class 1.

A major implication of this language policy is that pupils need a sound mastery of English language skills to enable them follow instruction not only during the English lessons but also for all other subjects in the curriculum, except Kiswahili. Sure and Ogechi (2009) argue that the pupils' mastery of English should enable them learn complex concepts in Mathematics and Science effectively. This includes reading and comprehending textbooks and other curriculum materials written in English. Teachers of English, therefore, need to use instructional strategies that will ensure all pupils acquire high levels of reading comprehension abilities.

2.2.1 Reading Comprehension in Lower Primary School in Kenya

The Kenyan primary school syllabus (KICD, 2002) is detailed in terms of the basic skills upon which reading comprehension instruction may be based. The general objectives of lower primary school are: By the end of the first three years, the learner should have acquired sufficient command of vocabulary and language patterns, to be able to use

English as a medium of instruction in upper primary. Specifically, the learner should acquire:

a) Listening skills to be able to listen, understand and respond to information and instructions appropriately;

b) Speaking skills to be able to use correct pronunciation, stress and intonation to express needs, feelings, convey information and relate experiences;

c) Readings skills to be able to read and understand instructions, to read for information and for pleasure, and to develop vocabulary and sentence structures;

d) Writing skills to be able to express own feelings and ideas meaningfully and legibly in correct English structures (KICD, 2002, p. 4).

The syllabus for each of the eight primary school classes is organized in a thematic approach and under each theme there is an objective on reading comprehension. In Class 3, pupils are expected to "read short passages and answer oral questions" (Objective 1.2.c) and "write answers to comprehension questions" (Objective 1.2.e) (KICD, 2002 p. 26 – 35). The syllabus also provides a list of the themes to be covered in Class 3. The themes are school and school activities; health and hygiene; child labour; home and family; position and direction; play things; transport; environment; diseases; accidents and road safety; everyday activities; occupations; communication; sports; technology; animals; climate and disasters. The syllabus, however, does not provide guidance on the instructional strategies that teachers should adopt in teaching comprehension. Gove and Wetterberg (2011) argue that this lack of guidance has led to teachers using a *mix and match* approach instead of being guided by well thought out focused, linear approaches.

This is in spite of the fact that comprehension ability depends heavily on effective instruction.

In the absence of guidance from the syllabus on comprehension instruction strategies, teachers would be expected to rely on either the instructional materials (mainly learners' course books and teachers' guides) and their Primary Teacher Education (PTE) pre-service training. A review of a sample of the instructional materials used in lower primary school and the PTE curriculum (KICD, 2004) reveals that neither provides guidance on instructional strategies that support and promote reading comprehension.

Muitung'u et al. (2004), which is one of the recommended course books for Class 3 English provides the comprehension passages, based on the themes specified in the syllabus; vocabulary study of words drawn from the passages and comprehension questions. The teachers' guides mainly provide guidance on teaching vocabulary, a teacher-led pre-reading discussion of the passage and answers to the vocabulary and comprehension questions.

At the end of 8 years of primary education in Kenya, pupils sit for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations; English is one of the compulsory subjects examined. The subject is examined in 2 papers; the first examines composition writing skills and is marked out of 40 marks; the second paper has 40 question items, with 2 comprehension passages that account for 25 question items and a cloze test that accounts for 15 question items. It is obvious that if a pupil is poor in comprehension, the chances of performing well in KCPE English are very low.

The PTE curriculum prepares the teachers more on how to teach the foundational reading skills of letter recognition, phonemic awareness, vocabulary and fluency and very little on reading comprehension. The following are the topics taught under reading: Teaching Reading; Pre-reading Skills; Reading Readiness; Informal Activities for Introducing English Reading; The Look and Say Method; The Phonic Method; Word Attack Skills; The Sequence of Activities for Reading Lessons, Word Recognition, Guided Reading, Checking Understanding; Using Supplementary Materials; and Individual Reading Progress (KICD, 2004)

The lack of clarity and specificity in reading comprehension instruction may lead to either lack of teaching comprehension or use of ineffective strategies, yet "both curriculum development and teacher training are key elements in the delivery of education" (Barasa, 2005, p. 4). This study sought to establish teachers' awareness of the instructional strategies and how they teach comprehension.

2.3 Classroom Environments that Support Comprehension

The classroom environment is a key determinant of a successful instructional process. Snow et al., (1991) found that students whose home environments were poor with respect to promoting reading comprehension development nonetheless made adequate progress in reading comprehension if they had a rich classroom environment. Duke, Pearson, Strachan and Billman, in Samuels & Farstrup (2011) identify 10 essential elements of successful reading comprehension instruction:

2.3.1 Build disciplinary and world knowledge

Borrowing from the principles of the Construction-Integration model the nature and amount of world/prior knowledge that a reader holds significantly affects the reader's comprehension of a given text. Duke et al. (2011) argue that teachers can build knowledge directly by situating knowledge-building goals alongside reading comprehension. This necessitates creating room for class discussions in comprehension instruction.

2.3.2 Provide exposure to a volume and range of texts

Studies have shown that the quantity and range of texts that students read both in and out of class has a strong correlation with their reading success. Comprehension instruction should, therefore, aim at exposing the pupils to a wide variety of texts. Research studies have shown that a comprehension strategy like prediction is determined to a large extent by the reader's world knowledge.

2.3.3 Provide motivating texts and contexts for reading

Studies have shown that students' motivation to read is enhanced by providing contexts, materials or tasks that catch students' attention and interests. Teachers need to develop innovative strategies of balancing teaching comprehension strategies and using materials that are interesting to the pupils.

2.4 Theory and Research on Nature of Reading Comprehension

Duke et al. (2011) say that research evidence has proved that teachers and the instructional strategies they adopt determine students' comprehension achievement

regardless of the students' characteristics, like home background and social economic status. Duke et al. (2011) point out that for teachers to provide effective comprehension instruction, they need to understand the nature of reading comprehension itself; how skilled comprehenders construct meaning.

Two models that have emerged to explain the nature of reading comprehension are the Schema Theory model McVee, Dunsmore & Gavelek (2005) and Kintsch's (1998) Construction-Integration (CI) model. This Schema model based on the Schema theory viewed the reader as an active constructor of meaning. According to Pearson (2012) the Schema theory explained the structure of human knowledge as it is represented in memory. He points out that we understand current events or texts based on our experiences and knowledge recorded in our schema. This is similar to the more contemporary concept of prior learning.

Aspects of the Schema model continue to influence reading comprehension instruction research. Pearson (2012) identifies the uses that we readers can make of schemata:

- Schemata provide ideational scaffolding for assimilating text information. Schemata have slots that readers expect to be filled with information in a text. Information that fills those slots is easily learned and remembered.

- Schemata facilitate the selective allocation of attention. Put simply, schemata guide our search for what is important in a text.

- Schemata enable inferential elaboration. No text is ever fully explicit. Schemata allow us to make educated guesses about how certain slots must have been filled.

- Schemata allow for orderly searches of memory.

- Schemata facilitate editing and summarizing. By definition, any schema possesses its own criteria of what is important. These can be used to create summaries of text that focus on important information.

- Schemata permit inferential reconstruction. If readers have a gap in their memory, they can use a schema, in conjunction with the information recalled, to generate hypotheses about missing information.

According to Schema Theory, comprehension takes place at the intersection between the reader, text and context. This is the main underpinning of the Transactional Strategy Instruction. The Construction-Integration model also acknowledges the central role played by the readers' prior knowledge in the comprehension process. Also known as 'background knowledge' or 'existing knowledge,' prior knowledge mediates the reconstruction of the text. The need for reconstruction is because texts are not always explicit and therefore the reader uses prior knowledge.

The Construction-Integration model explains that the comprehension process entails using our knowledge and perceptions of what we think the text says to construct mental representations of what the text means. We then integrate the mental representations we have constructed with the knowledge stored in our minds. According to the CI model, when we achieve that integration, we call it learning. These two concepts are very important to the present study because any effective comprehension instruction needs to be anchored on how readers comprehend texts. The CI model isolates two critical levels of representation: the text base and the situation base (Duke et al., 2011). The text base requires the readers to use their knowledge of the world and their knowledge of language

to get the key ideas from the text into their working memory. This also calls for inferencing. For example, knowing that the word 'he' in sentence 2 below refers to the 'boy' in sentence 1:

a. *The boy killed a big snake.*

b. *He is very brave.*

Inference is also necessary in making logical connections among ideas or events in the text. For example, in the sentences above the reader has to infer that a snake is dangerous, hence the boy must be brave to kill a big one. The situation model allows readers to integrate what they already know with what they read resulting in constructing new knowledge. According to Duke et al., (2011) just as knowledge drives comprehension so does comprehension provide the reader with new knowledge to modify existing knowledge structures in the long-term memory. The relationship between the reader and the comprehension text is, therefore, symbiotic.

The importance of these theories on the nature of reading comprehension to the current study is that teachers can only plan effective comprehension when they understand the comprehension process. This study sought to find out teachers' awareness and use of comprehension instructional strategies. Such strategies are informed by the comprehension process. The purpose of teaching reading comprehension is to produce good readers.

2.5 Reading Comprehension Instruction

The challenge in reading comprehension instruction research is to increase the efficacy of instruction by identifying effective instructional practices. Keer & Verhaeghe, (2005), Dole et al., (1991) argue that such instructional practice in reading comprehension should be informed by comprehension processes, comprehension strategies, and teaching strategies.

Dole et al., (1991) trace the historical origin of reading comprehension instruction to the early educational psychologists' notions about learning. The behavioural theories based on the Stimulus-Response associations influenced comprehension instruction to be organized in terms of teaching the learner a set of sub-skills involved in both decoding and comprehension. Such sub-skills include "sequencing events in a story, predicting outcomes of a story, drawing conclusions, finding the main idea etc." (Dole et al. 1991, p. 240). Within this tradition it was assumed that each skill can be mastered and that the aggregate of all the sub-skills equalled reading comprehension. In this approach, readers are passive recipients of information in the text. Meaning is assumed to reside in the text itself, and the goal is to help the reader to reproduce that meaning.

The emergence of cognitive psychology and the cognitively based view of reading comprehension emphasized the interactive nature of reading and the constructive nature of comprehension. This cognitive view explained that proficient readers use a flexible repertoire of comprehension monitoring and regulating activities which includes both cognitive and metacognitive strategies (Keer & Verhaeghe, 2005). Keer and Verhaeghe define cognitive strategies as mental or behavioural activities that increase the likelihood

of comprehension, such as rereading, activating prior knowledge and adjusting reading speed. They defined metacognitive strategies as self-monitoring and regulating activities that focus on the product and the process of reading, support readers' awareness of comprehension, and assist in the selection of cognitive strategies.

Research in reading comprehension instruction following the advent of cognitive research was either descriptive/correlational or experimental/quasi-experimental (Pearson 2012; Roberts & Duke, 2012). The experimental studies tried out different comprehension instructional approaches to test their efficacy. The descriptive/ correlational studies sought to find out what teachers were doing or not doing in comprehension instruction, the most famous of such studies being Durkin (1978-79) study that was based on classroom observation. A comparison of the two categories of studies reveals that there have been more experimental than descriptive/correlational studies. In Kenya, the specific instructional strategies that teachers employ in teaching reading comprehension are not well known, especially because the pre-service teacher training curriculum does not include such strategies in the curriculum content. The researcher, therefore, found it prudent to find out the specific strategies teachers are using to teach reading comprehension. The present study was therefore descriptive/correlational and borrowed from this category of studies. It will also contribute to the growing studies in this category.

According to Pearson (2012), the experimental studies have made two major contributions to comprehension instruction. First, the explicit teaching of comprehension strategies has now been accepted as sound comprehension instruction (NRP, 2000). Second, the dynamic role of the teacher in comprehension instruction has been well articulated in the Gradual Release of Responsibility model. Basic processes underlying reading comprehension are complex and call on the oral language system and a conscious understanding of this system (i.e., metalinguistic awareness) at all levels from semantic and morph syntactic to pragmatic awareness (Morrison et al., 2005).

Higher order metacognitive skills also appear to contribute to comprehension (Rapp et al., 2007; Wilson & Rupley, 1997). Thus, there is accumulating research on the underlying knowledge, skills, and strategies related to comprehension (NICHD, 2000; Rayner et al., 2001; Wilson & Rupley, 1997). These include semantic knowledge and vocabulary (Biemiller & Boote, 2006), comprehension strategy use (NICHD, 2000; Van den Broek, Risden, Fletcher, & Thurlow, 1996; Wilson & Rupley, 1997), awareness of text structure (Williams, Stafford, Lauer, Hall, & Pollini, 2009), background knowledge (Rapp et al., 2007; Wilson & Rupley, 1997), and self-regulation, including attention (McClelland et al., 2007).

Building on the work of Perfetti et al. (2005), Scarborough (1990), Catts & Kamhi (2004), and (Locke, 1993), the study by (Connor, Piasta, et al., 2009) relied on a developmental model of reading comprehension. The first assumption in this model is that the ability to read proficiently for understanding is built on students' developing social, cognitive, and linguistic systems. As these systems mature and increase in

sophistication, so too do students' ability to co-opt these systems in the service of reading. In addition to decoding and letter/word reading skills, they consider comprehension processes, which may be largely automatic and unconscious higher order processes identified in the cognitive psychology literature (Perfetti, 2008; Rapp et al., 2007) or reflective or interrogative comprehension processes, which include conscious efforts to understand text and are largely identified in the education literature (NICHD, 2000; Pressley & Wharton- McDonald, 1997).

In this model, reading comprehension requires fluent decoding and word-level skills and fluent, automatic higher order processes, as well as the ability to use the automatic skills actively and consciously when the reading task demands it (reflective comprehension processes). The developmental model elucidates key skills that students bring to the task of learning that may moderate the impact of the reading instruction they receive on their comprehension gains. These include students' basic word reading and decoding skills, their oral language, specifically vocabulary skills, and their comprehension skills.

Reading comprehension plays a central role in the school curriculum, yet it is not given the attention it deserves in primary school classrooms. One of the most disconcerting problem facing teachers in the schools today is not only their pupils' inability to read; but the pupils' general lack of interest, indifference, sheer rejection of reading, and poor comprehension (Cairny, 1999; Unoh, 1995). Comprehension is the basis of reading. Teaching children how to read and comprehend is the number one responsibility of schools (Unoh, 1995 and Cairney 1990). Cairney (1990) further stressed that no child should leave school without adequate reading ability and judging from the angle of low

income families, the school is the only hope for their children to attain proficiency in reading and comprehension.

Reading comprehension is equally not divulged from linguistics (Unoh, 1995). First and foremost to comprehend, the reader must have acquired the basic decoding skills, which are linguistic in nature. The linguistic domain includes phonemic, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic knowledge (Colley, 1987). The rhetorical domain includes information about the form and conventions of different kinds of texts, which can range from a technical description to a literacy novel.

In spite of the complexity of reading comprehension, its definition can be classified under three domains and each influence the pedagogical process. The first group perceives reading comprehension as the end product of a reading programme aimed at getting pupils to grasp the meaning of the words, which they perceive. This is referred to as bottom-up approach to reading. In this instance, the reader may construct an interpretation of the text, which matches what is intended by the author. Reading appears to be a sequential letter-by-letter; word-by-word process and the focus is on perfection in oral reading and literal recall of details. To the teacher and the reader, meaning is largely in the printed word.

Among the proponents of this concept of reading comprehension are Thorndike (1973), and Williams (1991). Thorndike (1973) defines reading comprehension as ability to answer questions about a passage presented together with multiple-choice questions. Williams (1991) stated that reading is a process whereby one looks at and understands what has been written. One obvious implication of this definition is that teachers have to

spend more time getting their pupils to "engage" with texts. For many children in this type of classroom environment, reading is a low-level process characterized by a constant struggle to "read words". Critics of the bottom-up view of reading comprehension assert that reading should not be only text-based. This process, in their view isolates the reader and his prior knowledge as well as limiting the role of the teacher to helping the reader understand someone else's meaning (Ringler and Weber, 1984; List and Lerner 1989; Richardson and Morgan 1990; Cairney 1990).

The second group defines reading comprehension as a constructive process involving the drawing of inferences based on an interaction between the readers' prior knowledge and information from the text (Singler and Dolan 1982, Dole, Duffy, Resehler & Pearson, 1991). This view is referred to as the top-down approach to reading. They propose that a text is language written in representation. In order to understand it the reader must, in many instances, use information, which is explicit and implicit. Inferences may be required to integrate parts of the text and in order to make these the reader must have some background knowledge of the situation portrayed in the text. The reader may construct a satisfactory interpretation of the text, which differs from that intended by the author.

Wixon, Peters, Weber and Roeber, (1987), cited in Richeck, List and Lerner, (1989) gave what they termed a comprehensive definition of reading as the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader, the text and the context of the reading situation. Looking closely at this definition point, it is observed that reading comprehension involves the interaction of three components of reader's existing

knowledge and interest, which affects what he or she is willing and able to read (Richardson and Morgan, 1990). The second is the text. This is the information presented to the reader. The clarity and organization of the text will affect the reader's ability to make sense out of it (Cairney, 1990).

Finally, the third component is the context of the reading situation, which also affects the reading process. Some children find texts so frightening that they have difficulty reading them. Richek, List and Lerner, (1989) postulated that people read one way when trying to understand detailed directions and another when reading a story for enjoyment. The interaction of these three components, according to Richek (1989), is dynamic and may change as the reader reads through the text. For example, when readers find information in the text that conflict with their existing knowledge, the reading act becomes less comfortable. On the other hand, when the information in the text agrees with reader's knowledge, they become more comfortable with material.

Teachers in this instance, reflect a concept of reading that emphasizes the importance of the total concept, including the reader's prior knowledge, in determining meaning. Reading comprehension skills are the strands that make up the term reading comprehension. The skills are needed to understand and apply information within written material (Oldson & Dillner, 1982). The proponents of reading comprehension skills suggest that the identified sub-skills or tasks lead to an understanding of written materials. Considerable research over the years does seem to verify the existence of separable, distinguishable skills. The most detailed study of this kind was carried out by Davis (1968, 1972), involving a statistical analysis of the results of two 96 item tests used

with 988 college students. Davis suggests that he could distinguish four skills used to identify word meaning, draw inferences, identify a writer's technique by creating the passage and find answers to questions. Since then, so many other studies have pointed to the fact that reading comprehension skills do exist and should be taught (Grillet, 1990; Williams 1991). Okwilagwe, (1992) identified eight comprehension skills while Grillet and Cairney (1990) identified as many as twenty-two reading comprehension skills. Oldson and Dillner (1982) listed twelve skills as follows: gaining word meaning, identify details, identifying main ideas, identifying sequence, identifying cause-effect relationship, making inferences, making generalizations and conclusions, identifying tone and mood, identifying theme, identifying characterization, identifying fact, fiction and opinion and identifying propaganda.

In contrast, some scholars consider reading comprehension as a "total process" with no separate skills whilst others suggest that skills exist but cannot be used in isolation. Cairney (1990) is of the opinion that to attempt to define reading comprehension, as skill-related phenomenon is to miss the major point that meaning making is at the heart of all we do as readers. She suggested a more student-centered approach that involves among other things: emphasizing the complete text, provide instructional activities and provide opportunities for readers to use alternative ways to create meaning. Griese (1987) condensed the sub-skills to three basic skills, namely ability to identify the specific ideas, ability to understand the organization of these ideas and ability to make inferences. He adopted the view that reading comprehension skills cannot be isolated but it can be incorporated into any instructional strategy.

Scholars have adduced several product factors as the main cause of pupils' reading comprehension problems. Unoh (1995) posited that pupils fail to comprehend text because they are not trained to read beyond the line and above the line. On the other hand, Philip, Kristy, Margaret and Ruth (2001) posited that one of the reasons pupils do not comprehend text is their non-exposure to the different levels of reading comprehension. According to the Kenyan language policy, from Class 1 to 3, pupils are involved in learning to read and they have crossed over from learning to read to reading to learn with English as the language of instruction.

At this level, reading comprehension is no longer for factual information alone but it becomes an active process where the reader exhibits the ability to read for details, grasps the main idea, selects and evaluates the correct meaning of text (Ogunniyi, 1994). In other words, to read and comprehend implies that the reader has to incorporate the three basic levels of reading comprehension, which are factual, inferential and evaluation (Costello, 2000).

There is a dearth of research on reading comprehension development and achievement of children at the primary school level. The few available have identified physical and perceptional, intellectual, emotional, language and experimental factors as possible contributors to reading failure (Asiedu & Akrofi, 1982). But all those factors suggest weaknesses within the children and tend to shift the responsibility away from the teachers. However, there is an accumulating body of evidence that the teachers have not been doing as well as they should in teaching reading comprehension as revealed by

research findings (Durkin, 1979, Asiedu – Akorfi, 1982; May, 1992). They show that the teacher is the most important variable in how well a child learns to read.

Extensive surveys and specific studies (SAPA Report, 1992; UNESCO, UNICEF, Nigeria Project 1997 & UBE 2001) have pinpointed some of the factors that hinder reading comprehension as limited and fragmented instructional programmes, lack of improper use of materials (Idogo 1987) and inadequately prepared teachers. The teacher's self-confidence (which comes partly through his or her knowledge of how to teach reading) seems to be an important factor. It is the teacher who makes the difference; his/her awareness of strategies, those that encourage children to look for ideas. In the conventional classroom, reading comprehension is taught as if understanding that passage in use is an end in itself.

Pearson (1989) is of the opinion that reading comprehension is not a passive, receptive, or text-based process, but an active, constructive, reader-based process. In the view of Tominson and Ellis (1990), teachers should bear in mind that when they give a comprehension lesson, they are helping to develop the pupil's basic reading skills that are used in their general reading. Pearson (1989) reiterated that the teacher's role is to make reading enjoyable and should therefore employ teaching strategies that should make pupils gain pleasure and knowledge from written texts. These research studies emphasize the importance of reading comprehension instruction and point at the need to focus on the teachers' awareness of such instruction, which is the main interest of the present study.

2.6 Related Studies

2.6.1 Teachers' Levels of awareness of Comprehension Instructional Strategies

Good teaching is perhaps the most critical part of a solid education. In fact, the deleterious effects of just one ineffective teacher may jeopardize the entire educational success of a young person; regardless of how many effective teachers he/she might subsequently have (Wright, & Brown, 2006). Goodall (2000) argues that whereas both good schools and quality teachers are directly related, good schools are a product of excellent and quality teaching staff. Kisrkoi (2011) further advances that good teacher education comes before good schools because quality teachers make good schools. Quality teachers greatly contribute to students' achievement and they are the system's principal resource. The teachers' effect and influence on learning is much greater than the effect of school organization, leadership and financial conditions as teachers are an important means of passing on knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for democracy, citizenship, intercultural dialogue and personal development (UNESCO, 2005). The current study therefore reviewed the following studies on teacher preparedness to teach reading comprehension.

According to Antunez, (2002) in a study on education and the challenge of patriotism in Nigeria revealed that reading comprehension is the larger goal of improving students' reading proficiency. This goal, however, is mediated by at least two critical variables. First, the research must be translated into appropriate instruction. Second, teachers must enact that instruction. Regardless of the quantity and quality of research-based knowledge about comprehension, the study notes that unless teachers use that knowledge to improve their instruction, students' reading achievement will not improve. This study gave a

general overview of comprehension instruction and therefore did not critically examine specific instructional strategies. This study did not also consider teachers' knowledge and use of comprehension instructional strategies. The current study sought to fill these gaps.

In a study by Padron (2005) on utilizing cognitive reading strategies to improve English reading comprehension of Spanish-speaking bilingual students, when asked about what reading comprehension instruction meant, teachers expressed uncertainty. A middle school teacher explained that she often try to guide the learners through readings, although she was not sure if this helped the learners comprehend. Other respondents equated comprehension instruction with assessing whether their students understood text. Another teacher noted, "I help students comprehend the text by asking them about the text. If they know they are held responsible for the content, students are more likely to take the time to focus on understanding the reading."

Absent in their discussions about reading comprehension instruction were explanations of teacher-led think-a louds to model reading strategies, explicit explanations for when and why to use strategies, or coaching students on how to apply strategies to their independent reading (Padron, 2005). The main focus in this study was on the teacher's awareness of comprehension instruction strategies and did not bring the student into focus. It therefore did not examine the effect of teacher-preparedness on the comprehension ability of pupils. This study was carried out among Spanish speaking bilingual students who have different linguistic backgrounds to Kenyan pupils. The current study was therefore necessary to establish teachers' preparedness towards comprehension instruction in public primary schools in Kenya and also examined how

this influences pupils' comprehension ability. The study also targeted middle school teachers while the current study targeted lower primary teachers and therefore examined teachers' preparedness to teach beginners.

Smith (2007) carried out a study on the effects of training teachers to teach students at different reading ability levels to formulate three types of questions on reading comprehension and question generation ability in Sierra Leon. The study revealed that secondary teachers saw their major instructional responsibility to be covering their particular syllabuses in preparation for state standardized tests. Overwhelmingly, teachers identified covering the syllabus as their most pressing instructional priority. For example, a teacher reasoned, "Teachers are so test-driven. We have an enormous amount of information to pour into students' heads in order to fulfill the yearly requirements of the state standardized test." Five of the eight teachers ranked syllabus coverage in preparation for state tests as their most pressing instructional priority. No doubt the pressure that teachers felt to cover syllabuses was closely aligned with the need to successfully pass state standardized tests. Smith (2007) further noted that the lessons taught in primary teacher training colleges did not go beyond word level reading. This left teacher trainees ill-prepared to teach reading skills such as fluency and text level understanding which seem to be the focus in the primary school textbooks. In addition, teacher educators combined teaching of methods and teaching a rigid four-stage reading lesson structure. The implication here is that learning to teach reading is the same as learning a set activities and procedures.

This study targeted teacher training colleges and was restricted to teachers' preparedness to generate questions during comprehension and did not examine how teachers gradually release this responsibility to pupils. The current study examined teachers' preparedness to teach pupils how to generate questions from the texts. The study also relied on interviews as the only data collection instrument which is susceptible to interview bias in addition to the likelihood of the interviewee being intimidated by the interviewer leading to giving of inaccurate information. The current study in addition used classroom observation which allowed for data to be collected where and when the instruction process was occurring and therefore did not rely on respondents' willingness to provide information as the researcher directly saw what teachers were doing rather than relying on what they said they do. The study therefore achieved more accurate results.

A study by Omondi (2011) on the causes of reading inabilities among primary school children in Nairobi area revealed that with the pressure to cover the syllabus, several teachers in this study saw comprehension instruction as an instructional burden which detracted from instructional time. One teacher said, "Teachers don't have time to teach students how to read. As long as they can read and answer the questions on the test, I don't worry about reading." Another teacher observed "My priority is to teach the students the English curriculum to the best of my ability while fostering a love for the subject. It is hard to take time to focus on reading in the classroom." One teacher stated that, "I'm quick to assess whether students can read the text, but I don't have time to work on their weaknesses. We have to move on to expose them to everything on the test. Teachers don't provide reading instruction because of standardized testing. I don't have the time to sit and teach students how to read. Although it's beneficial in the long run, I'd

have to give up instructional time to teach my content." This study therefore established that teachers saw reading comprehension as an instructional add-on, rather than a way to promote students' understanding and retention of content.

This study focused on comprehension instruction in upper primary which means that it targeted teachers of pupils who had higher reading capabilities. The current study targeted lower primary school pupils, which is a foundational level. This study also relied on interviews of teachers while the current study in addition used classroom observation which provided accurate information on teachers' preparedness to teach comprehension.

According to Mutea (2008) in an analysis of performance in English at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE), teachers pointed to their lack of professional knowledge and training as barriers to reading comprehension instruction. One teacher explained, "My students have to be able to read. However, I'm not qualified to teach them how to read. In my training, I didn't learn to teach children to read. I never felt comfortable working with reading." This study did not examine teachers' comprehension instruction preparedness but was a general overview of causes of poor performance in KCSE English examination. The current study on the other hand analyzed teachers' preparedness in specific comprehension instructional strategies. The study also targeted secondary school students who have more advanced comprehension knowledge while the current study targeted class teachers and pupils at primary school level.

In a study by Temizkan (2007) on reading strategies' effect on comprehension on elementary second stage Turkish language courses, focused group discussions were conducted to gain insights into teachers' knowledge and understanding of reading. The FGDs focused on the teachers' understanding of what teaching reading in the lower primary school means, knowledge about the primary school curriculum, pedagogical knowledge, their feelings about their preparedness to teach reading in the lower primary, and the challenges they expected to encounter when they started teaching. The findings revealed that teacher-trainees' understanding of reading in the lower primary was not different from that of their trainers. Some trainees thought that reading had to do with pronouncing words while others said it has to do with word recognition; yet other trainees associated reading with vocabulary building. However, a few did say that reading has something to do with understanding or getting the meaning of words. This study targeted teacher training colleges while the current study targeted teachers in schools and therefore examined the actual comprehension instruction process. The study also relied on focus group discussions which are susceptible to facilitator bias, can be dominated or side-tracked by a few individuals, does not provide valid information at the individual level and the information is not representative of other groups. The current study used classroom observation which enabled acquisition of accurate information.

According to Tompkins (2003) in a survey titled "Literacy for the 21st century: Teaching reading and writing in pre-kindergarten through Grade 4 in Upper Saddle River," it emerged that the teachers' knowledge, understanding, and practice about teaching reading in the lower primary were mostly derived from their training. Indeed, the headteachers reported that they did not have induction programmes for the teachers since

they were trained and it was therefore assumed that they were competent. This study only gave a general overview of teachers' preparedness to teach reading while the current study focused on specific instructional strategies and conducted a more in-depth analysis of the instruction process through classroom observation.

Oriedo (2008) in a study on the knowledge and understanding of the lower primary school reading curriculum in Emuhaya Division, Kakamega District revealed that teacher trainees had limited knowledge and understanding of the lower primary reading curriculum. The trainees' interaction with the school curriculum and materials was chiefly in preparation for teaching practice during which time one concentrated only on the particular class and topics he/she had been assigned to teach during the three weeks of teaching practice. The study also revealed that the trainees' pedagogical knowledge with regard to teaching reading in the lower primary was limited.

Oriedo (2008) notes that this is because, in the entire two year primary education teacher training programme, at best, trainees get only three weeks of practical teaching of reading in lower primary. This means that on the whole, the opportunity to practice what trainees have learnt theoretically in college is very much limited and the development of their pedagogical skills constrained. This study targeted teacher trainees and therefore focused more on teacher training. The current study on the other hand involved practicing teachers and therefore captured the actual classroom reading instruction. Classroom observation enabled the researcher to collect primary data on the actual teaching of reading.

In a study by Kamau (2009) on teachers' sense of preparedness to teach reading in the lower primary schools in Kiambaa Division, the teachers indicated that they were very confident about their preparedness to teach reading in lower primary school. In the questionnaires, 90% of the teachers rated their confidence as high or very high. Similarly, 87% of the teachers rated their ability to teach lower primary reading as high or very high. They were confident in their ability to use the 'look and say' method, how to structure a reading lesson and in the use of teaching and learning materials.

However, according to Kamau (2009) it was established that the teachers had learnt some techniques to use in reading lessons but had not grasped why the techniques would work. They seemed to have simplistic faith in the mere use of teaching and learning materials. A teacher noted that, "With the use of teaching aids, the learning is simplified; it's easy to understand." Clearly, the teachers had not addressed themselves to how teaching and learning materials ought to be used in ways that are effective in helping learners learn to read considering the learner, environmental and other learning factors. This faith in teaching and learning materials is consistent with what was found in the PTE curriculum analyses data sets and the teacher trainer interviews and classroom observation data sets. This study just gave a general overview of teacher preparedness and therefore failed to examine teachers' preparedness based on various comprehension instructional strategies. However, the study did not compare the teachers' awareness and use of instructional strategies and the pupils' ability. The current study filled this gap by administering a comprehension test and correlating the pupils' achievement with the teachers' use of instructional strategies.

A study by Gichaga (2006) on the factors that influence performance in English language at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Kiambu District revealed that most teachers did not readily own up to facing challenges in reading instruction. However, when asked to reflect on their training and their teaching of reading in the lower primary and to say what needed improvement in the teaching of reading methods in the primary teacher training colleges, the teachers indicated that the teaching of phonics was one area that needed improvement.

The study by Gichaga (2006) further reveled that through practice, some of teachers had realized the importance of phonics in helping lower primary school pupils to become independent. The teachers felt that better knowledge of the phonics method would make them more effective in helping students who were having reading difficulties. The study recommended that comprehension instruction in primary-teacher training colleges should be emphasized. This study only focused on the foundational reading skills, while the current study focused on the ultimate goal of teaching reading, which is comprehension.

A study by Akhusama, (2004) on problems with regard to the teaching and learning English in selected schools in Butere North Division of Kakamega District used questionnaires for data collection. The study revealed that teachers found finding meaning from a word's place in the sentences (56.5% of the respondents) very difficult or difficult to teach. The study further revealed that the other area where teachers found relatively challenging was understanding the overall meaning of a story, poem or other piece of writing (40% of the respondents). The study concluded that this was not surprising given that these areas are not given much emphasis in their training and yet

these are very important components of reading. This study targeted upper primary school pupils. The current study focused on Class 3 level pupils who are at a critical stage of developing reading comprehension ability. The current study also, other than interviews, used classroom observation which helped in obtaining more accurate data.

2.6.2 Strategies used by Teachers to Teach Comprehension

According to the US Centre for Education (2010), successful reading teacher trainers model the pedagogic strategies they are teaching their trainees to use, and provide opportunities for extensive and guided practice with students in their classrooms. The following studies were reviewed to provide insights on comprehension instruction strategies used by teachers.

In a study by Gebhard (2000) on teaching English as a foreign or second language in the USA, teacher trainers used a combination of methods. They included demonstration of how to teach reading, whole class teaching using question and answer as well as lecturing. A few teacher educators simulated early reading lessons with the trainees acting as lower primary school students or with a trainee role-playing the lower primary reading teacher. In all cases, the trainers took a dominant position in the class. They stood in front of the class with the trainees seated in rows facing the front. This study targeted teacher training colleges and therefore did not analyse the actual classroom instruction. The current study sought to fill this research gap by targeting Class 3 practicing teachers and collecting data through classroom observation.

Durkin (1978-79) carried out a study on 'What Classroom Observations Reveal about Reading Comprehension Instruction.' She conducted classroom observations of reading comprehension in Grades 3 through 6 to find out whether elementary school classrooms provide comprehension instruction and, if they do, to find out what amount of time is allocated to it. The study found no evidence of comprehension instruction. The nature of comprehension teaching was mainly focussed on assessment through teacher questions. A large part of the observed lessons was taken up by giving, completing and checking assignments. The study observed that by Grade 4 "instruction continued to be deemphasized in the sense that less time was spent on teacher directed lessons, whereas written assignments continued to grow longer and more numerous (Durkin (1978-79, p. 484). Durkin reports that in all the observed lessons, completing assignments and getting right answers seemed more significant than concerns like "Do the children understand this? and Will what I'm assigning contribute to reading ability?" (Durkin (1978-79, p. 484).

The present study benefited a lot from Durkin's study. First, the researcher is of the view that classroom observation is crucial in helping researchers understand how teachers conceptualise reading comprehension instruction. Second, the two studies focussed on Class 3, though Durkin's study extended to Grade 6. The present study however, differed in the sense that it also sought to find out the teachers' awareness of comprehension instructional strategies through a teacher interview. The present study also administered a comprehension test to find out the pupils' comprehension ability. The results of the comprehension test were then correlated with the teachers awareness and comprehension instruction strategies used in class. Although the correlation would not imply causal

relationships, it would be a pointer at the nature of relationship between the instructional strategies and pupils' ability.

In a study by Miller (2005) on the effects of general and specific self-instruction training on children's comprehension monitoring performances during reading teacher trainers considered their teaching to be learner-centred. A teacher trainer explained what they do before teaching practice is a lot of interactions and questioning. According to one trainer, it involved calling students to the front of the class and telling them to demonstrate just like they would do in a classroom situation. Another teacher trainer observed that they have a lot of reading sessions before teaching practice which involves talking and dramatizing something that teacher trainees see they are not doing well. This study targeted teacher training colleges to examine comprehension instruction strategies taught to teacher trainees. It was not therefore able to ascertain whether these strategies are applied in actual classroom situations. The current study sought to fill this gap.

Dermody (2008) in a study on metacognitive strategies for development of reading comprehension for younger children revealed that some teachers demonstrated awareness on the importance of the phonics method for the trainees in helping lower primary students learn to read as is evident below: "The thing that will really help them (lower primary students) to read is if they know the sounds of English or the sound of whatever language that they are reading; that will help them to know how to read, so you (the teacher of reading) have to start with the sounds. Let them know the sounds. This study relied on interviews as the means of data collection. The current study however in

addition used classroom observation which helped in ascertaining whether teachers used these strategies when teaching comprehension.

In a study by Shortland-Jones (2006) on the development and testing of an instructional strategy for improving reading comprehension based on schema and metacognitive theories, it was established that teachers taught the 'look and say' method of teaching early grade reading using activities such as matching words with the corresponding object, identification of words on a flash card and playing games. This suggests their inadequate knowledge and understanding of the phonic method which reading experts recommend especially for struggling readers (Silven, 2009). This study was mainly concerned with the effectiveness of selected comprehension instruction strategies while the current study sought to establish a wide range of comprehension strategies used by teachers and their influence on comprehension ability.

According to Rush & Milburn (2008) in a survey on the effects of reciprocal teaching on self-regulation of reading comprehension in a post-secondary technical school program, teachers identified using the phonics method to teach reading as a challenge. A trainee expressed reservations regarding the use of the phonics method thus: "The method I feel comfortable teaching in is the "look and say" because you know even when you go with those sounds, even you sometimes it will give you a problem. Even though you are a teacher you will have some problems. That is why you find some like me are comfortably using look and say." This study relied on interviews to collect data while the current study in addition used classroom observation to provide more accurate findings.

Hamman (2005) in an analysis of the real-time effects of reading strategy training found that during comprehension instruction, teachers had the reading passage read over and over again by the teacher; by the teacher with the students reading sentences after the teacher; by groups of students; and by individual students. However, most teachers were unable to explain why they had chosen this approach, only saying that it helps students learn to read or that it helps them to understand as the following excerpt illustrates: "Reading once they may not comprehend the passage, even twice they may not but the more they read, the more they understand because you realize as they are reading some of them would get lost and because they are children, we realize that they also learn through repetition, keep on asking them to repeat because they learn by repeating." This study did not establish the influence of instructional strategies on comprehension ability. The current study sought to fill this gap.

In a study by Blaha (2009) on teachers' comprehension instructional practices in India, observations of teachers teaching reading in lower grades revealed that the teachers were not making instructional decisions on the basis of their particular learners and the circumstances around them. The teachers generally kept to the highly structured approach to teaching reading that they had learnt in college and which was reinforced in the teacher's guides on which virtually all of them seemed to depend. They had the reading passage read over and over again. In this study, data were mainly collected using document reviews which did not allow the researcher to access actual classroom teaching. The current study used interviews and classroom observations to fill this gap.

Rich and Pressley (1990) conducted a study on 'teacher acceptance of reading comprehension strategy instruction'. The study rated the acceptability of 7 basic reading comprehension strategies, reciprocal instruction and 6 sets of published materials aimed at promoting use of comprehension strategies. The majority of the teachers who participated were elementary school teachers. The study used questionnaires and open-ended follow-up comments. The study found that there were clear differences in the acceptability of the various interventions. Among the basic strategies, prior-knowledge activation, representational imagery and question generation were favoured over other procedures.

According to Rich and Pressley (1990) reciprocal instruction and one reading series received high acceptability rating. This study did not correlate the teachers' choice of instructional strategies with the learners' ability. This is important in order to establish the efficacy of the instructional strategies chosen. The current study filled this gap by administering a comprehension test.

The importance of this study to the present one is that acceptability of reading comprehension is an important factor to consider in designing comprehension instruction. Whereas the present study did not investigate acceptability, it aimed at establishing teachers' awareness of comprehension instruction strategies and use of such strategies. Awareness is an important prerequisite to acceptance. Rich and Pressley observed that some of the reservations expressed by the teachers were based on the fact that they had not tried the strategies. The researcher, therefore, found it important to carry out classroom observations to establish teachers' practices. The strategies that found the

highest levels of acceptability in Rich and Pressley's study are among the strategies the present study focused on.

Taylor et al., (2000) conducted a study on 'Effective Schools and Accomplished Teachers: Lessons about Primary-Grade Reading Instruction in Low-Income Schools'. The study focused on Grade 1 to 3. The purpose of the study was to examine the instructional or organizational factors that might explain how and why some schools attain greater-than-expected primary-grade reading achievement with students at risk of failure by virtue of poverty. The study adopted use of questionnaires, interviews and administered a test on learners. The study categorized the schools using a combination of (a) gains in scores from their own classroom reading measures and (b) scores on whatever achievement test the district normally used. In the present study the researcher selected the schools based on their performance in Nairobi County end of year examinations. This study relied on interviews and questionnaires while the current study used classroom observations to provide more accurate information.

For comprehension instruction Taylor et al. (2000) observed and coded eight instructional practices: doing a picture walk; asking for a prediction; asking a text-based question; asking higher-level, aesthetic response question; asking children to write in response to reading (including writing answers to questions about what they had read) doing a story map; asking children to retell a story; and working on a comprehension skill or strategy. The study found that a collaborative model for delivery of reading instruction, including early reading intervention, was a hallmark of the most effective schools. The study relied on document review to collect data and therefore did not have access to primary data,

which is more accurate. The current study filled this gap by conducting classroom observations.

According to Taylor et al. (2000), statistically significant teacher factors included time spent on small-group instruction, time spent in independent reading, high levels of student-on-task behaviour, and strong home communication. Most of the accomplished teachers also employed higher-level questions in discussions of text and were more likely to ask students to write in response to reading. The present study was modelled along the same classroom observation of comprehension instruction and the comprehension strategies used by the accomplished teachers with some of the strategies the researcher investigated in terms of teachers' awareness and use. However, the current study went further to correlate the use of instructional strategies with the pupils' ability through administration of a comprehension test.

Working with fourth-grade students, Neuman (1988) found that when teachers presented students with oral previews of stories, which were then turned into discussions and predictions, story comprehension increased relative to "read only" previews and typical basal background-building lessons. In a creative variation of the preview theme, McLaughlin & Allen (2002) had students compose very short narratives based on a list of keywords from the upcoming story. For example, terms such as *loose tooth, string, pain, baseball game, tie score,* and *home run* might serve as keywords for an upcoming story about a girl who has a loose tooth that would not come out but falls out naturally when she is engrossed in a close ballgame. Interestingly, the accuracy of their 'prediction' stories proved relatively unimportant in explaining subsequent comprehension of the real

stories; apparently, it was the engagement itself that triggered the deeper story comprehension. This study used classroom observation as the only data collection method and did not benefit from teachers' explanations for the reasons behind their choice of instructional strategies. The current study generated data from teachers' interviews to fill this gap.

Shany and Biemiller (2008) investigated which instructional strategies are deemed to be effective for ELLs with disabilities by educators and students. The researchers used the Multi-Attribute Consensus Building process, which is a quantitative research approach designed to determine a small group's opinion about the importance of specified items (Shany et al. 2008). Surveys were used to elicit the opinions of 42 educators and 25 students with disabilities in a Midwestern state. The researchers found that both the educators and students valued the three reading instructional strategies of (a) fluency building, (b) direct teaching of vocabulary, and (c) practicing paraphrasing and retelling as important strategies to use with ELLs with disabilities. Also, the educators identified two additional strategies as important for reading instruction: (a) relating reading to students' previous experiences and (b) chunking and questioning aloud.

A similar study by Thurlow, Shyyan, Barrera, and Liu (2008) examined the instructional strategies recommended for ELLs with disabilities by middle school teachers in schools meeting the No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements. The researchers used the Delphi survey process to gather combined information from a group of participants with expertise in the area being researched. The participants included 18 educators from states with high ELL populations and 21

educators from states with low ELL populations. The survey process resulted in the identification of seven important reading instructional strategies: (a) relating reading to students' previous experiences, (b) using visual aids, (c) activating background knowledge, (d) chunking and questioning aloud, (e) pre-reading and prediction about the text, (f) using vocabulary in context, and (g) retelling in groups. These studies targeted learns with disabilities who have unique learning needs thus the need to conduct the current study which targeted pupils without learning disabilities, which was the focus of the current study.

Although the impact of questions on comprehension is important, the more interesting questions are (a) whether students can learn to generate their own questions about text and (b) what impact this more generative behaviour might have on subsequent comprehension (Rosenshine, Meister, & Chapman, 1996). Raphael and her colleagues (Raphael & McKinney, 1983; Raphael & Pearson, 1985; Raphael & Wonnacott, 1985) carried out studies on question generation in the mid-1980s.

Using a technique called QARs (Question-Answer-Relationships), Raphael et al. (1996) modeled and engaged students in the process of differentiating the types of questions they could ask on the text. Students learned to distinguish among three types of questions: (1) *Right There* QARs were those in which the question and the answer were explicitly stated in the text, (2) *Think and Search* QARs had questions and answers in the text, but some searching and inferential text connections were required to make the link, and (3) *On My Own* QARs were those in which the question was motivated by some text element or item of information, but the answer had to be generated from the students' prior knowledge.

Through a model of giving students ever-increasing responsibility for the question generation, Raphael and her colleagues were able to help students develop a sense of efficacy and confidence in their ability to differentiate strategies in both responding to and generating their own questions for text (Raphael & McKinney, 1983; Raphael & Pearson, 1985; Raphael & Wonnacott, 1985). The study relied on document review to collect data and did not benefit from primary data. The use of primary sources of data in the current study sought to fill this gap.

Okwako (2011) conducted a study on 'enhancing the development of vocabulary knowledge in English as a second language in Kenya'. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design in which the experimental group was treated to the post-comprehension reading multi-tasks teaching approach for three months. The study found that the experimental group performed better than the control group on the post-test vocabulary test and recommended that teachers should let students interact more with reading comprehension passages using the multi-tasks teaching approach on vocabulary learning. Although Okwako's study focused on secondary schools and only on vocabulary, his recommendation has a bearing on the present study because he suggested that vocabulary is best taught within the framework of comprehension instruction. The present study acknowledges the important role of sound vocabulary mastery in comprehension strategies, especially prior knowledge activation and investigated how teachers plan instruction that integrates vocabulary learning.

A study by Onyamwaro (1990) on a study of factors that affect the teaching of reading in lower primary classes in selected schools, Kisii municipality used interviews and observations to generate data. The study revealed that most teachers had the knowledge of how to conduct reading lessons in lower primary classes and applied the methods they had learnt in college in teaching lower primary classes. However, most of them seemed to be at a loss about how to help students with reading difficulties. Asked what they do with students who cannot read, they stated that they call the students back to school in the afternoon and continue to teach them using the same methods as they used in the lessons. This of course had not succeeded in helping the children learn to read. This did not rely on primary data from actual classroom observation to ascertain the claims made by the teachers. The current study filled this gap through classroom observation.

In a diagnostic study by Wanyoike (2008) on Kenyan children with specific language/reading disabilities, some teachers identified repetition as a strategy of teaching reading. What the teacher-trainees were not clear about was how merely reading a piece of text over and over again translates into understanding. However, a few of them did talk of what they were learning practically as they tried to overcome the challenges that they faced. One such challenge had to do with the large class sizes. One teacher explained how she was using mixed ability grouping, with designated group leaders who could read well and were willing to help the non-readers. This study did not assess the learners' comprehension ability and also did not generate primary data through classroom observation. The current study filled this gap through classroom observation and administering a comprehension test.

A study by Munyeki (1997) on teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning materials in Githunguri Division, Kiambu District revealed that though the teachers talked about the importance of teaching and learning materials and particularly concrete objects and went to great lengths to have and use teaching and learning materials in the lessons, it seemed that enthusiasm about teaching and learning materials was waning among some teachers. In some of the classrooms, there were no signs of teaching and learning materials and upon enquiry from the teachers; some gave hard-to-believe answers such as they had taken them home for safekeeping. This study targeted Class 7 and 8 teachers and did not rely on classroom observation to establish the practices teachers adopted. The current study filled this gap through classroom observations.

2.6.3 Impact of Comprehension Instruction on Pupils' Ability

In a study on reading comprehension instruction, Klinger and Vaughn (1996) examined the effectiveness of reciprocal teaching on the comprehension of 26 Spanish-speaking ELLs with LD in middle school. In the reciprocal teaching model, developed by Palincsar and Brown (2004), students are taught four comprehension strategies through the use of teacher modelling and gradually the students take on the role of teaching the strategies to other students. The four strategies are (a) prediction, (b) summarizing, (c) question generation, and (d) clarification. In Klinger and Vaughn's study, the students read English texts and were encouraged to discuss with each other in either their first language (L1) or their second language (L2). The researchers found that students with learning disabilities showed statistically significant improvement in their reading comprehension through the use of the reciprocal teaching strategy. These studies adopted an experimental design and also targeted learners with disabilities who have unique learning

needs. The current study adopted a case study, mixed methods design in order to get in-depth information on how teachers use comprehension strategies.

Anderson (1992) found that prediction activities promoted overall story understanding only if the predictions were explicitly compared to text ideas during further reading, suggesting that the verification process, in which knowledge and text are compared explicitly, may be as important as making the prediction. These studies suggest a variety of productive ways of encouraging students to engage their knowledge and experience prior to reading. They also suggest that in nearly all cases, the impact on story understanding is positive, at least for narrative texts in which themes and topics are likely to be highly familiar. These studies relied on views of teachers in assessing the influence of use of prediction on comprehension performance. The current study used a comprehension test to ascertain pupils' comprehension ability.

In their approach to teaching frames Brady (1990) in a study on improving the reading comprehension of middle school students through reciprocal teaching and semantic mapping strategies identified and successfully taught students, usually at the middle school level, to use several generic frames as tools for organizing what they are learning from reading, among them frames for depicting conflicts, cause-effect relations, descriptions, explanations, and procedures. Studies show that graphic organizers, such as semantic maps, story maps and concept diagrams, are effective tools in improving comprehension.

These graphic organizers go beyond assisting in the acquisition of information but also help students to develop, maintain and generalize skills (Brady, 1990). Therefore, educators must consider the use of graphic organizers as a means of aiding students derive meaning from text. After using the graphic organizers, students will be ready to engage in independent practice. Here, students have mastered the skill, and can complete and/or create graphic organizers on their own. This case study sought to extend the literature on graphic organizers by examining their effect on the reading comprehension of one female public middle school student who was an English language learner with a learning disability. These studies relied on teacher interviews to get information on the effectiveness of use of graphic organisers in comprehension instruction. They also focused on only one instructional strategy. The current study focused on multiple instructional strategies and used classroom observation and a comprehension test to fill this research gap.

Dianda (2002) examined the effect of graphic organizers on the learning of relational knowledge from social studies texts for 24 students with LD in middle school. Relational knowledge is the understanding of the relationships that link key concepts within a text (Dianda, 2002). The researchers used a pre-test-post-test control group design for the study. Both the graphic organizer group and the control group received reading instruction as well as summary writing instruction over a one month (20 sessions) treatment period. The independent variable in the study was instruction on using graphic organizers.

The findings of the study by Dianda (2002) were a statistically significant advantage for the recall of relational knowledge statements in written essays by the graphic organizer intervention group in comparison to the control group after 20 sessions of instruction. An interesting finding was that on measures of factual content knowledge in multiple-choice tests and quizzes, there was no main effect for condition. This indicates that care must be taken in the assessment measures used to determine the effect of graphic organizers as their positive effects may not be visible in the recall of factual knowledge. This study examined the use of graphic organisers to teach reading in social studies texts while the current study examined the use of graphic organisers as only one among several other instructional strategy teachers were expected to use when teaching reading comprehension.

In a study examining the effect of graphic organizers on the reading comprehension of 45 seventh-grade English second language (ESL) students, Tang (1992) showed that the use of graphic organizers as a visual aid for ESL students' understanding of text structure resulted in statistically significant increases in reading comprehension. The students had diverse L1 backgrounds and low English proficiency. Tang used expository texts because this type of text poses a challenge to students since it is "often crowded with difficult vocabulary, complex concepts and principles, unfamiliar typographical features, peculiar organizational structures, and numerous tables and figures" (Tang, 1992, p. 156).

The study adopted a quasi-experimental design with a pre-test, post-test, and non-equivalent control group. The graphic organizer intervention group received instruction on using graphic organizers that depicted the semantic relations of the text passages. The

researcher found that the difference in mean score on the post-test for the graphic organizer group and the control group was statistically significant, with the intervention group showing significant increases in the amount of textual information recalled during testing. Tang proposed that the use of graphic organizers "facilitates the acquisition of a second language for academic purposes" (Tang, 1992, p. 189). This study helps to provide evidence for the use of graphic organizers with ELLs, yet further research is needed to examine the effects of graphic organizers in diverse contexts. The current study sought to fill this gap by focusing on more instructional strategies and using a regular population of pupils.

A study by Barry (2002) on the evolution of high school remedial reading programs in the United States established that the success in the treatment is more frequent with poor or below-average readers; good readers do not seem to need this kind of instruction. The treatment successfully transfers to question answering and recall. Only a few (two of three) studies report transfer to standardized comprehension tests. The instruction of the content and organization of stories thus improves comprehension of stories as measured by the ability of the reader to answer questions and recall what was read.

This improvement is more marked for less able readers. More able readers may already know what a story is about and therefore do not benefit as much from the training. However, this kind of instruction may aid both kinds of readers in terms of writing as well as reading literary texts. Because stories are used extensively in elementary school, instruction on how to understand a story is warranted by the data, especially for less able readers (Barry, 2002). This study targeted learners with disabilities who have unique

learning needs thus the need to conduct the current study which targeted pupils without learning disabilities.

An explolatory study by Kamil (2004) established that summarizing in comprehension instruction involves identifying the main idea in a paragraph or composing a concise statement of the central concepts from a longer passage, either orally or in writing. The study revealed that this strategy used either during or after reading helps readers to focus on main ideas or other key skill concepts that have been taught and to disregard less relevant ones. It encouraged deeper engagement with a text and motivated students to re-read as they construct a summary (Kamil, 2004). Studies by Armbruster et al. (1987) and Palincsar and Brown (2004) show that summarizing taught either alone or as one of several strategies improves comprehension and memory for what was read.

Weisberg and Balajthy, (1990) in their study indicated that summarizing is a good method of integrating ideas and generalizing from the text information and also improves memory for what is read, both in terms of free recall and answering questions. The study relied on document review to collect data and therefore did not analyse primary data. The use of primary sources of data in the current study helped to fill this gap.

Yopp (1988) revealed that when students learn to generate questions for text, their overall comprehension improves. Yopp studied three different groups that varied in terms of who was taking the responsibility for question generation. In the first group, the teacher asked the questions; in the second, the students generated their own; in the third, the students

generated their own and were provided with a metacognitive routine (in the manner of QAR) for answering their own questions.

According to Yopp (1988), the second and third groups performed better on post-tests given during instruction and after the instruction has ended, suggesting that student control of the questioning process is a desirable instructional goal. Furthermore, although it did not translate into higher performance on the comprehension assessments, the third group, those who received the additional metacognitive routine, were better at explaining the processes they used to answer questions. The study relied on secondary sources of data and therefore did not benefit from analysis of primary data. The use of primary sources of data in the current study helped to fill this gap.

A study by Fisher & Frey (2007) documented the gradual release of responsibility model of instruction as an effective approach for improving literacy achievement, reading comprehension and literacy outcomes for English language learners. The study relied on secondary sources of data and therefore did not benefit from analysis of primary data. The use of primary sources of data in the current study helped to fill this gap.

Correlational studies have shown a positive correlation between students' vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension outcomes (Anderson & Freebody, 1983 and Duke & Pearson, 2002). Further, vocabulary interventions have been associated with improved comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHD, 2000). The findings of the National Reading Panel, a meta-analysis of over 50 studies relating to best practices for the teaching of vocabulary instruction and its relation to reading comprehension, suggested

that when instruction focused on building vocabulary, students' reading skills improved (NICHD, 2000). The National Reading Panel stated that "reading vocabulary is crucial to the comprehension processes of a skilled reader" (NICHD, 2000, p. 4-3). These studies focused more on ability to read as the main output of comprehension instruction through teaching of vocabulary, while the current study in addition assessed pupils' ability to not only read but also be able to comprehend what they have read.

Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension are strongly related. This is true at all grade levels and in all languages throughout the world, with correlations on the order of 6 to .7 (Anderson & Freebody, 1983). Moreover, the size of a child's vocabulary in the early school years is predictive of his or her reading comprehension in high school (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Reasons for this relationship were that vocabulary may reflect a reader's background knowledge where word knowledge and world knowledge develop simultaneously and together influence comprehension. Secondly, the extent of a reader's vocabulary may reflect his or her aptitude for learning and using language. These studies provided a hypothetical analysis of the influence of teaching vocabulary as a comprehension instruction strategy while the current study conducted a practical analysis through classroom observation and comprehension test to pupils.

According to a study by Stanovich et al. (1998), depth and breadth of word knowledge may enable readers to construct meaning quickly and easily as they read. The study found that there is a reciprocal relationship between vocabulary and comprehension: being a good reader contributes to having a larger vocabulary. This may be because good readers tend to do more reading. The study further showed that individuals who read extensively

generally have larger vocabularies and a greater command of general knowledge. They also encounter more words, receive more practice at using context to infer and refine meanings, and over time grow cognitively and linguistically "richer." These studies relied on document review to collect data and therefore did not analyse primary data. The use of primary sources of data in the current study helped to fill this gap.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a review of literature on theory and research on nature of reading comprehension, and reading comprehension instruction. These guided the present study on the contemporary trends in comprehension instruction. The chapter has also reviewed studies whose methodologies, findings or recommendations inform the present study.

The researcher found it necessary to carry out this study because reviewed studies by Antunez, (2002), Mutea (2008), Tompkins (2003) and Kamau, (2009) did not examine teachers' awareness and use of comprehension instructional strategies. Studies by Klinger and Vaughn (1996) and Padron (2005) were carried out among Spanish speaking bilingual students who have different linguistic backgrounds to Kenyan pupils. A study by Smith (2007) was restricted towards teachers' preparedness to generate questions during comprehension instruction while studies by Padron (2005), Omondi (2011) and Mutea (2008) focused on comprehension instruction in upper primary while others relied on interviews of teachers without classroom observation.

Studies by Smith (2007), Temizkan (2007) Oriedo (2008) and Gichaga, (2006) targeted teacher training colleges while the current study targeted practicing and therefore

examined the actual comprehension instruction process. A study by Temizkan (2007) relied on focus group discussions to collect data while the current study used classroom observation which enabled acquisition of accurate information. In the studies by Temizkan (2007) Oriedo (2008) data were mainly collected using document reviews while other studies relied on questionnaires. A study Omondi (2011) used a survey research design. The current study sought to fill these gaps through use of a mixed method research design and generated data using interviews, classroom observations and a comprehension test.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research paradigm, design and methodology used in the study. Specifically, the chapter presents the paradigm, design, a description of the study area, the target population, study sample, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of instruments, piloting of instruments, data collection and analysis processes.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Bryman (2008) says that methods of social research are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. He argues that methods are not simply neutral tools but are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how they should be examined. These viewpoints are expressed through the various philosophical paradigms. Williams (1995) says that although philosophical ideas remain largely hidden in research, they still influence the practice of research and need to be identified. From a pragmatic perspective, concern is on the consequences of actions, it is problem centred, pluralistic and real world practice oriented (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The main assumptions include the belief that knowledge is not abstract philosophy but practical and works to address research question and how well it solves problems. Pragmatism is guided by the notion that your research design should be planned and conducted based on what will best help you answer your research questions.

The study is situated within the pragmatic philosophical paradigm. Creswell (2009) observes that pragmatism emphasizes the research problem and uses all approaches available to understand the problem rather than focusing on the methods. The researcher adopted this approach because the present study is exploratory; the teachers' awareness of the reading instruction strategies and the specific strategies they use in class is not known, and this is very important for planning interventions in reading comprehension instruction. The researcher, therefore, needed a paradigm that would allow many approaches for collecting and analysing data because this would provide the best understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

3.3 Research Design

Creswell (2009) says that a research design is "the plan or proposal to conduct research, and involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry, and specific methods" (Creswell, 2009 p.5). The current study adopted the mixed methods research design. According to Creswell, a mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative research and methods in a single study to understand a research problem. Quantitative methods involve collecting numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. Examples of data collection methodologies include performance tests and questionnaires. In the current study, quantitative data were obtained using the classroom observation schedule and comprehension test.

Qualitative method is a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the views of participants; asks broad, general questions; collects data consisting largely of words (or text) from participants; describes and analyzes these words for themes; and conducts the inquiry in a subjective, biased manner (Creswell, 2012). Generally, it involves listening to the participants' voice and subjecting the data to analytic induction (e.g., finding common themes); more exploratory in nature. Examples of data collection methods include interviews, open-ended questionnaires, observations and focus groups discussions. For this study, qualitative data were obtained from interviews of Class 3 teachers on their awareness of reading comprehension instruction strategies and how they teach reading comprehension.

Bryman (2008) identifies three approaches to mixed methods research. These are triangulation, which refers to the use of quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings; facilitation, which arises when one research strategy is employed in order to aid research using the other research strategy; and complementarity, which occurs when the two research approaches are employed in order that different aspects of an investigation can be dovetailed. The present study adopted the complementarity approach. This is because the qualitative data collected through interviews with the teachers was aimed at establishing teachers' preparedness to teach English comprehension to Class 3 pupils in public primary schools, to establish instruction strategies used by teachers and the impact of the use of these strategies on pupils' comprehension abilities. The quantitative data collected through the classroom observation and comprehension test were intended to find out how the instruction

actually happens in class, and if there is any relationship between the instructional strategies adopted and pupils' comprehension abilities.

The study adopted a case study method for data collection. Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011) point out that case studies allow in-depth analysis of an individual unit. They advice that researchers need to pay attention to balance and variety when selecting the case. In the current study, the researcher selected Starehe Sub-County because of its diversity; the Sub-County has a good mix of well performing and poorly performing schools which would allow the researcher to obtain a deep understanding of the problem. The choice of case study also allowed for correlation of comprehension test and use of strategies for the same teachers and pupils.

3.4 The Study Area

The study was carried out in selected primary schools in Starehe Sub-County of Nairobi County. Starehe Sub-County is one of eight sub-counties of Nairobi County. It covers the central to north areas of Nairobi. The Sub-County has common boundaries with Central Business District (CBD) of Nairobi. The entire Sub-County is located within Nairobi City Council area. The Sub-County comprises of Nairobi Central, Mlango Kubwa, Ngara, Huruma and Mathare administrative Divisions. The Sub-County has 24 registered public primary schools with a mix of high, average and low performing schools. The Sub-County has the second informal settlement area in Nairobi; Mathare. The researcher identified the study area based on the fact that the sub-county continues to experience a widening gap between best performing schools and worst performing ones and therefore was ideal for a comparative analysis of use of reading instruction strategies and its influence on pupils' comprehension ability.

3.5 The Study Population

Babbie (2011) says that "the population for a study is that group (usually of people) about whom we want to draw conclusions" (p.119). The target population for the present study were Class 3 primary school teachers and pupils in Starehe Sub-county.

3.6 The Study Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sampling procedures adopted for the study was purposive, stratified and random sampling. Bryman (2008) says that purposive sampling essentially involves the selection of units with direct reference to the research questions being asked. In the present study the researcher sampled 6 schools using simple random sampling to select 6 public primary schools. According to Bryman (2008), the simple random sample is the most basic form of probability sample. With random sampling, each unit of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in the sample.

Starehe Sub-County was purposively sampled because according to the KCPE examination analysis by Nairobi County Education office (2012), out of the 8 sub-counties in Nairobi County, Starehe Sub-County has a mix of both well performing and poorly performing schools in the annual county and national examinations with only a few schools performing very well. This mix would allow the researcher to observe a variety of teachers. The Nairobi Central Business District is in Starehe Sub-County, but the Sub-County also hosts one the big slums in the country; Mathare slums. These dynamics were bound to provide the researcher with a rich sample to explore the nature of comprehension instruction. The 6 schools were randomly sampled after all the 24 registered public primary schools had been classified in terms of well and poorly

performing schools. All the public primary schools in the District are required to sit for a common end of year examination. The researcher consulted the Starehe Sub-County Education Officer to access results of English for all the schools for three years; 2009 to 2011. Twelve (12) best performing schools and 12 worst performing schools were classified together. The researcher then randomly selected 3 schools from both categories.

The participants in each school were 1 Class 3 teacher and all the pupils in his or her class. These made the case for the study. The choice of Class 3 was informed by the fact that the language policy in Kenya requires that by Class 3 pupils should have acquired sufficient mastery of English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to enable them follow instruction in English in all subjects in Class 4 (KICD, 2002).

With regard to sample size, Gay and Airasian (2003) say that the type of research is the main determinant of the minimum sample a researcher should use. They suggest 30% of the target population for correlational-causal-comparative and experimental research. For descriptive studies, they suggest 10 -20% of the target population. The target population for the current study was Starehe Sub-County, which has a total of 24 registered public primary schools. A sample of 6 schools is 25% of the target population. In each school, the researcher observed 3 lessons, and this required a lot of time, considering that each lesson at lower primary school is 30 minutes long. In total the researcher had 9 hours of observed lesson time in the 6 schools. When combined with the teacher interviews and pupils' comprehension test, this was considered sufficient data for the study.

3.7 Research Variables

Field (2009) defines a variable as things that can change (or vary). An independent variable is a variable that is thought to be the cause of some effect, while a dependent variable is thought to be affected by changes in an independent variable. In the present study the independent variables were teachers' awareness and use of reading comprehension instruction strategies and the dependent variable was the pupils' reading comprehension ability.

3.8 Research Instruments

Creswell (2009) says that qualitative researchers collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour, or interviewing participants. They typically gather multiple forms of data, review and make sense of it, and organise it into categories or themes that cut across all the data. The study used 3 instruments to for data collection: classroom observation schedule, semi-structured teacher interviews and a comprehension fest for pupils. According to Bryman (2008), in qualitative research it is important to use more than one source of data in the study of social phenomena. This results in greater confidence in the findings. The use of the classroom observation schedule, semi-structured teacher interviews and comprehension test was intended to serve this purpose.

3.8.1 Classroom Observation Schedule

The researcher developed and used a classroom observation schedule to find out how Class 3 teachers teach reading comprehension. Bryman (2008) points out that the observation schedule specifies the categories of behaviour that are to be observed and how behaviour should be allocated to those categories. The observation schedule for the

present study was developed based on research-based instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension. The researcher carried out 3 observations in each of the 6 schools in person and in addition audio-taped the lessons in order to capture all the verbal details of the lessons. In total 18 lessons were observed which the researcher found to be appropriate in obtaining enough information on the reading comprehension strategies used by teachers. This helped ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments and the data obtained.

3.8.2 Semi-Structured Teacher's Interview Schedule

Semi-structured interview schedule is a method that works best when accompanied by other methods (Bryman, 2008). An interview schedule was used to collect data from the teachers. The researcher interviewed the 6 teachers after the third observation of reading comprehension lessons to find out teachers' levels of awareness of comprehension instructional strategies. An interview guide makes it possible to obtain data required to meet specific objectives of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) further point out that the interview guide consists of items that help the researcher to uncover broad concerns of the study in depth through consistent probing. In the present study the semi-structured teacher interviews were conducted to investigate the teachers' awareness and use of comprehension instructional strategies. The researcher audio-taped the interviews in order to capture all the details accurately.

3.8.3 Comprehension Test for Pupils

Connor et al. (2011) point out that comprehension is a complex cognitive process and there is on-going debate on the best way to assess comprehension ability. Currently,

asking learners questions based on reading comprehension passages is the most widely used method. The present study administered a comprehension test to 193 pupils in the 6 sample schools using a test that was developed for use in the RTI (2010) study. The test was validated by language experts from KNEC, KICD, university lecturers, teachers and researchers. The choice of this test was aimed at ensuring the validity and reliability of the assessment. The test was used by the researcher to find out if there is a relationship between the choice of comprehension instructional strategies and pupils' comprehension ability. The test was administered to all the pupils in the participating teachers' classes.

3.9 Pilot Study

Before the study was carried out, the researcher pre-tested the data collection instruments in 2 schools from Starehe Sub-County (one well performing and 1 poorly performing school) not included in the main study sample. During the pilot study, in each school, the researcher conducted 3 classroom observations and after the second visit interviewed 1 Class 3 teacher and administered the comprehension test. The classroom observation during the pilot enabled the researcher to identify items which were difficult to observe in course and therefore these were removed before embarking on the main study. The pilot also helped the researcher to modify the interview question to make them more focused. The pilot revealed that the comprehension questions were many for this level and these were reduced from 8 to 5 questions in the main study. The researcher also addressed logistical challenges identified such as schools having only one English comprehension lesson in a week and delays caused by traffic jams during the pilot before collecting data for the main study.

3.9.1 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

Validity is described as the ability of the data collection instruments to enable the researcher draw meaningful and justifiable conclusions about a sample or population from the data collected (Bryman, 2004). Reliability, on the other hand, is described as the stability of the data collection instruments drawing the same or near equal measure when administered to the same sample or closely matched sample (Creswell, 2009).

The researcher established the reliability of the classroom observation guide and comprehension test during the piloting using the split half test. The researcher also ensured the reliability of the instruments by administering them in person.

On the other hand, the researcher established the validity of the instruments through expert reviews. Experts in reading from KICD were requested to study the tools and give feedback on their content validity. Their views were taken into consideration and the tools revised. Use of mixed method approach was also used to address the validity of the tools.

Validity and reliability in qualitative approach is done in terms of credibility of the of the processes of data collection. Huberman (1992) explains that credibility reflects the extent to which the study shows true value and has meaning to the people who provided the information. It establishes the confidence of the findings. The researcher established this by recording the interviews and classroom observations. The researcher also made detailed notes from the classroom observations and used the information from the interviews to give quotes from the teachers.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining authorization letter from Moi University, the researcher obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology. The researcher visited the Starehe Sub-County education office and sought clearance to visit the sampled schools. The researcher then visited the schools and sought the consent of head teachers by presenting the introduction letter and the research permit and explained the purpose of the study. The headteachers then introduced the researcher to teachers of English who then introduced the researcher to Class 3 pupils. The researcher then briefed the head teachers, teachers and pupils assuring them of utmost confidentiality.

Given that reading comprehension has been allocated one lesson per week, the research made arrangement with teachers on the day and time for the lessons. The researcher arrived in schools one hour before the lessons for brief meetings with the headteachers for notification purposes and preparation which involved going through lesson plans and schemes of work before embarking on the lesson observation and teacher interviews. Using the observation guide, the researcher observed 3 lessons in each of the 6 schools and took notes on the comprehension instructional strategies used by teachers. On the final day, the researcher administered the comprehension tests and later interviewed the teacher in each school. All the lessons and interviews were tape recorded.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data obtained from observation exercises were coded and analysed using descriptive statistics. Data obtained from interviews were analysed using

content/narrative analysis which is a form of qualitative analysis. Content analysis is ideal for analysing qualitative data obtained from open-ended questions and interviews. It allows for detailed reporting of accounts of respondents in relation to the subject of investigation (Bryman, 2008). The researcher then triangulated the observation and interview data to draw conclusions on teachers'' awareness of comprehension instruction strategies and their classroom practices.

Pupils' comprehension test scores and the scores obtained from the instructional strategies used were analysed and used to find out if there is a correlation between the choice of instructional strategies and pupils' comprehension abilities. Persons' correlation was computed to establish the relationship.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

According to Creswell (2009) researchers need to protect their research participants; develop trust with them; promote the integrity of research; guard against misconduct and impropriety that might reflect on their organizations or institutions; and cope with new, challenging problems. The researcher sought consent from the Ministry of Education and the participants involved in the study before collecting any data. The researcher also ensured anonymity and confidentiality of all data collected. The audio tapes of all recording were protected from being accessed by any other person except the researcher. Confidentiality of all of the teachers and schools was protected through the use of pseudonyms.

3.13 Chapter Summary

This chapter focussed on the research paradigm, design and methodology. It delineated the study area, study population and sample, research instruments, piloting of the instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis and interpretation of the findings under the following themes: Data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation which describes the processes involved in the collection of data and presentation of findings. The second section is based on the first research objective and presents findings on teachers' awareness of comprehension instructional strategies. The third section is on the second objective and presents study findings on the comprehension instructional strategies used by Class 3 teachers. The forth section presents an analysis of the correlation between comprehension instructional strategies and pupils' ability.

4.2 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

Data were collected using classroom observations, interview of Class 3 teachers and administering of a comprehension test. The researcher carried out 3 observations of comprehension lessons in each of the 6 sampled schools and at the end of the third session conducted interviews with each of the 6 teachers and administered the comprehension test to all the pupils in the 6 sampled classes. Data collected were analysed thematically based on the research objectives which were to:

a. Establish Class 3 teachers' awareness of the instructional strategies for teaching reading comprehension.

b. Find out the instructional strategies used by Class 3 teachers to teach reading comprehension.

c. Establish the relationship between Class 3 teachers' use of reading comprehension instructional strategies and their pupils' comprehension ability.

4.3 Teachers' Awareness of Comprehension Instructional Strategies

The first objective of the study was to establish teachers' levels of awareness of the instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension to Class 3 pupils. This objective was achieved through administering the interview.

4.3.1 Teachers' Professional Qualifications

The main focus of the study was on teachers in their role in planning and providing instruction that facilitates acquisition of comprehension ability by the pupils. The study sought to establish their competence levels in regard to awareness of research-based instruction strategies. The researcher in line with this asked teachers to state their professional qualifications and whether they were aware of comprehension instruction strategies. The findings indicated that all the teachers who took part in the study (100.0%) had attained Primary Teacher 1 (P1) qualifications. In addition, 3 (50.0%) had a Bachelor of Education degree while 2 (33.3%) had Masters' degrees. This is an indication that all teachers who took part in the study had the required qualifications to teach the English subject in public primary schools. This information was important as a way of confirming that the teachers who participated in the study had received the basic professional training necessary for teaching reading comprehension. The researcher would have expected that although the teachers were purposively selected, since 5 (83.3%) of the teachers had received university education, they would have learnt aspects of reading comprehension instruction. However, this was not demonstrated either in classroom observation or the

interview where teachers demonstrated lack of awareness of instruction strategies and that pupils therefore showed difficulty in comprehending what they were reading.

These findings agree with Antunez, (2002) despite the fact that teachers had the necessary academic qualifications to teach they lacked knowledge of specific comprehension instruction strategies and therefore were not using them. He also noted that that regardless of the quantity and quality of research-based knowledge about comprehension, unless teachers have this knowledge and use knowledge to improve their instruction, students' reading achievement will not improve. Muthwii, (2002) on the other hand notes that a teacher's academic and professional qualifications is an important predictor of the quality of teaching because the "essence of effective teaching lies in the ability of the teacher to set up desired outcomes."

4.3.2 Teachers' Awareness of Language Policy in Kenya

Teachers were asked whether they were conversant with the language policy in Kenya. The results revealed that all teachers (100.0%) were aware of the language policy in Kenya, especially that English should be studied as a subject in Class 1 to 3 and used as the medium of instruction from Class 4. This is an indication that teachers are aware of the importance of the English language and especially ensuring that pupils have a sound mastery of reading comprehension by the end of Class 3. According to all the teachers (100.0%), poor reading skills has had a negative impact on pupils' performance in other subjects as the none-readers were unable to revise and read questions correctly and as a result relied on guess work in examinations.

4.3.3 Teachers Awareness of Comprehension Instructional Strategies

Teachers were also asked whether they were trained on reading comprehension instruction strategies during their pre-service training and all teachers (100.0%) replied in the negative. They indicated that they had not received training in teaching of reading comprehension in pre-service training forcing some of them to rely on their own experience in school while most of them relied on the instructions and activities in the pupils' course books for guidance.

Teacher A said:

> "I don't remember being taught how to teach comprehension while in college. However, we were given comprehension assignments to do and from that experience plus my experience as a student in primary and high school I am able to teach these kids."

Teacher C noted that:

> "The primary teacher education training does not allow for specialisation in specific subject(s) as teachers are required to train in all subjects taught in primary schools. This means that no special attention is given to English and therefore we were just taught on the general aspects of English instruction and not specific areas like comprehension instruction."

Teacher B observed that:

> "Without clear guidelines on how to teach comprehension, teachers are compelled to devise their own teaching methods depending on the strength of learners."

Teacher D said:

> "Some of us who have not been taught how to teach comprehension, rely on the textbooks which have been organised in a way that there are steps to follow both in the build-up and in the actual teaching of the comprehension. Every text starts with a lesson on news words while the questions that come at the end guide us on what to exactly focus on."

It was evident from the teachers' responses that none of them had received any formal training on reading comprehension instruction strategies. It was also observed that none of the teachers (0.0%) had schemes of work, lesson plans, or lesson notes. Lack of using schemes of work and lesson plans implied that the teachers could not have used the strategies optimally, because using the strategies would obviously call for planning in schemes of work and lesson plans. Preparation for teaching reading comprehension mainly entailed selecting the comprehension passage from the pupils' course book and teaching using the activities and exercises in the course books.

In all schools (100.0%), the general instruction process observed started by teachers going through the new words presented before the passage. This was followed by the reading of the passage where in 50.0% of the schools pupils read the passage in chorus, in 33.3% of the schools teachers would select pupils to read while in one school (16.6%), the teacher read the passage while the pupils followed silently. In all schools (100.0%), the reading was followed by a brief discussion of the passages by teachers which involved asking pupils questions from the passage followed by the answering of the set questions. This was strictly as prescribed in the course book, an indication that teachers were not adequately prepared for comprehension instruction. The outcomes show that in 2 (33.3%) schools i.e. School F and School D (See Table 4.14) where there was substantial participation of pupils in the instruction process and pupils performed better in the comprehension test. The findings show that teachers have not received training on comprehension instruction strategies and were therefore not using them during lessons.

Those using some of them were doing subconsciously and could not identify them or even state their effectiveness.

These findings concur with Padron (2005) in a study on utilizing cognitive reading strategies to improve English reading comprehension of Spanish-speaking bilingual students, when asked about what reading comprehension instruction meant, teachers expressed uncertainty. A middle school teacher explained, "I often try to guide them through readings, although I am not sure if that helps reading comprehension." Other respondents equated comprehension instruction with assessing whether their students understood text. Another teacher noted, "I help students comprehend the text by asking them about the text. If they know they are held responsible for the content, students are more likely to take the time to focus on understanding the reading." The findings also agree with Mutea (2000) in an analysis of performance in English at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE), teachers pointed to their lack of professional knowledge and training as barriers to reading comprehension instruction. One teacher explained, "My students have to be able to read. However, I'm not qualified to teach them how to read. In my training, I didn't learn to teach children to read. I never felt comfortable working with reading."

4.3.4 Provision of Reading Materials

To establish if teachers use effective instructional practices, the classroom observation guide focused on the provision of reading materials and the findings are as shown on Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Provision of Reading Materials

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Pupils have reading materials in form of course books.	6	100.0
Pupils are provided with a variety of supplementary reading materials.	1	16.7

N = 6

The findings revealed that all schools (100.0%) had adequate reading materials which were in form of course books in this case the *New Primary English Pupils' Book Three*. Only 1 school (16.7%) provided a variety of reading materials for instruction of English comprehension. In two schools (33.3%) the ratio of textbooks to pupils was 1:1, in two other schools (33.3%) it was 1:2 while two other schools (33.3%) it was 1:3. To ensure that textbooks are not lost or worn out quickly, in all schools (100.0%), the books were kept in classroom cabinets. It was noted that in schools where the pupil: textbook ratio was low, pupils recorded higher scores in the comprehension test.

The findings also revealed that it is only in one school that the researcher observed the teacher using a variety of supplementary reading materials. This might have had an impact on pupils' comprehension performance and the same school recorded the highest average score in the comprehension test. It was observed that most textbooks were in good condition as they were kept in closets in classrooms and were only brought out at the beginning of the lesson. This however denied pupils a chance to interact more with the books. According to one teacher, retaining books in school not only minimises the loss of textbooks but also ensured that the books remained in good condition. The

findings show that teachers did not have a variety of reading materials to use during lessons and in most cases restricted themselves to the prescribed texts. This was majorly influenced by the need to cover the syllabus.

These findings concur with a study by Munyeki (1997) on teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning materials in Githunguri Division, Kiambu District revealed that though the teachers talked about the importance of providing variety of teaching and learning materials and particularly concrete objects and went to great lengths to have and use teaching and learning materials in the comprehension lessons it seemed that enthusiasm about teaching and learning materials was waning among some teachers. In some of the classrooms, there were no signs of teaching and learning materials and upon enquiry from the teachers, some gave hard-to-believe answers such as they had taken them home for safekeeping or that some of the materials were not in line with the current curriculum.

4.3.5 Text Selection

In order to find out if pupils play any role in selection of reading materials of their interest, the researcher sought to establish how texts are selected for the reading comprehension teaching. The results are as highlighted on Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Text Selection

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher selects the text	6	100.0
Teachers adhere strictly to prescribed texts.	6	100.0
The teacher gives pupils the context of reading texts.	6	100.0
Selection of the text is based on the purpose of instruction.	5	83.3
The teacher provides interesting texts	3	50.0

N = 6

The results revealed that in all schools (100.0%), selection of comprehension texts was done by teachers and that all teachers strictly selected passages from prescribed course books. The main text that was used in all schools was *New Primary English Pupils' Book Three*. Teacher B observed that:

"I am mostly motivated by the need to complete the syllabus which also translates to going through the course book from the beginning to the end."

Teacher A observed that:

"We are strictly required to use the course books and I can't just pick a book from nowhere and use."

She added that:

"Since the oral lesson, sentence patterns and vocabulary are in the course books, it means that the passage should also come from the same course book."

It was also revealed that in all schools, the school administration determines the course book to be bought, in many cases without involving the class teachers. Teacher E stated that:

"I don't have a choice but to use the books that are availed to me. Since the school has not bought any other texts, I just use what is available."

It was established that in three schools (50.0%), teachers try to select passages that are interesting to pupils. Teacher C observed that:

"At this level, I have to give pupils passages that they can easily connect with, which are also interesting so as to cultivate their interest in the passage."

This is very important in comprehension instruction because pupils are motivated to read the texts.

The findings show that in all schools (100.0%) teachers select passages based on the purpose of instruction. In 3 schools (50.0%) teachers selected informational passages on health for example the selection of the passage of *Keeping Healthy* (See Appendix 7). They started the instruction process by briefing pupils on the context of reading the passages. Teachers start by providing a preview of the passage based on the theme at hand, for example, a passage on health in one school begun by the teacher discussing various health issues affecting pupils in their environment. Pupils were also encouraged to give their own observations. In a number of schools, selection of the passage was based on the purpose of instruction, for example specific passages such as narratives could be selected to teach oral literature.

Teacher F declared that:

"I teach reading comprehension once a week and it is me who identifies a particular topic to be taught based on the syllabus."

Teacher C noted that:

"Among the seven lessons in a week there is a library lesson where pupils read story books. This acts as a way of exposing them to a variety of texts."

Teacher E, observed that:

> "Pupils are only allowed to choose passages in story books and not in the course books."

This shows that in most schools, it was the responsibility of teachers to select passages to be used during the instruction process. The selection of passages was not viewed as a determinant of pupils' performance in the comprehension test. These findings concur with a study by Munyeki (1997) on teachers' knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning materials in Githunguri Division, Kiambu District revealed that selection of reading texts was mostly influenced by the syllabus and therefore teachers had limited choices. The study also revealed that most schools lacked supplementary reading materials and therefore instruction was carried out using the prescribed course books only.

4.4. Comprehension Instruction

The second objective of the study was to find out the instructional strategies used by Class 3 teachers to teach reading comprehension. The results are as presented in the successive sub-sections.

4.4.1 Comprehension Instruction Process

The study sought to establish how teachers approach the teaching of reading comprehension. To achieve this, the researcher carried out a classroom observation exercise and also interviewed Class 3 teachers of English in public primary schools in Starehe Sub-County. In order to establish ways in which teachers facilitate the

comprehension instruction process, the researcher carried out a classroom observation exercise. The findings are as presented on Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Comprehension Instruction Process

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher allocates time for reading comprehension.	6	100.0
Class discussions involve questioning.	5	83.3
Discussions emphasise regular pupil participation.	4	66.7
The teacher challenges the pupils during instruction.	4	66.7
The teacher provides motivation to pupils during the lesson.	3	50.0
The teacher allows learners to interact during instruction.	1	16.7

N = 6

According to the results, the researcher observed that all teachers (100.0%) were allocating time for reading comprehension. In 3 (50.0%) schools, teachers could read the passage first then allow pupils to read in chorus or in 2 (33.3%) schools, the teacher could let pupils read the passage in chorus or sometimes they read in groups, individual or they read after the teacher. In 3 (50.0%) schools, occasionally teachers could allocate paragraphs to selected pupils to read aloud in class as the rest of the followed suit silently.

The findings further show that in 4 (66.6%) schools, teachers would read out the words to the pupils and then ask pupils to repeat the words after them. In one school (16.6%), before teaching the passage titled *Keeping Healthy,* (See Appendix 7) started by going through the new words such as breath, breather, dustbin and handkerchief. The pupils would spell out the words while making the signs of each letter in the air. This according to the teacher made the lesson more interesting and participatory as well as enhancing pupils' memory of the words. This school (School F) had pupils scoring the highest average score of in the comprehension test an indication that this is an effective method in comprehension instruction (See Table 4.14).

In another school, when teaching the passage titled *At the Hospital* (See Appendix 8) the teacher begun by taking pupils through the new words such as *taken, deep, alive* and *dresser.* These words are clearly highlighted in the text as they are printed in the red colour. The teacher instructed pupils to first read out the words and then explained possible meanings to the words. Instruction on new words could then be followed by the reading of the passage where in most schools teachers would pick pupils to read while in two schools reading of the passages was done in chorus.

The study revealed that majority of schools (83.3%) pupils showed enthusiasm about reading comprehension. Most pupils could be seen competing to be selected to read the passages. The pupils were also eager to answer questions asked by the teacher. The findings also revealed that in another 83.3% of the schools, reading of passages was followed by class discussions which mostly involved the teacher asking questions which

were answered by pupils orally. Teachers did the questioning using questions in the course book then provided corrective feedback using answers in the teacher's guide.

The study also showed that in all schools (100.0%), class discussions of the passages emphasised regular pupil participation through a question and answer format. Teachers could interrupt the reading and ask pupils questions drawn from particular parts of the passage. The researcher observed that 2 (33.3%) teachers provided motivation to pupils who answered questions correctly by asking their colleagues to clap for them. This increased pupils' levels of participation making the lesson very interesting. However it was observed that all teachers allowed minimal interaction between learners during instruction.

Teacher B noted that:

"I allow minimal interaction between pupils as this could be disruptive."

The study revealed 66.6% of teachers give pupils passages and then ask them questions orally. This according to one teacher is because at Class 3, most pupils are not able to express what they have understood in the passage in writing. For example in a passage titled *The Mutimba Family* (See Appendix 9) after reading the passage, the teacher orally asked pupils the following questions:

What makes Musa to be a polite servant?

Is that man cruel or is he polite or how is that man?

Why is he cruel?

Who was the servant?

What type of work does Musa do?

Do you help your parents at home?

Who is unkind to children?

Is Omari a polite servant?

The findings revealed that teaching of reading comprehension by most of the teachers follows a rigid, regular pattern. First, pupils are taken through a section on grammar, followed by a section on writing and guided composition. Teacher C observed that:

"I start by taking pupils through sentence patterns which is followed by oral work, teaching of vocabulary, written exercise using words from the passage and then a guided composition before reading comprehension which is normally the last English lesson of the week."

Teacher C added that:

"It is not advisable to teach reading comprehension without first teaching these others areas."

According Teacher C, this helps in enhancing their comprehension abilities and that when preparing for the lesson, it was important to put this in mind.

"Without following these steps, a teacher will just be teaching to clear the syllabus but in real sense learning is not taking place," said the teacher.

The same teacher observed that although the timetable has five English lessons in a week, she has to create more lessons so that by the end of the week all these sessions have been covered. For example she takes lessons allocated for mother tongue to teach the extra English lessons.

Is summary the findings revealed that teachers followed close to identical instructional process during the comprehension instruction. This mirrored the instructional process prescribed in the course books. However differences in the instruction processes were mostly influenced by teacher and student characteristics where a number of teachers

introduced new aspects to make the lesson more interesting. Teachers also slightly modified the instruction process to address learners' needs where teachers included other activities to enable slow readers and none-readers to benefit from the instruction process.

The findings revealed that most of the lesson time was allocated to pupils writing down answers to comprehension questions. During this time, some teachers would walk around assisting pupils while others would be seated waiting for pupils to finish the task. The other activity that was observed to have taken the second highest proportion of time was marking of pupils' books where most teachers would walk around the class marking the questions that pupils had already answered. This implies that teachers were not using most of the time to teach comprehension, but rather to assess it.

These findings are in agreement with Blaha (1999) in a study on teachers' comprehension instructional practices in India. Observations of teachers teaching reading in lower grades revealed that the teachers were not making instructional decisions on the basis of their particular learners and the circumstances around them but based on the texts. The teachers generally kept to the highly structured approach to teaching reading that they had learnt in college and which was reinforced in the teacher's guides most of which were provided in the texts on which virtually all of them seemed to depend. They had the reading passage read over and over again strategy.

4.4.2 Instruction using Prior knowledge/Prediction

The researcher carried out a classroom observation to determine the use of prediction and prior knowledge during reading comprehension instruction. The results are as presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Instruction using prior knowledge

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher sets purpose for reading.	5	83.3
The teacher previews the texts.	4	66.7
The teacher makes reference to previous texts.	4	66.7
Pupils identify meaning based on their experiences.	4	66.7
Teachers encourage pupils to apply techniques used in previous texts to answer questions.	4	66.7

N = 6

The findings revealed that majority of teachers 83.3% activate prior knowledge by setting purpose for reading texts which gives pupils prior knowledge of the text. From the observation, this was done by teachers discussing the headings of the passage, the new words and the pictures at the beginning of the passage which guide pupils to have an idea of what the passage is about. For example in the passage titled, *At the Hospital* (See Appendix 8) the teacher gave a preview of a hospital using local examples. The teacher then explained the meaning of the new words. This was followed by 66.7% of teachers who preview texts and pupils identifying meaning based on their experiences. When teaching a passage titled *The Mutimba Family*, (Appendix 8) teachers asked pupils if they have houseboys at home, how they behave and how they treat them. This gave learners an idea of what was in the passage. Most teachers (66.7%) also use prior knowledge by encouraging pupils to apply techniques used in previous texts to answer questions in passages. Pupils could be instructed to note key words as they always do in other

passages. A number of teachers (66.7%) made reference to previous texts as a way of giving prior knowledge to pupils before instruction. A teacher in one school did this by asking pupils whether they could remember the previous passage.

According to the findings, prior knowledge is passed to pupils in the build-up to the reading comprehension lesson. Teacher B said that:

> "In the build-up to the comprehension lessons, pupils are first taken through the oral part which talks about the theme in the passage. For example before a passage on diseases, there is an oral lesson on diseases. This is followed by teaching of vocabulary where pupils are taken through various words and their meanings; words which will be found in the comprehension passage. This is done on a different day. After that they now read the passage. This gives them prior knowledge and they can even predict what is going to come."

Teacher F observed that:

> "The overall syllabus has been organised in a way that the theme in the passage is also a topic in science and even in social studies which should be taught almost within the same period. This means that the comprehension is taught when the pupil has already encountered the same theme from other subjects."

The findings show that one teacher said she does not refer to previous passages. Teacher F argued that:

> "After completing one passage, many other things follow, such as a written exercise and vocabulary teaching. Therefore it is normally a while before teaching another comprehension thus it is not possible to ask pupils to refer to previous passages."

The findings show that there is extensive use of prior knowledge during comprehension instruction. This was mostly done in line with the way course books were structured

where before passages there were new words and pictorial presentations of themes in the passage where pupils were asked to predict. This was also through other subjects. The findings concur with Anderson & Pearson (1984), who noted that most teachers and teacher guides emphasize prior knowledge through introduction to new vocabulary and use of photographic representations. They add that although prediction and prior knowledge is better conceived as a family of strategies than a single, identifiable strategy, it involves making predictions and then reading to see how they turned out. It also entails activities that come with different labels, such as activating prior knowledge, previewing, and overviewing (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). They note that what all these variants have in common is encouraging students to use their existing knowledge to facilitate their understanding of new ideas encountered in text.

The researcher carried out classroom observation to determine whether teachers were using prediction as a comprehension instruction strategy. The results are as presented on Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Use of Prediction

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Teacher encourages prediction.	2	33.3
Pupils read or listen to the text to confirm or reject their predictions.	2	33.3
Pupils elicit predictions and read the text to justify their predictions.	1	16.7
Pupils verify/modify predictions and make news ones throughout the text.	1	16.7

N = 6

The findings revealed that in 2 (33.3%) schools, teachers encouraged pupils to make predictions and then pupils read the passages to confirm or reject their predictions. In two schools (33.3%), teachers use the pictures in passages (See Appendix 6, 7, and 8) and ask pupils to say what they make or think persons or items in pictures. After reading the passage, the teacher in reference to earlier prediction would either confirm to disapprove pupils' predictions.

In 1 (16.7%) school pupils were encouraged to elicit predictions and read the passages to justify their predictions while in another school pupils read the passages to verify/modify predictions and make new ones throughout the text. This is an indication that majority of teachers did not use prediction as an instruction strategy. These findings contradict Neuman (1988) found that when teachers presented students with oral previews of stories, which were then turned into discussions and predictions, story comprehension increased relative to "read only" previews and typical basal background-building lessons. In a creative variation of the preview theme, McClelland et al., (2007) had students compose very short narratives based on a list of keywords from the upcoming story. For example, terms such as *loose tooth, string, pain, baseball game, tie score,* and *home run* might serve as keywords for an upcoming story about a girl who has a loose tooth that will not come out but falls out naturally when she is engrossed in a close ballgame. Interestingly, the accuracy of their 'prediction' stories proved relatively unimportant in explaining subsequent comprehension of the real stories; apparently, it was the engagement itself that triggered the deeper story comprehension. This study used classroom observation as the only data collection method that there it could not benefit from teachers explanation of the reasons behind use of certain comprehension instruction

strategies. Fielding, Anderson, and Pearson (1990) found that prediction activities promoted overall story understanding only if the predictions were explicitly compared to text ideas during further reading, suggesting that the verification process, in which knowledge and text are compared explicitly, may be as important as making the prediction. From the comprehension test, pupils from schools where teachers used prediction as an instructional strategy performed better in the comprehension test as evidenced results from School F, D and C (See Table 4.14).

4.4.3 Use of Graphic Organizers in Comprehension Instruction

The study sought to establish graphic organizers used by teachers during comprehension instruction. The classroom observation revealed the findings presented on Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Use of Graphic Organisers

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher uses pictures to represent themes of texts.	6	100.0
The teacher encourages visualising and creating visual representations.	2	33.3
Teachers use semantic maps	0	0.0
Teachers use story maps	0	0.0
Teachers use concept diagrams.	0	0.0

N = 6

The findings reveal that all teachers (100.0%) use pictures representing themes of texts. These pictures are provided in the pupils' course books. In the story on *Keeping Healthy*, the picture in the text presents a classroom setting with pupils sitting attentively. In the

picture there is a teacher and a doctor who is talking to pupils and the teacher (See Appendix 7). The story titled *At the Hospital,* (See Appendix 8) there are two pictures. In the first picture the boy is chasing a dog across the road while there is a man riding a bicycle down the road.

The second picture presents a hospital setting where there is a boy with a bandage on his head being attended to by a nurse. In addition to pictures provided in texts, some teachers provided photographs and paintings representing the theme of the passage. Two teachers (33.3%) encouraged pupils to visualise and create visual representations based on their own experiences. This being one of the characters in the picture and then state how they would have acted in similar circumstances. Pupils from these two schools recorded higher scores in the comprehension test.

The study further observed that none of the teachers was using semantic maps and were not even knowledgeable of these graphic organisers. It can be concluded that teachers in the sampled schools relied so much on printed pictures in the course books as graphic organisers in comprehension instruction. There is therefore need for them to come up with a variety of pictures under the same theme so as to increase pupils' levels of exposure. The findings also show that none of the teachers was using concept diagrams neither were they knowledgeable of them and their use. Finally, it was established that all teachers were not using story maps to teach comprehension. The findings are an indication that there was minimal use of graphic organisers with pictures printed in texts being the most commonly used. These findings contradict the National Reading Panel

(2000) which indicates most teachers use graphic organizers as a reading comprehension instructional strategy.

4.4.4 Use of the Text Structure as an Instructional Strategy

The researcher carried out an observation exercise to establish whether Class 3 teachers use the text structure as a comprehension instructional strategy. The results are as presented on Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Explicit Teaching of text Structure

Item	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher encourages discussion of characters	4	66.7
The teacher encourages discussion of the setting of the story	4	66.7
Teachers encourages the discussion of action taken in the story	2	33.3
The teacher discusses the outcome of the story	2	33.3
Teachers use the story structure to teach.	0	0.0
Teachers teach the story structure of narratives	0	0.0
Teachers teach the structure of expository texts	0	0.0
Teacher teach the structure of informational texts	0	0.0

N = 6

According to the findings, majority of teacher (66.7%) teach the characters in the story. This was done through the analysis of the actions of characters. Teachers would encourage pupils to give varied descriptions of the characters based on their actions and how they are described in texts. For example, in the passage *The Mutimba Family,* (Appendix 9), Musa who is a servant serving the Mutimba Family is described as a polite servant who loves his work and is hardworking. In the same passage, Mr and Mrs

Mutimba are good parents who have taught their children, Salma and Abdalla, to be responsible and respect their elders. The children help Musa in doing house work. Musa is described as humble servant who is always thankful of everything that the Mutimba Family does for him. In the same passage, another character by the name Omari is described. Omari is also a house servant who moves from one family to another. He is not polite like Musa and is very unkind to children as he always beats them. He does not greet people when he meets them.

Another 66.7% of teachers teach the setting of the story. This was mainly done by leading the class in the description of setting of the story from the pictures at the beginning of the passage. For example in the passage titled *Keeping Healthy*, (Appendix 7) the setting of the story in a classroom full of pupils. Teachers engaged pupils in a discussion of the setting of the story. The findings show that 33.3% of teachers discuss the outcome of the story as well as the action taken in the story. The findings however revealed that none of the teachers was using the story structure to teach the structure of narratives, expository texts and informational texts. The findings are an indication that teachers were using the text structure to teach reading comprehension. However, this was mainly through the discussion on characters in the text as well as the setting of the story. These findings concur with Neuman (1988) who found that teachers presented students with oral previews of the characters and the setting of stories in texts, which were then turned into theme discussions.

4.4.5 Summarizing as an Instructional Strategy

The researcher carried out an observation exercise to determine whether teachers were using summarizing as an instructional strategy. The findings are as highlighted on Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Summarizing as a Comprehension Instruction Strategy

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers give a summary of the story to pupils	3	50.0
Teacher summarises parts of the story	2	33.3
Teachers ask pupils to retell the story	1	16.7
Teachers ask pupils to summarise parts of the story	0	0.0
Teachers teach pupils ways of summarizing stories	0	0.0

N = 6

The findings reveal that 50.0% of teachers give a summary of the story to pupils during instruction. This is followed by 33.3% who summarize part of the story while 1 teacher (16.7%) asks pupils to retell the story in class. It was however revealed that none of the teachers (0.0%) ask pupils to summarize part of the story or teach pupils ways of summarizing. The findings are an indication that there was minimal use of summarizing during reading comprehension instruction. Summarizing was mostly done by teachers through the presentation of the prose of the text. The findings concur with Weisberg and Balajthy, (1990) who found that use of summarizing is commonly used by teachers.

4.4.6 Questions/Questioning as an Instructional Strategy

The researcher sought to establish ways in which teachers use questioning as a comprehension instructional strategy. The findings on Table 4.9 were obtained from the classroom observation.

Table 4.9: Use of High Order Questioning

Item	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher generates own questions from the texts	3	50.0
Discussions emphasizes providing evidence from the text to support one's thinking	3	50.0
Teachers encourage pupils to question contents of the text.	1	16.6
Teachers encourage pupils towards self-criticism and thinking aloud	0	0.0
Teacher encourages pupils to generate own questions from the text.	0	0.0
Teachers engage in thinking aloud	0	0.0

N = 6

The findings revealed that half the number of teachers (50.0%) generate own questions from the texts during the lesson. The study also shows that in 50.0% of the schools, class discussions during comprehension instruction emphasise pupils providing evidence from the text to support their thinking. Pupils in these schools scored slightly higher than their counterparts in the comprehension test. Only one (16.6%) teacher encouraged pupils to question the contents of the text. Pupils in this school (School D; See Table 4.14) equally scored higher than those in schools where this strategy was not used; a pointer that it is an

effective strategy of comprehension instruction. None of the teachers encouraged pupils towards self-criticism and thinking aloud and to generate own questions from the text. None of the teachers also engaged in acts of thinking aloud. The findings show that most teachers were not using questioning as a reading comprehension instruction. In a few cases, teachers were mainly the ones generating questions as asking them during lessons. The findings disagree with Raphael et al. (1996) who noted that most teachers modeled and engaged students in the process of differentiating the types of questions they could ask on the text. They noted that through a model of giving students ever-increasing responsibility for the question generation, Raphael and her colleagues were able to help students develop a sense of efficacy and confidence in their ability to differentiate strategies in both responding to and generating their own questions for text. Yopp (1988) indicated that when students learn to generate questions for text, their overall comprehension improves.

4.4.7 Gradual Release of Responsibility Process

The researcher used classroom observation to determine whether teachers were using the gradual release of responsibility process as an instructional strategy. The results are as presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Gradual Release of Responsibility Process

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher leads the discussion of the texts.	6	100.0
The teacher leads the instruction process and gradually hands over to the pupils.	2	33.3
The teacher encourages pupils to lead discussions of the texts.	1	16.7

N = 6

The findings revealed that all teachers (100.0%) lead the discussion of the texts during teaching of English comprehension. Teachers regulate the reading of passages and lead the discussion through asking questions and selecting pupils who answer the questions. A handful of them (33.3%) lead the instruction process and gradually hands over to the pupils. This is mostly done by teachers picking on pupils who are instructed to lead discussions especially in small groups. Pupils in these schools (School C, D and F) scored higher than their counterparts in other schools which is an indication that allowing pupils to participate actively in the comprehension process enhances their comprehension skills (See Table 4.14).

Teacher E observed that:

> "Pupils do not lead class discussions in Class 3 because they are not competent to do so. Therefore it's the teacher who leads and moderates class discussions."

The findings show that there was no inadequate use of gradual release of responsibility as an instructional strategy. During the observed lessons, teachers mainly adopted the role of instructors and did not give pupils opportunities to lead or independently use reading comprehension strategies. This finding concur with, Pearson & Gallagher (1983) who

observed that most teachers rarely encourage students to independently use comprehension reading strategies and prefer to retain the instructor role all through. They argue that one way teachers can provide more targeted, individualized instruction is to adopt the gradual release of responsibility process in comprehension instruction.

4.4.8 Code-focused Instruction

Code-focused instruction is any instructional activity that builds students' grasp of the alphabetic principle, orthographic knowledge, and fluent decoding. This instruction includes phonics, phonological awareness, letter and word fluency and spelling. In third grade, code-focused or word study instruction might include decoding multisyllabic words, morphological awareness, and other encoding strategies. Key is that code-focused instruction in third grade should likely focus on higher order and more complex decoding and encoding strategies than are observed in the earlier grades, depending on students' decoding skills. The findings of the classroom observation are as discussed in successive sub-sections.

4.4.8.1 Code-focused Instruction of Teaching Vocabulary

The study sought to establish strategies used by teachers in comprehension instruction through teaching of vocabulary. The findings are as presented on Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Teaching of Vocabulary

Items	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher encourages pupils to note key words when reading the text.	5	83.3
Vocabulary and language knowledge is based on relevant context.	4	66.7
Teachers ensure that children have frequent encounters with words, especially words that they are likely to encounter in a variety of texts.	3	50.0
Children are encouraged to make connections between words and their own knowledge and experience.	3	50.0
Pupils infer meanings by acting out words.	3	50.0
Part of the lesson is spent building pupils vocabulary and language knowledge.	3	50.0
Instruction provides pupils with multiple experiences with variety of words	1	16.7
Pupils infer meaning and using words in writing.	1	16.7

N = 6

From the findings on Table 4.11, majority of teachers (83.3%) encourage pupils to note key words before and when reading the text as a way of teaching vocabulary. It was observed that teachers first of all let pupils read out news words that are listed down before every passage and ask them to give possible definitions of these words. Pupils are then asked to read the passage while they note these words and also identify other new/difficult words. The findings also revealed that teaching of vocabulary is done based on the relevant context. The findings also show that a number of teachers (50.0%) encourage pupils to make connections between words and their own knowledge and experience. A teacher could read out a word and then ask pupils to give instances where they have used or encountered these words. Some teachers (50.0%) ensure that children

have frequent encounters with words, especially words that they are likely to encounter in a variety of texts. This is done by teachers using similar words in different sentences and different contexts. It was further observed that one teacher (16.7%) has taught pupils how to act out words as they spell the words. This is done by pupils making the signs of individual letters of words in the air as they spell out the words. This is an effective strategy as pupils in this school scored higher marks.

4.4.9 Code-focused Instruction of Fluent Reading

The study sought to establish code-focused instructional strategies used to teach fluent decoding of content. The findings are presented on Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Code-focused Instruction of Fluent Reading

Items	Frequency	Percentage
Pupils read along with a teacher.	6	100.0
Pupils use sounding out, making analogies to known words.	4	66.7
Pupils are assisted by a teacher who provides corrective feedback.	4	66.7
Pupils are repeatedly exposed to similar words.	4	66.7
There is repeated reading of the same text assisted by the teacher.	4	66.7
Pupils listen to the text before practising.	2	33.3
There is repeated reading of the same text by pupils independently.	2	33.3

N = 6

The results show that all teachers (100.0%) teach fluent reading by letting pupils read along with them. Teachers read out words and ask pupils to repeat the words after them while emphasising the correct pronunciation. This is followed by 66.7% who teach pupils how to use sounding out words and making analogies to known words. In 66.7% of schools, pupils are assisted by a teacher who provides corrective feedback as they read out words. Teachers would occasionally interrupt the reading to correct pronunciation and fluency errors. In another 16.7% of schools, pupils were repeatedly exposed to similar words emphasising the correct pronunciation. The findings also show that in 66.7% of the schools, repeated reading of the same text assisted by the teacher was observed. In 33.3% of schools, pupils listen to the text before practising as well as repeated reading of the same text by pupils independently as a way of enhancing fluent reading. It is worth noting that pupils from these schools (School C and D) scored higher in the comprehension test than their counterparts (See Table 4.14).

Teacher A observed that:

> "Fluent reading is taught earlier but even right now, fluent reading is taught during grammar lessons such as teaching of punctuations.

Pupils were observed to be observing various punctuation marks as they read the passages. Teacher F noted that:

> "In earlier classes, pupils are taught how to observe punctuation marks such as commas, full stops and question marks."

Teacher B stated that:

> "Sometimes we have to make them repeat sentences so as to ensure that they have mastered how to pose in case they come across a comma or a full stop. Otherwise they read until they run out of breath.

It was thus revealed that teaching of fluent reading is mostly done in other lessons and only practiced during comprehension reading. These findings are an indication that pupils are made to read passages repeatedly as a way of enhancing their fluency. This concurs with Hamman, (2005) in an analysis of the real-time effects of reading strategy training it was revealed that teachers had the students reading passage read over and over again to enhance fluent reading. Jenkins et al. (2003) and Kuhn & Stahl (2003) note that there is a reciprocal relationship between fluency and comprehension. The more fluent the reader, the more likely it is that he or she will understand a passage; conversely, the better a reader's comprehension, the more fluent his or her reading is likely to be.

4.5 Correlation between Comprehension Instructional Strategies and Pupils' Ability

The study sought to establish whether there is a correlation between the choice and use of comprehension instructional strategies by the teachers and pupils' ability. A short passage was given to pupils to read and answer questions relating to the passage.

4.5.1 Pupils' Performance in Comprehension Test

The researcher administered a standardised comprehension test at the end of the third classroom observation lesson in all the 6 sampled schools. The summary of the results are as presented on Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Summary of the Comprehension Test Scores

School	Scores obtained per pupil						Total Score	No. of Pupils	Average Score
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**			
School A	3	14	6	2	3	0	44	28	1.5
School B	5	20	0	4	3	0	44	32	1.3
School C	0	8	6	8	10	1	65	32	2.0
School D	0	6	4	14	10	0	96	34	2.8
School E	3	18	1	7	3	0	53	32	1.6
School F	1	4	7	6	21	2	130	41	3.1
Total	**12**	**54**	**24**	**41**	**59**	**3**	**453**	**193**	**2.05**

The results in Table 4.13 show that pupils in School F scored the highest in the comprehension test with an average score of 3.1. This was followed by School D with an average score of 2.8, then School C with an average score of 2.0, School E with an average score of 1.6, School A with average score of 1.5 and lastly School B with an average score of 1.3. These findings are an indication that the overall performance of pupils in the comprehension test was unsatisfactory with an average score of 2.05 marks out of 5. It was also established that the least number of pupils (3) got all the five questions correct while a higher number of pupil got question 1 correct and the least number of pupils got the correct answer for question 3.

Table 4.14: Scores obtained per school

Schools	Comprehension Scores	Average Scores for Instruction Strategies
1	15	13
2	5	6
3	16	14
4	10	13
5	11	11
6	12	10

An analysis of the way pupils answered the comprehension test questions revealed most pupils were able to answer the first question correctly where they could pick the answer directly from the passage. They however had difficulties answering question 2 to 5 which required they to comprehend the passage and give answers in their own words. Even those pupils who were considered fluent readers or good readers had difficulty answering these questions. It was revealed that pupils attempted to use words or phrases from the passage and thus giving wrong answers. For example when asked, "*Why does the land get dry*?" most pupils wrote "*Before the rains come*" as presented in the passage. It was therefore established that pupils were mostly taught how to hand pick answers from the texts where in most cases they could use exact words or phrases as they are printed in the passage.

Table 4.15: Correlation between Use of Instructional Strategies and Pupils' Ability

School	Test Scores (X)	X^2	Instruction strategies scores (Y)	Y^2	XY
1	15	225	13	169	195
2	5	25	6	36	30
3	16	256	14	196	224
4	10	100	13	169	130
5	11	121	11	121	121
6	12	144	10	100	120
	$\sum X = 69$	$\sum X^2 = 871$	$\sum Y = 67$	$\sum Y^2 = 791$	$\sum XY = 820$

The *r* value obtained was 0.9241. This implies that there is a strong positive correlation between the use of reading comprehension instructional strategies and pupils ability in reading comprehension. Although most of the teachers did not use the instructional strategies, these results reveal that those who used the strategies had their pupils perform better in the comprehension test than the pupils of the teachers who did not use the instructional strategies. Several integrative literature reviews and meta-analyses, summarizing instructional research, supported the fact that instruction in reading strategies contributed to improved reading comprehension (Block & Duffy, 2008; Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHD, 2000). Finally, correlational studies provided support that ability to engage in strategic processing contributes to overall reading comprehension.

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

This section is a discussion of the findings in relation to related studies on comprehension instructional strategies and their impact on pupils' ability.

4.6.1 Teachers' Awareness of Comprehension Instructional Strategies

The first objective of the study was to establish teachers' levels of awareness of the instructional strategies of teaching reading comprehension to Class 3 pupils. This objective was achieved through administering an interview. The researcher asked teachers to state their professional qualifications and whether they were aware of comprehension instructional strategies.

To assess teachers' level of competence to teach reading comprehension, teachers were asked to state their highest professional qualifications. The findings indicated that all the teachers who took part in the study (100.0%) had attained a certificate in Primary Teacher Education (P1). This information was important as a way of confirming that the teachers who participated in the study had received the basic professional training necessary for teaching reading comprehension.

Teachers were asked whether they were conversant with the language policy in Kenya. The results revealed that all teachers (100.0%) were aware of the language policy in Kenya, especially that English should be studied as a subject in Class 1 to 3 and used as the medium of instruction from Class 4. According to all the teachers (100.0%), poor reading skills has had a negative impact on pupils' performance in other subjects as pupils who could not read were unable to revise and read questions correctly and as a result relied on guess work in examinations.

Teachers were also asked whether they were trained on reading comprehension instruction strategies during their pre-service training and all teachers (100.0%) replied in the negative. They indicated that they had not received adequate training in teaching of

reading comprehension forcing some of them to rely on their own experience in school while most of them relied on the instructions and activities in the pupils' course books for guidance. It was evident from the teachers' responses that none of them had received any formal training on reading comprehension instruction strategies.

Critics of the bottom-up view of reading comprehension assert that teaching of reading should not be solely text-based. This process, in their view, isolates the readers and their prior knowledge as well as limiting the role of the teacher in helping the reader understand someone else's meaning (Ringler and Weber, 1984; List and Lerner 1989; Cairney 1990). These findings are reinforced by Cairney (1990); Costello (2000) who note that since teaching is the core process through which education happens, a survey of the instructional techniques used in teaching reading comprehension in the schools reveal three major lapses: (a) Reading comprehension skills are not taught. (b) Teachers adhere strictly to the prescribed text book and (c) Questions are set to test understanding of the text instead of teaching to produce understanding of any text.

In all schools (100.0%), the general instruction process was strictly based on the provisions of the course books an indication that teachers were not adequately prepared for comprehension instruction. The outcomes show that in 2 (33.3%) schools i.e. School F and School D (See Table 4.16) where there was substantial participation of pupils in the instruction process, pupils performed better in the comprehension test. These findings concur with Williams (1991) who states that some English teachers are lagging behind in their approach to teaching reading comprehension leading to poor performance among students. These teachers lack methods of imparting reading skills to pupils. The condition

is so bad that some pupils find it difficult to read and understand a simple sentence. According to Taylor (2000), pre-service and in-service reading education is not given sufficient emphasis in many countries. The primary teacher education curriculum is general and broad without concentrations or specializations. Mutuku (2000) proposed that pre-service primary teachers need more preparation in the teaching of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

To establish if teachers use effective instructional practices, the observation guide focused on the provision of reading materials. The findings revealed that all schools (100.0%) had adequate reading materials which were in form of course books in this case the *New Primary English Pupils' Book Three*. Only 1 school (16.7%) provided a variety of reading materials for instruction of English comprehension. This might have had an impact on pupils' comprehension performance and the same school recorded the highest average score in the comprehension test. It was observed that most textbooks were in good condition as they were kept in closets in classrooms and were only be brought out at the beginning of the lesson. This however denied pupils a chance to interact more with the books.

In order to find out if pupils play any role in selection of reading materials of their interest, the researcher sought to establish how texts are selected for the reading comprehension teaching. The results revealed that in all schools (100.0%), selection of comprehension texts was done by teachers and that all teachers strictly selected passages from prescribed course books. The main text that was used in all schools was *New Primary English Pupils' Book Three*. The findings show that in all schools (100.0%)

teachers select passages based on the purpose of instruction. This shows that in most schools, it was the responsibility of teachers to select passages to be used during the instruction process. The selection of passages was not viewed as a determinant of pupils' performance in the comprehension test.

4.6.2 Comprehension Instruction

The study sought to establish how teachers approach the teaching of reading comprehension. To achieve this, the researcher carried out a classroom observation exercise and also interviewed Class 3 teachers in Starehe Sub-County.

4.6.2.1 Comprehension Instruction Process

In order to establish ways in which teachers facilitate the comprehension instruction process, the researcher carried out a classroom observation exercise. According to the results, the researcher observed that all teachers (100.0%) were allocating time for reading comprehension. The study also revealed that majority of schools (83.3%) pupils showed enthusiasm about reading comprehension. The findings also revealed that in another 83.3% of the schools, reading of passages was followed by class discussions which mostly involved the teacher asking questions which were orally answered by pupils. Teachers could also lead pupils through answering questions provided at the end of the passage which was also done orally and then could provide corrective feedback.

The study also showed that in all schools (100.0%), class discussions of the passages emphasised regular pupil participation through a question and answer format. Teachers could interrupt the reading and ask pupils questions drawn from particular parts of the

passage. However it was observed that all teachers allowed minimal interaction between learners during instruction. The findings revealed that teaching of reading comprehension follows a systematic pattern. This pattern was observed from the text where before the comprehension, pupils are taken through a section on grammar, followed by a section on writing and guided composition.

Is summary the findings revealed that teachers followed close to identical instructional process during the comprehension instruction. This was in line with what was prescribed in the course books. However differences in the instruction processes were mostly influenced teacher and student characteristics where a number of teachers introduced new aspects to make the lesson more interesting. Teachers also slightly modified the instruction process to address learners' needs where teachers included other activities to enable slow leaders and none-readers to benefit from the instruction process.

4.6.2.2 Instruction using Prior knowledge/Prediction

The study sought to establish whether teachers use prior knowledge as a comprehension instruction strategy. The findings revealed that majority of teachers 83.3% activate prior knowledge by setting purpose for reading texts which gives pupils prior knowledge of the text. From the observation, this was done by teachers discussing the headings of the passage, the new words and the pictures at the beginning of the passage which make pupils to have an idea of what the passage is about. According to the findings, prior knowledge is passed to pupils in the build-up to the reading comprehension lesson. These findings are in line with Neuman (1988) who found that when teachers presented students with oral previews of stories, which were then turned into discussions and predictions,

story comprehension increased relative to "read only" previews and typical basal background-building lessons.

Explicit attempts to get students to engage in prediction behaviors have proved successful in increasing interest in and memory for stories (Anderson, 1993). Hamman (2005) found that prediction activities promoted overall story understanding only if the predictions were explicitly compared to text ideas during further reading, suggesting that the verification process, in which knowledge and text are compared explicitly, may be as important as making the prediction.

In order to establish whether teachers use prediction as a comprehension instruction strategy, the researcher carried out a classroom observation. The findings revealed that majority of teachers did not use prediction as an instruction strategy which negatively affected pupils' achievement. From the comprehension test, pupils from schools where teachers used prediction as an instructional strategy performed better in the comprehension test as evidenced results from School F, D and C (See Table 4.16). these findings concur with Hamman (2005) who found that prediction activities promoted overall story understanding only if the predictions were explicitly compared to text ideas during further reading, suggesting that the verification process, in which knowledge and text are compared explicitly, may be as important as making the prediction.

4.6.2.3 Use of Graphic Organizers in Comprehension Instruction

The study sought to establish whether teachers use graphic organizers. The classroom observation revealed that all teachers (100.0%) use pictures representing themes of

passages. These pictures are provided in the pupils' course books. The study further observed that none of the teachers was using semantic maps and were not even knowledgeable of these graphic organisers. It can be concluded that teachers in the sampled schools relied so much on printed pictures in the course books as graphic organisers in comprehension instruction. There is therefore need for them to use a variety of pictures under the same theme so as to increase pupils' levels of exposure.

According to Barret (1995), semantic maps are visual devices that students can use to derive implicit and explicit meaning from ideas, concepts and details in text. This strategy increases students' understanding by helping them acquire, maintain and organize information. One way that this strategy can be used, is by presenting students with a completed semantic map depicting the key words and concepts of a passage. They should then read each paragraph. After finding the main ideas in the passage, students should link these key ideas to those on the map. This modus operandi provides the scaffolding that students with LD require. Research indicates that semantic maps outperformed conventional reading techniques on comprehension tests (Raphael & McKinney, 1983). This might be an explanation for pupils' poor performance in the comprehension test.

The findings also show that none of the teachers was using concept diagrams neither were they knowledgeable of them and their use. Concept diagrams visually present the relationship among concepts. According to Colley (1987), concept diagrams are "chart-like graphic that describes a concept and its various relationships, with general concepts

at the top, supporting concepts at the bottom, and lines showing the connections between the concepts. This method enables students to add new information to existing schema.

Colley (1987) recommended that concept diagrams be used with students with learning difficulties and those in low grades, as these students encounter tremendous difficulty in expressing and linking ideas. Moreover, this technique can be used to evaluate students understanding of information, by asking students to create their own concept diagrams. Taylor et al., (2000) elaborated that concept diagrams provide an accurate, objective way to evaluate areas students have not grasped. The multiple ways that this strategy can be used to increase comprehension makes it a necessary tool in all classrooms. Furthermore, concept diagrams allow students to focus on pivotal concepts necessary to enhance comprehension. It facilitates understanding of definitions, characteristics and uses of concepts (NRP, 2000).

Finally, it was established that all teachers were not using story maps to teach comprehension. According to Therrien (2004) the use of story maps has been proven effective in improving reading comprehension with students with learning disabilities. This strategy allows students to systematically identify important story elements such as characters, plot and setting. Therrien (2004) stated that story maps improve students' literal, interpretative and applied comprehension skills. They elaborated that this method assists in learning new vocabulary as well as recall information from a story. In fact, it helps students pay attention to important parts of a story. A study conducted by Locke (1993) reported that poor readers were able to successfully use story maps in identifying the elements of a story. This suggests that story maps are effective tools that can enhance

students' comprehension skills. In conclusion, it was established that in schools where teachers used graphic organisers, pupils registered slightly higher marks in the comprehension test. This was observed from School C and D.

4.6.2.4 Use of the Text Structure as an Instructional Strategy

The researcher carried out an observation exercise to establish whether Class 3 teachers of English use the text structure as an instructional strategy. According to the findings, majority of teacher (66.7%) teach the characters in the story. This was done through the analysis of the actions of characters and then teachers could encourage pupils to give varied descriptions of the characters based on their actions and how they are described in texts. Another 66.7% teach the setting of the story. This was done by teachers leading the class in the description of setting of the story from the pictures at the beginning of the passage. The findings however revealed that none of the teachers was using the story structure to teach the structure of narratives, expository texts and informational texts. The research on story structure uses a few consistent heuristics to help students organize their story understanding and recall. Although there are situations and texts in which this sort of instruction does not appear helpful, in the main, story structure shows positive effects for a wide range of students, from kindergarten to the intermediate and high school grades (Singer & Donlan, 1982).

4.6.2.5 Summarizing as an Instructional Strategy

The researcher carried out an observation exercise to determine whether teachers were using summarizing as an instructional strategy. The findings reveal that 50.0% of teachers give a summary of the story to pupils during instruction. This is followed by

33.3% who summarize part of the story while 1 teacher (16.7%) asks pupils to retell the story in class. The results show that summarizing or retelling of the passage is effective in enhancing pupils' comprehension skills as school which applied this strategy recorded higher scores in the comprehension test. This concurs with Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) in their research suggests that instruction and practice in summarizing not only improves students' ability to summarize text, but also their overall comprehension of text content. Thus, instruction in summarizing can be considered to meet dual purposes: to improve students' ability to summarize text and to improve their ability to comprehend text and recall.

4.6.2.6 Questions/Questioning as an Instructional Strategy

The study sought to whether teachers use questions or questioning an a comprehension instruction strategy. The findings revealed that half the number of teachers (50.0%) generates own questions from the texts during the lesson. The study also shows that in 50.0% of the schools, class discussions during comprehension instruction emphasize pupils providing evidence from the text to support their thinking. Pupils in these schools scored slightly higher than their counterparts in the comprehension test. Only one (16.6%) teacher encouraged pupils to question the contents of the text. These findings are in agreement with Yopp (1988) who indicated that when students learn to generate questions for text, their overall comprehension improves.

4.6.2.7 Gradual Release of Responsibility

The researcher carried out an observation to determine whether teachers were using the gradual release process as an instructional strategy. The findings revealed that all teachers

(100.0%) lead the discussion of the texts during teaching of English comprehension. Teachers regulate the reading of passages and lead the discussion through asking questions and selecting pupils who answer the questions. A handful of them (33.3%) lead the instruction process and gradually hands over to the pupils. This is mostly done by teachers picking on pupils who are instructed to lead discussions especially in small groups. Pupils in these schools (School C, D and F) scored higher than their counterparts in other schools which is an indication that allowing pupils to participate actively in the comprehension process enhances their comprehension skills (See Table 4.16). These findings concur with Fisher & Frey (2007) and Lloyd (2004), who urge that gradual release of responsibility model of instruction has been documented as an effective approach for improving writing achievement reading comprehension and literacy outcomes for English language learners.

4.6.2.8 Code-focused Instruction of Teaching Vocabulary

The study sought to establish strategies used by teachers in comprehension instruction through teaching of vocabulary. From the findings majority of teachers 83.3% encourage pupils to note key words before and when reading the text as a way of teaching vocabulary. It was observed that teachers first of all let pupils read out news words that are listed down before every passage and ask them to give possible definitions of these words. Pupils are then asked to read the passage while they note these words and also identify other new/difficult words. The findings of the National Reading Panel, a meta-analysis of over 50 studies relating to best practices for the teaching of vocabulary instruction and its relation to reading comprehension, suggested that when instruction

focused on building vocabulary, students' reading skills improved (NICHD, 2000). The National Reading Panel stated that "reading vocabulary is crucial to the comprehension processes of a skilled reader" (NICHD, 2000, p. 4-3)

4.6.2.9 Code-focused Instruction of Fluent Reading

The study sought to establish code-focused instructional strategies used to teach fluent decoding of content. The results show that all teachers (100.0%) teach fluent reading by letting pupils read along with them. Teachers read out words and ask pupils to repeat the words after them while emphasising the correct pronunciation. This is followed by 66.7% who teach pupils how to use sounding out words and making analogies to known words. It is worth noting schools where teaching taught fluent reading posited higher grades in the comprehension test.

4.6.3 Correlation between Comprehension Instructional Strategies and Pupils' Ability

The study sought to establish whether there is a correlation between comprehension strategies and pupils' performance. A short passage was given to pupils to read and answer questions relating to the passage. The r value obtained was 0.9241. This is an indication that there is a strong positive correlation between the use of reading comprehension instruction strategies and pupils ability in reading comprehension. Although most of the teachers did not use the instructional strategies, these results reveal that those who used the strategies had their pupils perform better in the comprehension test than the pupils of the teachers who did not use the instruction strategies. These findings concur with Williams (1991) who carried out empirical studies on reading strategies and their relationships to successful and unsuccessful L2 reading. Williams

(1991) pointed out that language teachers should go beyond the transmission of knowledge and should empower students by helping them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and strategies needed to become autonomous learners who can take responsibility for their own learning. Several integrative literature reviews and meta-analyses, summarizing instructional research, supported the fact that instruction in reading strategies contributed to improved reading comprehension (Duke & Pearson, 2002; NICHD, 2000). Finally, correlational studies provided support that ability to engage in strategic processing contributes to overall reading comprehension.

4.6.4 Discussion of Findings Based on the Conceptual Framework

Kim & Baylor (2006) explain that the Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes that teaching and learning are highly social activities and that interactions with teachers, peers, and instructional materials influence the cognitive and affective development of learners. Of particular interest to the present study was Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The researcher sought to find out if teachers plan reading comprehension instruction so that the teacher scaffolds the process of constructing meaning from written texts. The Transaction Strategy Instruction (TSI) expects the teacher to use a variety of instruction strategies to enable the learner either take meaning away from the text or enjoy the reading (Gill, 2008).

The study revealed that teachers do not appreciate learning as a social activity that should incorporate a lot of interaction between the pupils and the teacher and among the pupils as espoused by the Social Cognitive Theory. The interview and classroom observations revealed that the instructional strategies adopted made learning highly individualistic.

The teacher took the centre stage in the learning process. The only form of interaction was between the teachers and pupils in the form of teacher questions. The pupils did not interact among themselves. With regard to the TSI, teachers did not demonstrate awareness of the fact that in reading comprehension meaning is constructed. Although there were some teachers who used elements of the strategies of prediction and prior knowledge, the teachers did not engage the pupils in deliberate and intensive discussions that would guide the pupils to construct meaning from the comprehension texts. The general thrust of the instruction was to help the pupils read the comprehension passages as presented in the course books, answer the questions in the course books, and then the teacher would provides the answers as presented in the teacher's guide.

The Gradual Release of Responsibility model and Vygosky's ZPD would expect the teacher to model and guide the learners through the reading comprehension strategies to the point where the learners can use the strategies independently. The study revealed that teachers do not model strategies and do not provide guide practice to the pupils. There was also no collaborative use of the strategies observed. This implies that to a large extent pupils learn on their own. The teacher does not scaffold the learning experience. There is no mediation and this could possibly explain the very low reading comprehension achievement by the pupils in the comprehension test.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions of the study, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to establish teachers' levels of preparedness towards teaching of English comprehension to class 3 pupils in public primary schools in Starehe Sub-County. The findings indicated that all teachers who took part in the study had the required qualifications to teach in public primary schools however, all teachers said they were not aware of research-based comprehension instruction strategies as they had not received adequate training in teaching of English comprehension forcing some of them to rely on their own experience in school while some relied on the course book for guidance.

The study sought to establish how teachers approach the teaching of reading comprehension. To achieve this, the researcher carried out a classroom observation exercise and also interviewed Class 3 teachers in primary schools in Starehe Sub-County. According to the results, all teachers were allocating time for reading comprehension. In some cases, teachers could read the passage first then allow pupils to read in chorus or in some schools, the teacher could let pupils read the passage in chorus or sometimes they read in groups, individual or they read after the teacher. Occasionally teachers could

allocate paragraph to selected pupils to read aloud in class as the rest of the followed suit silently.

The findings also revealed that reading of passages was followed by class discussions which mostly involved the teacher asking questions which were orally answered by pupils. Teachers could also lead pupils through answering questions provided at the end of the passage which was also done orally and then could provide corrective feedback. The findings further revealed that teaching of reading comprehension follows a systematic pattern. This pattern was observed from the text where before the comprehension, pupils are taken through a section on grammar, followed by a section on writing and guided composition. It was established that in schools where teachers embraced the instructional processes that included/encouraged active participation of pupils, pupils scored higher marks in the comprehension test. This is an indication that instructional process influenced pupils' achievement in comprehension.

The study sought to establish ways in which teachers used prior knowledge and prediction as comprehension instruction strategies. The findings revealed that majority of teachers activated prior knowledge by setting purpose for reading texts. This was done by teachers discussing the headings of the passage, the new words and the pictures at the beginning of the passage which made pupils to have an idea of what the passage is about. Most teachers also used prior knowledge by encouraging pupils to apply techniques used in previous texts to answer questions in passages. A number of teachers made reference to previous texts as a way of giving prior knowledge to pupils before instruction. In regard to the use of prediction, teachers encouraged pupils to make predictions and then

pupils read the passages to confirm or reject their predictions. Some teachers used the pictures in passages where they asked pupils to say what they make of think persons of items in pictures. After reading the passage, teachers in reference to earlier prediction would either confirm to disapprove pupils predictions. The findings showed that in schools where teachers used strategies that activated prior knowledge of pupils, pupils attained high scores in the comprehension exercise.

It was established that in schools where teachers embraced the instructional processes that included/encouraged active participation of pupils, pupils scored higher marks in the comprehension test. This is an indication that instructional using prior knowledge and prediction process influenced pupils' achievement in comprehension.

The study sought to investigate the use of graphic organisers as a comprehension instruction strategy and the findings revealed that all teachers used pictures representing themes of texts. These pictures were provided in the text. In addition to pictures provided in texts, some teachers provided photographs and paintings representing the theme of the passage. The study further established that none of the teachers was using semantic maps, concept diagrams and story maps and were not even knowledgeable of these graphic organisers. It was revealed that in schools where teachers used graphics organisers extensively, pupils scored higher marks in the comprehension test. This is an indication that instructional process influenced pupils' achievement in comprehension.

The study also sought to assess the use of the text structure as a comprehension instruction strategy. According to the findings, majority of teacher teach the characters in the story through the analysis of the actions of characters and then teachers could encourage pupils to give varied descriptions of the characters based on their actions and how they are described in course books. A number of teachers teach the setting of the story. This was done by teachers leading the class in the description of setting of the story from the pictures at the beginning of the passage. Some teachers discuss the outcome of the story as well as the action taken in the story. The findings however revealed that none of the teachers was using the story structure to teach the structure of narratives, expository texts and informational texts. In schools where teachers taught characters in the story, pupils scored higher marks in the comprehension test; an indication that it enhances pupils' comprehension skills.

The researcher carried out an observation exercise to determine whether teachers were using summarisation as an instructional strategy. The findings revealed that 50.0% of teachers give a summary of the story to pupils during instruction. Others summarize part of the story while 1 teacher (16.7%) asks pupils to retell the story in class. It was however revealed that none of the teachers ask pupils to summarize part of the story or teach them ways of summarizing stories. Research suggests that instruction and practice in summarizing not only improves students' ability to summarize text, but also their overall comprehension of text content. Thus, instruction in summarizing can be considered to meet dual purposes: to improve students' ability to summarize text and to improve their ability to comprehend text and recall. The findings established a strong correlation

between the use of summarizing and pupils' achievement in comprehension as in schools where teachers encouraged retelling of the story, pupils registered higher scores in the comprehension test.

The study further sought to establish the use of questions as a comprehension instruction strategy. The findings revealed that 50.0% of teachers generate their own questions from the texts during the lesson. The study also shows that in a number of schools, class discussions during comprehension instruction emphasize pupils providing evidence from the text to support their thinking. This was found to be effective in enhancing pupils' comprehension skills.

One way teachers can provide more targeted, individualized instruction is to use the gradual release of responsibility model. The researcher carried out an observation to determine whether teachers were using the gradual release process as an instructional strategy. The findings revealed that all teachers lead the discussion of the texts during teaching of reading comprehension. Teachers regulate the reading of passages and lead the discussion through asking questions and selecting pupils who answer the questions. A handful of teachers lead the instruction process and gradually hands over to the pupils. This is mostly done by teachers picking on pupils who are instructed to lead discussions especially in small groups. These pupils scored higher scores in the comprehension test an indication that it is an effective instruction strategy.

The study sought to establish strategies used by teachers in comprehension instruction through teaching of vocabulary. From the findings, majority of teachers encourage pupils to note key words before and when reading the text as a way of teaching vocabulary. It was observed that teachers first of all let pupils read out news words that are listed down before every passage and ask them to give possible definitions of these words. Pupils are then asked to read the passage while they note these words which are clearly highlighted and also identify other new/difficult words. The findings also revealed that teaching of vocabulary is done based on the relevant context and that a number of teachers encourage pupils to make connections between words and their own knowledge and experience. Some teachers ensure that children have frequent encounters with words, especially words that they are likely to encounter in a variety of texts.

The study sought to establish code-focused instructional strategies used to teach fluent decoding of content. The results show that all teachers (100.0%) teach fluent reading by letting pupils read along with them. Teachers read out words and ask pupils to repeat the words after them while emphasising the correct pronunciation. A number of teachers teach pupils how to use sounding out words and making analogies to known words. In a number of schools, pupils were assisted by a teacher who provides corrective feedback as they read out words. Teachers would occasionally interrupt the reading upon noticing non-observance of punctuation and correct the pupils. In a few schools pupils were repeatedly exposed to similar words emphasising the correct pronunciation.

The findings also show that in a number of schools, repeated reading of the same text assisted by the teacher was observed. In some schools, pupils listen to the text before practising while in another some of the schools, there is repeated reading of the same text by pupils independently as a way of enhancing fluent reading. Lastly, the r value obtained was 0.9241 which strongly tends towards 1. This is an indication that there is a strong and significant positive relationship between comprehension strategies and pupils performance in English comprehension. The null hypothesis has therefore been rejected.

5.3 Conclusion

The study sought to establish comprehension teaching strategies used by teachers in primary schools in Starehe Sub-County. The findings revealed that most teachers feel that they are not adequately trained to teach reading comprehension. Teachers who took part in the study acknowledged that although they had undergone the primary teacher education pre-service training, they had not been trained on comprehension instructional strategies. The study also revealed that teachers were using several instruction strategies to teach reading comprehension based on the course books and from their experience while in primary and secondary schools. The strategies used included pupils reading passages aloud. This was either by teachers selecting a reader from among pupils or a pupil volunteering to read. Some teachers asked the whole class to read in chorus or occasionally a teacher would read the passage as pupils listened. While doing this, teachers could occasionally interrupt the reading to have a brief discussion of the key words most which are highlighted in the texts. The findings further revealed that teaching of reading comprehension followed a systematic pattern. This pattern was observed from the text where before the comprehension, pupils are taken through a

section on grammar, followed by a section on writing and guided composition. This is a clear proof that comprehension instruction was entirely guided by the course books and the syllabus. Some teachers used prior knowledge and prediction as comprehension instruction strategies. However teachers could not explain why they were doing this as according to a number of them this is how comprehension lessons should be introduced. The findings finally revealed that there is a strong positive correlation between teachers' comprehension instruction strategy and pupils' achievement in reading comprehension. The findings revealed that pupils had been taught how to get answers from the passages and this was lifting words and phrases that carried the answers. From how pupils performed in the comprehension test, it was clear that they lacked the ability to read and comprehend and even give answers in their own words. It was observed that even fluent readers were unable to answer most questions correctly.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings, the study makes the following recommendations.

5.4.1 Pre-service and In-service Training

The study revealed that Class 3 teachers were not aware of research-based comprehension instruction strategies as they had not received adequate pre-service and in-service training on reading comprehension instruction strategies. The study recommends that:

(i) KICD needs to revise the PTE pre-service curriculum to include training of teachers on reading comprehension instruction strategies to ensure that teachers graduate having these competences.

(ii)   The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology needs to mount in-service programmes for primary school teachers on reading comprehension instruction strategies to ensure that they use these in teaching reading comprehension.

(iii) Educational stakeholders like NGOs and private sector organisations can use the findings of this study to design interventions targeting competence of teachers to teach reading comprehension effectively to improve learners' abilities in reading comprehension.

(iv)   The Ministry of Education and teacher training colleges need to allocate more time for teaching practice to ensure that teacher trainees get more time to practice using the comprehension instructional strategies under the guidance of their tutors.

5.4.2 Interventions in Reading Comprehension

The study established that reading comprehension instruction is affected by use of unsuitable reading materials and time allocated for reading comprehension. The study recommends that:

1. The Ministry of Education and schools administration should allocate more lessons for teaching of reading comprehension to ensure that pupils have adequate time to learn reading comprehension strategies and also more time to practice using these strategies in order to enhance their comprehension abilities.

2. Teachers should generate questions from passages that will facilitate pupils' mastery of the reading comprehension strategies to enhance their comprehension abilities.

3. Examiners at the KCPE level should emphasise the application of comprehension instruction strategies as a way of encouraging teachers to teach these strategies. This

will increase the amount of time pupils will interact with these strategies thus enhance their comprehension abilities.

4. KICD should ensure that it approves primary English textbooks which adopt reading comprehension strategies and have reading comprehension questions which facilitate the teaching and learning of reading comprehension strategies.

5. The Ministry of Education and schools administration should provide teachers with teaching aids such as graphic organizers or train teachers to prepare such teaching aids in order to encourage pupils and teachers to use them in enhancing comprehension abilities.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

In view of the limitations and delimitations of the study, the researcher makes the following suggestions for further research:

1. The current study targeted Class 3 pupils in lower primary school meaning that the findings obtained are majorly focused on the strategies used to teach pupils at this level of education. A similar study could be carried out in upper primary or even secondary schools.

2. There is need to carry out experimental studies to find out which reading comprehension instruction strategies are most effective in building pupils reading comprehension abilities.

3. A similar study could be carried to find out the competence of primary teacher education college tutors on their ability to train teacher on reading comprehension instruction strategies.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

TEACHER'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Were you trained on reading comprehension instructional strategies during your pre-service training?

2. How do you select the comprehension texts to use for the reading lessons?

3. What do you consider when selecting texts?

4. Do you involve pupils in the selection of texts?

5. Do you use a variety of texts to teach reading comprehension?

6. How many comprehension lessons do you have in the week? Explain

7. Do you allow interaction between pupils during the reading comprehension lesson?

8. Which strategies do you use to teach reading comprehension?

9. Do you allow pupils to lead discussions during reading comprehension lessons?

10. Please explain the process you follow when teaching reading comprehension?

11. Do you make reference to previous passages when teaching reading comprehension?

12. Do you provide additional pictures during lessons other than those printed in the texts?

13. How do you teach vocabulary during reading comprehension lessons?

14. Which strategies do you use to teach vocabulary?

15. Do you teach fluent reading during reading comprehension lessons?

16. If yes which strategies do you use to teach fluent reading?

17. Do you carryout assessment of pupils before reading comprehension lessons?

18. If yes which strategies do you use?

19. Do you consider pupils' reading strengthens when deciding on the strategies to use during reading comprehension instruction?

20. If yes, which strategies do you use?

21. If No, explain.

22. What explanation do you have for differences in reading capabilities among pupils?

APPENDIX 2

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

PART A

1. Class Size:………………………………………………………………………

PART B

Key: 0 – Strategy not used
        1 – Strategy used

Items	1	0
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT		
The teacher is enthusiastic about teaching comprehension.		
The teacher allocates time for comprehension reading.		
Learners are enthusiastic about reading comprehensions.		
Learners show difference in response when reading for pleasure and for tests.		
The teacher allows learners to interact with each other during the lesson.		
The teacher interacts with learners during the lesson.		
Discussions emphasise regular pupil participation.		
The teacher challenges pupils during the lesson.		
Class discussions involve questioning.		
Class discussions involve collaborative reasoning.		
The teacher provides motivation for pupils during the lesson.		
Instruction is done in small groups.		
The teacher uses integrative strategies.		
The teacher uses strategies independently.		
TEXT SELECTION		
The teacher selects the text		
Pupils are involved in the selection of the text		
The teacher provides interesting texts.		
The teacher selects narratives.		
The teacher selects expository texts.		
The teacher selects informational texts.		
The teacher gives pupils the context of reading texts.		
Selection of the text is based on the purpose of instruction.		
PRIOR KNOWLEDGE		
The teacher sets purposes for reading.		

The teacher previews the text.		
The teacher makes reference to previous texts.		
The teacher links the current text with previous texts		
Learners identify meaning of text content based on their experiences.		
Pupils and encouraged to use techniques used in previous texts to answer questions.		
USE OF PREDICTION		
Teacher encourages prediction		
Pupils elicit predictions and read the text to justify their predictions.		
Pupils read or listen to part of the text to confirm or reject their predictions.		
Pupils verify/modify predictions and make new ones throughout the text.		
USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS		
The teacher encourages visualising and creating visual representations.		
The teacher emphasises drawing of inferences.		
Are pupils taught visual representations of common text structures through use of graphic organisers (e.g. story maps)?		
The teacher uses visual imagery training.		
PUPIL ASSESSMENT		
Teachers assess pupil's comprehension strengths and weaknesses.		
Instruction is done individually based on learners' needs.		
Instruction is done putting in mind pupils' different strengths.		
Comprehension instruction includes use of small groups based on pupils' particular comprehension strengths and needs.		
EXPLICIT TEACHING OF TEXT STRUCTURE		
The teacher uses the story structure to teach.		
The teacher teaches pupils the structure of narratives.		
The teacher teaches pupils the structure of expository texts.		
The teacher teaches pupils the structure of informational texts.		
TEACHING OF VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGE		
The teacher encourages pupils to note key words when reading the text.		
Part of the lesson spent building pupil's vocabulary and language knowledge.		
Instruction provides pupils with multiple experiences with variety of words.		
Vocabulary and language knowledge instruction is based on relevant context.		
The teacher uses a variety of strategies to enhance pupils' exposure to a broad range of vocabulary.		

PROVISION OF READING MATERIALS		
Pupils have adequate reading materials.		
The reading materials are in form of course books.		
Pupils are provided with a variety of reading materials.		
USE OF SUMMARIZING		
The teacher uses summarising of the text.		
The teacher asks pupils to retell the story in summary.		
The teacher gives a summary of the story to pupils.		
TEACHING OF READING AND WRITING		
Learners apply different strategies as they read.		
Reading and writing connections are emphasised.		
Instruction integrates reading and writing in a meaning full manner.		
Pupils have ample opportunities to revisit and re-represent important ideas in writing, reading, speaking and listening.		
Teachers' instruction integrates reading and writing.		
TEACHING OF THE PLOT		
The teacher asks questions and allows variety of interpretations.		
The teacher adjusts to purpose of the comprehension.		
The teacher encourages active interpretation.		
The teacher encourages retelling.		
The teacher encourages pupils to note important points when reading the text.		
The teacher emphasises on constructing of meaning of the text.		
USE OF HIGH ORDER QUESTIONING		
The teacher generates own questions from the text.		
The teacher encourages pupils towards self-criticism and thinking aloud.		
The teacher encourages pupils to generate own questions from the texts.		
The teaching encourages pupils to question the contents of the texts.		
Discussions emphasise providing evidence from text to support one's thinking.		
GRADUAL RELEASE OF RESPONSIBILITY PROCESS		
The teacher leads the discussion of the texts.		
The teacher encourages pupils to lead discussions of the texts.		
The teacher leads the instruction process and gradually hands over to pupils.		

APPENDIX 3

COMPREHENSION TEST

Read the following story and then answer the questions that follow.

My name is Pat. I live on a farm with my mother, father and brother Sam. Every year, the land gets very dry before the rains come. We watch the sky and wait. One day in the afternoon as I sat outside, I saw dark clouds and then something hit my head, lightly at first and then harder. I jumped up and ran towards the house. The rains had come at last.

Questions

1. Where does Pat live?

2. Why does the land get dry?

3. Why do Pat and his family watch the sky?

4. What hit Pat on the head?

5. How do you think Pat felt when the rains came?

APPENDIX 4

SAMPLE LESSON TRANSCRIPTIONS

Researcher: Good morning class.

Class: Good morning sir

Researcher: How are you doing?

Class: We are alright and how are you?

Researcher: I am fine. Thank you.

Researcher: I have come to learn with you today. So let me hope you will also enjoy.

Thank you and you can sit.

(After a long pause as pupils take out their textbooks)

Teacher: What is the date to day?

Class: In chorus 27th

Teacher: Which month

Class: February

Teacher: Open on page 30…. We have the Mutimba…

Class: Family.

Teacher: So we are talking about which family?

Class: In chorus – The Mutimba Family.

Teacher: Spell the word family

Class: F-A-M-I-L-Y, family

(Displaying a separate picture)

Teacher: In the picture we can see people. How many people are there?

Class: Five

Teacher: How many?

Class: Five

Teacher: Can you name the people in the family?

Class: Father, mother and children

Teacher: What are they doing?

Class: They are eating

Teacher: What?

Class: They are eating.

Teacher: They are eating some good food. Have you seen the food?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Are they talking?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Who can tell me what they are talking.

Teacher: That family is a happy…

Class: Family

Teacher: The Mutimba family is just like the family you have seen in this picture. Who is the head of the family?

Class: Father

Teacher: Father is the head of the family. And who cooked that food?

Class: Mother

Teacher: Now let us come to our books. We have the Mutimba Family. Then we have some new words. Class say new words.

Class: New words

Teacher:	New words
Class:	New words
Teacher:	We have the word *home*. Spell the word *home*.
Class:	H-O-M-E, home.
Teacher:	Who can tell us what is a home? Somebody there, what is a home?
Pupil 1:	A home is where people live.
Teacher:	Yes, a home is where people live. Do we all have homes?
Class:	Yes
Teacher:	Yes we all have homes and human beings stay in a home. Then we have the word
Teacher:	We have the word what?
Teacher:	Who can tell us what grown up means, you are now in Class 3 you must know what grown up means.
Pupil 2:	Teacher, Teacher!
Teacher:	Yes
Pupil 2:	Grown up is a person who has grown big
Teacher:	Yes, a grown up is a person who has grown big. When you came here in nursery, were you not small?
Class:	Yes
Teacher:	But now you have grown up. You have grown?
Class:	Up
Teacher:	In the picture look at the children, are they big or small?
Class:	Big

Teacher: Yes. Because they have grown?

Class: Up

Teacher: Then the other one we have parents. Spell the word parents.

Class: P-A-R-E-N-T-S, parents.

Teacher: Who can tell me who are the parents?

Pupil 3:   Parents are our fathers and mothers.

Teacher: Yes. Do you have a father?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Do you have a mother?

Class: Yes.

Teacher: Father and mother are my…

Class: Parents

Teacher: Do you love you parents?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Do your parents love you?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Then we have elders. Everybody say elders.

Class: Elders

Teacher: Who can tell us who are elders?

Pupil 4:   Elders are the heads of the village.

Teacher: Yes. Elders are the heads of the village. In the village we have the elders.

                 But even in your family you have your…

Class: Elders

Teacher: Like elder sister or brother. The people who are older than you.

Class: Yes

Teacher: Then we have other new words like?

Class: Responsible

Teacher: Spell for me the word responsible.

Class: R-E-S-P-O-N-S-I-B-L-E, responsible.

Teacher: Responsible. Everybody say responsible.

Class: Responsible

Teacher: What is responsible? Do you know what is responsible?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Can you tell us.

Pupil 5: When you know how to take care of your things.

Teacher: Yes. When you fail to take care of your things, you are?

Class: Irresponsible.

Teacher: Yes. When you are responsible, you are a good girl and you are becoming responsible. That is why we have given you your books to keep in your bags so that when you are going home, you make sure that nothing is on the…

Class: Table.

Teacher: You have your own things and you are becoming a responsible…

Class: Yes.

Teacher: You don't just lose your things. When you are going for PE you make sure you have put your sweater in the bag and that all things are safe. Ok?

Class:	Yes
Teacher:	The next is?
Class:	Water
Teacher:	Then
Class:	Servant
Teacher:	Spell the word servant
Class:	S-E-R-V-A-N-T, servant
Teacher:	Who is a servant? Kate
Kate:	A person who works in a house.
Teacher:	Is she correct? Another person.
Pupil 7:	A person who cooks food in the house.
Teacher:	No. Is your mother a servant?
Class:	No
Teacher:	Because mother cooks food for us. Mukami.
Mukami:	The maid.
Teacher:	Yes. The maid is a servant because she helps with work at home. But you should not go and tell her that you are a servant.
Teacher:	Then we have a new word "cruel" spell cruel.
Class:	C-R-U-E-L, Cruel.
Teacher:	Who can tell us what is cruel. Somebody tell us may be a sentence.
Pupil 3:	Cruel is a person who beats people.
Teacher:	Yes, a person who beats you even when you have done nothing wrong. And teacher, is teacher a cruel person?

Class: No

Teacher: Yes, I beat you here, does it mean am a cruel teacher?

Class: No

Teacher: Teacher is not cruel?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Teacher is what?

Class: Kind

Teacher: Teacher is kind?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Yes, I beat when you do what?

Class: A mistake

Teacher: When you do a wrong thing you are beating just to correct the mistake.

Teacher: So here we have a family just like you all have families at home. You can also have your own family. What is your father's name? Yes?

Pupil 9:   Edward

Teacher: So we can have Mr. Edward's family. So this family is for Mr. Mutimba.

Teacher: What can you see in the picture

Pupil 4:   The father

Teacher: You can see the father. Who else can you see?

Pupil 2:   The mother

Teacher: Is there the mother?

Class: Yes

Teacher: Yes, then you have somebody else. We have…

Class: Childrens

Teacher: We don't have childrens we have children. Even if they are many they are children.

Pupil 6:   Servant

Teacher: So we have a servant. Now we read.

Class reads the passage in a chorus

Teacher: Stop. We have a servant. What is the name of that servant we have just read?

Pupil 8:   Musa

Teacher: The servant's name is...

Class: Musa

Teacher: Where do they live? That family. Where do they live? They live somewhere, where is their home?

Pupil 4:   They live at Mitamboni Estate.

Teacher: Yes, they live at?

Class: Mitamboni Estate.

Teacher: Now, Musa goes to work every morning. Spell the word morning.

Class: M-O-R-N-I-N-G, morning.

Teacher: Then we are told that Musa is a very polite servant. Musa is not cruel he is…

Class: Polite

Teacher: What makes Musa to be a polite servant? There is a sentence there that tells us why Musa is a polite servant

Pupil 11:   When he meets people, he greets them.

Teacher: Yes, when you meet people, you greet them. That shows that you are very?

Class: Polite

Teacher: Look at the picture there on page 31. What can you see in the picture?

Pupil 5:   A dog

Teacher: You can see a dog. Something else you can see? Yes

Pupils 13:   A man throwing a stone at a dog.

Teacher: A man throwing a stone at a dog. What else can you see?

Pupil 10:   I can see a house

Teacher: A house. There are many things there

Pupil 2:   A tree

Teacher: A tree

Pupil 15:   A fence

Teacher: A fence. Now, that man is throwing a stone to a…

Class: Dog

Teacher: Is that man cruel or is he polite or how is that man?

Class: Cruel

Teacher: Why is he cruel?

Class: He is throwing a stone to a dog.

Teacher: He is throwing a stone to a dog meaning he is very bad. Lets continue from the second paragraph.

The teacher reads

Teacher: Who can tell use the name of the girl? The girls name is Salma, the boy's name is

Pupil 2: Abdalla

Teacher: Who was the servant?

Pupil 16: Musa

Teacher: Musa does what? What type of work does he do? He does some work in the house. What kind of work does he do? Mary

Mary: He washes dishes

Teacher: He washes dishes.

Pupil 18: He cooks lunch and diner.

Teacher: He cooks lunch as what? Diner?

Class: No! dinner

Teacher: Yes dinner, that word is dinner not diner. What else does he cook?

Class: Supper.

Teacher: Spell the word supper?

Class: S-U-P-P-E-R, Supper.

Teacher: What time do you eat you breakfast?

Class: In the morning

Teacher: Breakfast we eat in the morning. So Musa washes the dishes, cooks breakfast and there is something else he does, what is it?

Pupil 2: He washes and irons clothes

Teacher: Yes, he washes and irons clothes. Everybody say he washes and irons clothes

Class:	He washes and irons clothes.
Teacher:	Again
Class:	He washes and irons clothes.
Teacher:	He also washes and dusts the house.
Class:	Yes
Teacher:	We come to the next page

Teacher reads

Teacher:	Do you help your parents at home?
Pupil 1:	Yes, I clean the house.
Teacher:	Good you are a clean girl. So these children also work. They get water from the water tank. Do we have a water tank in the school?
Class:	Yes.

Teacher reads

Teacher:	Who is unkind to children?
Class:	Musa

Teacher reads

Class reads in chorus

Teacher:	Ok. Now down there do the following exercise. I want you to answer if it is true of false.
Teacher:	Musa greets Salma and Abdalla when he meets them. True or false
Class:	True
Teacher:	Omari is a very polite servant. Somebody to tell us.
Pupil 6:	False

Teacher: Is Omari a polite servant?

Class: No

Teacher: Yes, we know Omari is a very cruel servant.

Class: Yes

Teacher: Musa does not have a home. True of false? Tell us; Monica

Monica: True

Teacher: True? Is it?

Class: No

Teacher: Yes Musa has a home. After work he goes to his home.

Class: Yes

Teacher: Musa steps on the vegetables in the market. Does he?

Everlyn: False

Yes: Who does to the market?

Class: Mrs Mutimba and her children

Teacher: Yes. Now you are going to do that work in your books.

APPENDIX 5

MARKED COMPREHENSION TEST PAPER I

Read the following story and then answer the questions that follow.

My name is Pat. I live on a farm with my mother, father and brother Sam. Every year, the land gets very dry before the rains come. We watch the sky and wait. One day in the afternoon as I sat outside, I saw dark clouds and then something hit my head, lightly at first and then harder. I jumped up and ran towards the house. The rains had come at last.

Questions

1. Where does Pat live? *On the farm*

2. Why does the land get dry? *a long time their is no rain*

3. Why do Pat and his family watch the sky? *If there are dark clouds ... outside I saw ... hit me on the head*

4. What hit Pat on the head? *then drops of rain*

5. How do you think Pat felt when the rains came? *he felt very happy*

APPENDIX 6

MARKED COMPREHENSION TEST PAPER II

Read the following story and then answer the questions that follow.

My name is Pat. I live on a farm with my mother, father and brother Sam.

Every year, the land gets very dry before the rains come. We watch the sky and wait.

One day in the afternoon as I sat outside, I saw dark clouds and then something hit my head, lightly at first and then harder.

I jumped up and ran towards the house. The rains had come at last.

Questions

1. Where does Pat live? *I am live in the notofans house*

2. Why does the land get dry? *bofore the rains come*

3. Why do Pat and his family watch the sky? *and mait*

4. What hit Pat on the head? *lightly at first and the harder*

5. How do you think Pat felt when the rains came? *at last*

APPENDIX 7

PASSAGE ONE

Health and Hygiene

UNIT 3   **Keeping Healthy**

READ

breath breathe dustbin handkerchief sick ill bath nails trim responsible take care of healthy exercise bone cure injury treat

Welcome to my lesson. I am Dr Chepchumba from Kilibwoni National Hospital. I will tell you how to take care of your bodies. I treat children and I like talking to school children about their health. Today I will tell you what you need to do to remain healthy.

First, you need to exercise. Running, playing games and helping in the shamba are very important exercises for children who are growing up. When you exercise, you make your bones strong. A good body needs strong bones. Make sure that after exercising, you take a bath and put on clean clothes. Then eat good food like fruits, vegetables, rice, and beans or meat.

Secondly, always trim your nails. Long nails keep a lot of dirt and may cause diseases through the food we eat. We should wash our hands with clean water and soap before we eat.

Thirdly, we should sweep our houses everyday. Any dirt in the room should be put in the dustbin. Dusty houses cause diseases like coughing and sneezing. When you cough or sneeze, remember to use a clean handkerchief.

It is not good to smoke. People who smoke cigarettes have a bad breath. Sometimes they fall sick and even die. Smoke makes the air we breathe dirty.

Now do you know what you should do when you are ill?. Always let your parents or teachers know that you are sick. They will help you. If the illness stays, you have to be taken to a doctor. The doctor will treat you. If the doctor gives you medicine, make sure you take it as you are told. Then the medicine will cure you.

Next time, I will come and tell you what you should do when you have an injury or an accident. I hope you have enjoyed my lesson. To take care of your health is to be responsible.

WRITE

A.

1. **Answer these questions.**
    a. What does Chepchumba do?
    b. Which exercises are important for children?
    c. Name **three** foods that you ought to eat after exercise.
    d. Why should we sweep our houses clean everyday?
    e. What causes bad breath?

2. **Talk about**
    a. Are exercises good for children? Why?
    b. You should only take the medicine the doctor tells you to take. Why?

12

13

APPENDIX 8

PASSAGE TWO

UNIT 4   At The Hospital

READ

> hospital nurse ambulance ward syringe needle blood
> health centre patient cut bandage inject injection
> bleed ache taken deep   alive dresser

One evening when Agwati was coming from school, he found Wachmon, Onyango's dog, stealing food from his mother's kitchen.

He started chasing the dog towards the main road. Agwati was so annoyed that he did not look at both sides of the road.

As he was crossing the road, a man riding a bicycle knocked him down. Agwati lay flat as if he was dead.

The villagers rushed to the scene and took Agwati to the nearest health centre. He was not breathing well. The dresser at the centre advised that Agwati should be taken to the District Hospital. Agwati was put in an ambulance and then taken to a hospital ward with many beds.

16

He was going to be an in-patient in the children's ward. Agwati's leg ached and there was a bandage on his head. His face had a deep cut and it was bleeding. His shirt had a lot of blood.

A nurse came to Agwati and smiled at him. "It's time for your injection," she said. She pulled out the syringe and fixed a needle on it. Agwati was scared and closed his eyes. The injection was not too painful. Agwati had to stay in hospital for two weeks. He had to be helped whenever he wanted to go to the toilet. Agwati was lucky to be alive. He was stupid to chase the dog across the road.

SAY
You'll Get Better
Nurse please feel my head
Nurse I have a fever
I think I'm going to die
No child, no child you can't die
I'll treat you now, and treat you now
And you will get better.

17

APPENDIX 9

PASSAGE THREE

UNIT 6   The Mutimba Family

READ

home grown-up parents elders lid wash estate plot share responsible remember help remind unkind polite cruel grateful water tap tank servant

Musa works for the Mutimba family. The family lives on a family plot at Mtamboni Estate. Musa goes to work every morning. He arrives at his place of work very early in the morning. Musa is a very polite servant. When he meets Mr and Mrs Mutimba in the morning, he greets them.

When Mutimba's children, Salma and Abdalla meet Musa, they shake his hand.

Musa loves his work. There is a lot of work at the Mutimba's house. Musa washes dishes and cooks lunch and dinner. He washes and irons clothes. He also cleans and dusts the house. Mr and Mrs Mutimba have taught their children to be responsible and to respect elders.

30

The children help Musa to do the housework when they are not doing their homework. They like washing clothes and dishes at the water tank outside their house. Musa always reminds them to turn off the tap. Mrs Mutimba is kind to Musa. She gives him dinner before he leaves for his home every evening. Musa always remembers to thank Mrs Mutimba for the food. He is grateful to them.

"Thank you, Mrs Mutimba. You are very kind," he says.

Omari is also a house servant. He moves from one family to another. Omari is not polite like Musa. He is very unkind to children. He always beats them. He does not greet people when he meets them. When Omari shook hands with Musa one day, he hurt Musa's hand. Omari is very cruel to animals. Musa saw him hit a dog with a big stone one day. Musa also saw him throw cold water on a cat because he does not like cats.
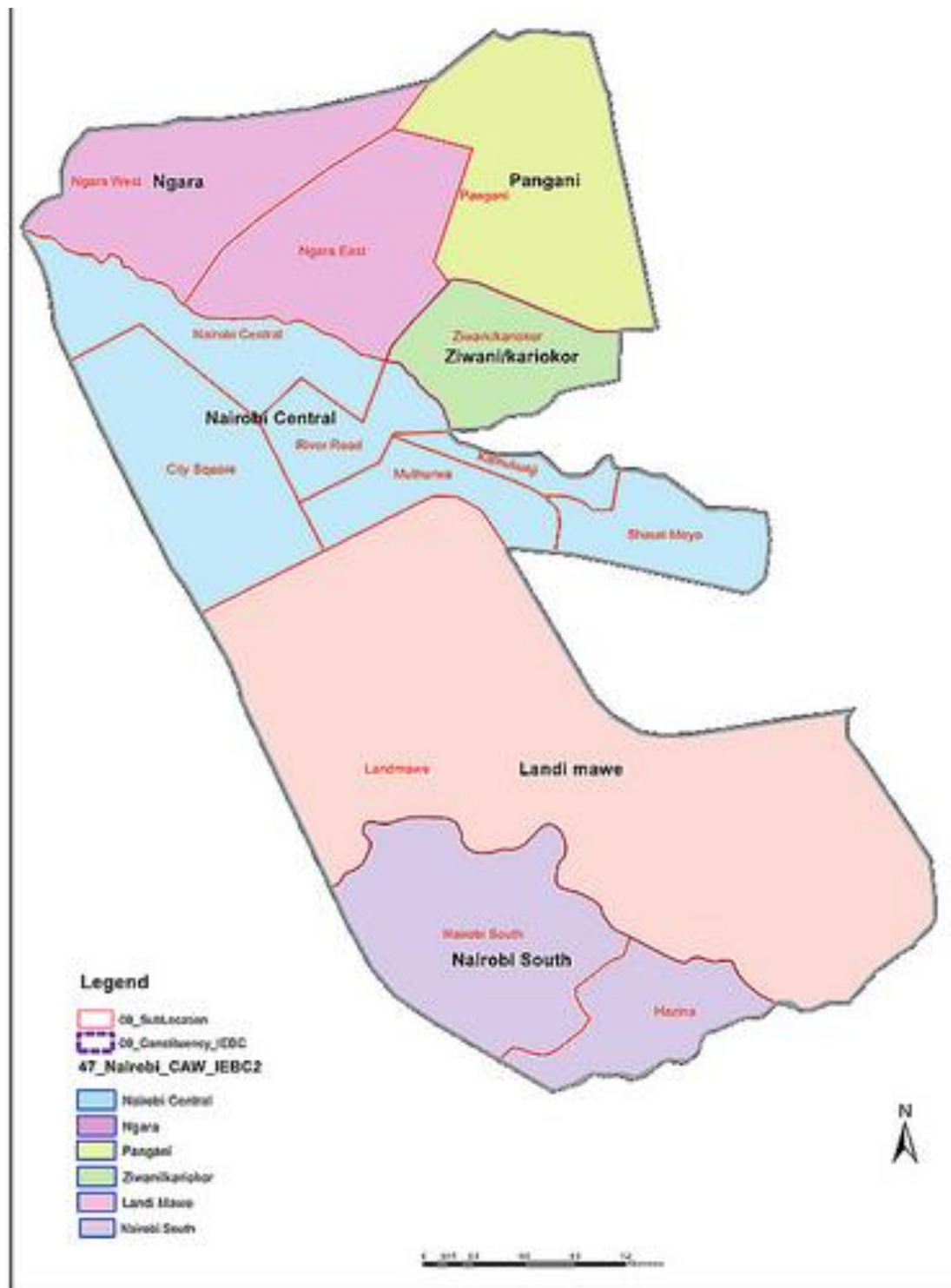
"Why did you throw water on the cat?" Musa asked.

"I don't like cats," Omari answered.

"Cats do not like water on their bodies," Musa reminded Omari.

31
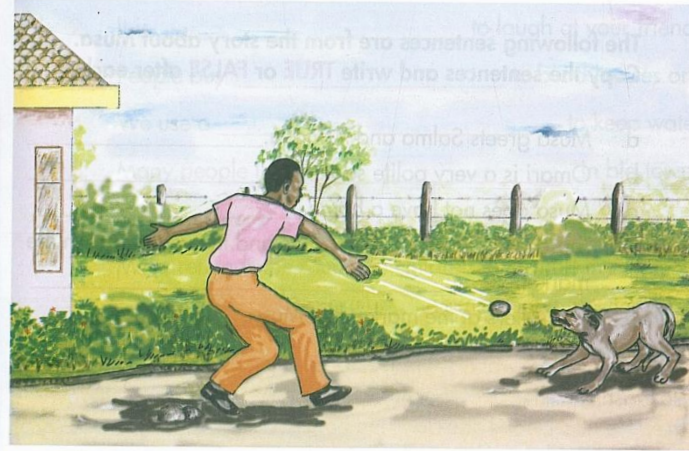
APPENDIX 10

MAP OF THE STUDY AREA: STAREHE SUB-COUNTY

APPENDIX 11

RESEARCH PERMIT