



# Availability and access of extensive reading resources for teaching and learning English: The Kenyan case

<sup>1</sup>Kennedy Indembukhani, <sup>2\*</sup>Paul Onsare Onchera (PhD) and <sup>1</sup>Selina Alonya Kulo

<sup>1</sup>Moi University, School of Education, P. O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

<sup>2</sup>University of Kabianga, School of Education, P. O. Box 2030-20200, Kericho, Kenya

\*Corresponding author's Email: [paulonchera@yahoo.com](mailto:paulonchera@yahoo.com)

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines extensive reading as a method recommended for teaching English as a second language. Specifically the paper investigated the availability of extensive reading resources for teaching and learning and examined how extensive reading is used in the teaching of English in Kenyan primary schools. The study used questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedule to collect data. The results revealed that there are inadequate extensive reading resources, few schools have library facilities and that extensive reading materials available in libraries are few. It was also found that pupils were told to read many story books, magazines and newspapers without being informed on how this would impact on their learning of English. In light of the findings the study recommends that ministry of education should ensure library lessons are time tabled; school administration should establish libraries; purchase and develop a variety of extensive reading materials.

**Keywords:** Extensive reading, reading resources, library facilities, library lessons.

## INTRODUCTION

The place of English in the world cannot be overlooked. In Kenya, English is an official language. It is used in offices, court rooms and even parliament among many others. It is also the language of instruction from primary to university. More importantly is the fact that English is an examinable subject both in Kenyan primary schools (KCPE) and secondary schools (KCSE). Training and job placement in Kenya requires that individuals have good scores in English. Good mastery of English language also enables candidates perform well in other subjects. Therefore, any aspect that affects English language performance becomes a major concern for language educators.

Reading is an important skill that not only helps learners in the mastery of English but also enhances their performance in other subjects in school curriculum (KIE, 2006). Emma (2010) argues that reading is a key skill that enables students to function efficiently and successfully apart from its use in exams. Reading is one of the receptive skills alongside listening by which

learners acquire language. It is taught as a skill and at the same time is an important component of content subjects in the school curriculum. Horning (2007) avers that refocused emphasis on reading as the process of getting meaning can address students difficulties, the goals of teachers and the need of the nation for an educated, informed and fully participatory democratic population.

Extensive reading (ER), a sub set of reading is generally associated with reading large amounts with the aim of getting an overall understanding of material (Julian and Richard, 1997). Extensive reading as an approach to teaching may be thought of in terms of purpose or outcome. Julian and Richard refer to it as pleasure reading. They observe that as a consequence of traditional intensive approaches to foreign language reading instruction, students do not read much. This points to the fact that over emphasis on intensive reading in teaching and learning of English may not promote fluency. Reading, it is argued, is like any learned human

abilities; the more you do it the more fluent and skilful you become (Julian and Richard, 1997). In support of extensive reading, Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) contend that fluency is an important by-product of reading for pleasure, which is a component of extensive reading. They added that unless a reader gains fluency, reading of any material for whatever purpose is likely to be tedious, which in turn decreases motivation to read anything other than materials that are essential for survival.

In Kenyan primary schools, especially with the introduction of free primary education, resources such as text books should be provided to make the work of the teacher easy (UNESCO, 2005), however the provision is only limited to text books which do not address the need for extensive reading. The purpose of this study was to investigate the availability of extensive reading resources for teaching and learning and examine how extensive reading is used in the teaching of English in Kenyan primary schools.

### **Study Objectives**

The main purpose of this study was to establish the availability of extensive reading resources for teaching and examine how extensive reading is used in the teaching of English in Kenyan primary schools.

### **Related Literature**

#### **Reading and Types of Reading**

Reading can be described as a means of language acquisition, communication and of sharing information and ideas. It is thus a complex interaction between the reader and the text that is shaped by prior knowledge, experiences attitude language community. Pang et al (2003) defines reading as a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. It consists of two processes, word recognition and comprehension. Where recognition refers to the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to ones spoken language while comprehension is the process of making sense of word sentences and connected texts. Learning to read is an important educational goal for both children and adults, the ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables people to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature and enjoy everyday things that are part of modern life (ibid).

Reading is therefore a very useful skill in the education and life of an individual. Pangs, et al. (2003), draw the relationship between reading and various aspects of language. They contend that there is a close connection between oral vocabulary and early reading ability. They also indicated that phonological phonemic awareness and reading mutually reinforce each other. They found

out that reading of texts with high frequency words encourage fluency. Many studies indicate that good readers have good vocabulary knowledge. Vocabulary however is taught directly or indirectly. There are other principles that are cited by (Pang, et al., 2003) which include prior knowledge of the word, comprehension, the choice of texts, provision of feedback and reading more generally which aid learning and teaching of reading. They aver that both research and classroom practices support the use of balanced approach in instruction. Reading is a skill that empowers everyone who learns it. Good teaching enables students to learn to read and read to learn.

### **Types of Reading**

Reading is a complex and huge subject (Ayot, 1984). Therefore, there are different kinds of reading skills involved, for purpose of management and convenience Ayot divides them into three categories; Intensive reading skills, applied reading skills and extensive reading. Intensive reading refers to reading shorter texts for specific details with a lot of concentration. Barret in Ayot (1984) refers to these skills as reading the lines, reading between the lines and reading beyond the lines. These skills need to be trained by means of suitable questions. Reading lines and reading between lines are normally tested in examinations. It should be noted that most teachers concentrate on intensive reading. This is what they do with the students when reading passages.

Applied reading skills refer to the approaches to training of intensive reading. These skills refer to access skills, skimming, scanning, reading for study and reading faster. Skimming refers to looking over a text quickly in order to get general or superficial idea of the context. Access skills include how to locate a book in the library, how to use the reference book, using of the contents page, index, appendices. They include sub skills like alphabetical order. Scanning on the other hand refers to carefully reading to find out specific, clear and detail information.

Extensive reading refers to reading for pleasure. It involves learners reading a lot of books, newspapers, magazines and any other material for enjoyment. This exposes learners to new vocabulary and new language usage. Ayot (1984) suggests that ER can be approached using class readers and through individual reading scheme (IRS) based on either the school or class library.

Individual reading scheme (IRS) is measured in terms of quantity read while class reader is in general used to help learners improve on their quality of reading. However, in extensive reading sub skills such as silent reading and reading aloud are also used to achieve the purpose of reading therefore an integrated approach is suggest.

## **The Use of Extensive Reading in Teaching and Learning of English**

Warring (2003) while examining the role of textbooks in teaching and learning of English says that textbooks introduce a piece of language and then learners analyze it and find out how it works. This introduction phase is followed by a stage to check that the feature is understood and can be manipulated and controlled by giving some kind of drill, a gap-fill, a sentence completion activity or a test, to see if the learners have learnt the items correctly. This procedure as much as it is widely used, Warring tends to disagree and he feels this approach is inadequate.

In demonstrating the inadequacy of the use of the textbook, Warring (2003) looks at a number of aspects of language. He points out that English is made up of very few common words that make up the bulk of the language we meet. Written texts of about 2000 word families cover about 85-90% of general texts (Nation, 2001) in Warring, (2003). He argues that vocabulary learning is more than just learning words. There are the shades of meaning, the nuances and the punctuation to learn as well. To learn words well, the learner must also learn the words collocations and colligations.

The learners also need to pick up the tens of thousands of useful phrases and chunks of language that characterize much of native language (Warring, 2003). In grammar, for example various forms mark the present perfect tense, in its various guises. It comes with differing uses, differing subjects and objects, as questions, negatives or declarative; in active or passive; in continuous or simple, with irregular and regular past participle and so on. To be able to induce the rules underlying the forms, let alone the different uses and nuances of the present perfect tense, one must take thousands and thousands of meetings. Each chapter of the course book has something new- new vocabulary, new grammar, new reading skills, and new punctuation and so on. Thus the structure of course books shows us that they are not concerned with deepening knowledge of a given form. They do not concentrate on the amount of revisiting and revising necessary for acquisition. The assumption according to Warring (2003) is that learners have met or done that we do not have to go back to. Adopting this view of language teaching is a mistake as we have seen we need to meet language features a lot in order to learn them.

Nation (2001) in Warring (2003) suggests that our brains do not learn things all at once, we are destined to forget things we learn and we tend to pick up complex things like language in small incremental pieces rather than as whole chunks of language. The argument is that it takes between 10-30 meetings of a word respectively for the form (spelling or sound) of an average word to be connected to its meaning. A greater number of meetings will be needed to deepen the knowledge of the word.

Loafer (1989) and Nation (2001) in Warring (2003) say that unless we have about 98-99% coverage of the vocabulary in the text the chance that unknown word will be learnt is minimal. This means that at minimum there should be one new word in 40 words, or 1 in 50 for the right condition for learning unknown language from context. The course books deal with initial meetings with words, they are not designed to recycle or re-visit the features taught. Thus it is only through extensive reading that re-visiting the words and structures taught will be possible.

Elley (1991) also reports about the research conducted in Singapore, The Singapore REAP program (1985-1989) where as a result of positive results the program was extended by the Ministry of Education. The pupils who participated in the programs Performed well in the National Exams. It is important to note that Singapore pupils performed well in the recent IEA survey of reading literacy, conducted in 32 countries (Elley, 1991). He reports that the study conducted in Sri Lanka proved that abundant supply of high-interest illustrated storybooks could have a strong impact on children's language growth provided the teachers ensure the children interact with the books daily and productively.

Warwick et al (1997) who evaluated the book based literacy programs in South African schools says that the program has been widely rated by teachers and principals. The project is highly successful in making their pupils more fluent readers and confident users of English. Attendance records and enrolment figures had increased in schools in the program and pupils who had been through the program achieved above expectation at secondary school.

In the light of the above Warring (2003) suggests any program that does not support learners to develop their comfort zone of language is denying them the chance to progress to productive language use Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) argue that reading in a formal school system is the core of the syllabus because of a number of reasons. Firstly, content provided in text books provide little reading for pleasure. Where there is little reading there will be little development of reading skills. Providing direct experience of language used as part of real life in the way a native learner gets his first language is not possible in second language situation. Secondly, only by reading can a learner acquire the speed and skills she will need for practical purpose when she leaves school. Thirdly, education depends on quality and quantity of reading. Fourthly, general knowledge depends on reading. Fifthly, in most schools there is a desire and need to read texts of literary work for their own sake. Lastly, reading in English offers the only means of accessing materials.

Bluntly stated, language programs that do not have extensive reading component of massive comprehensible and sustained silent individualized language practice will hold back their learners (Warring, 2003). Extensive

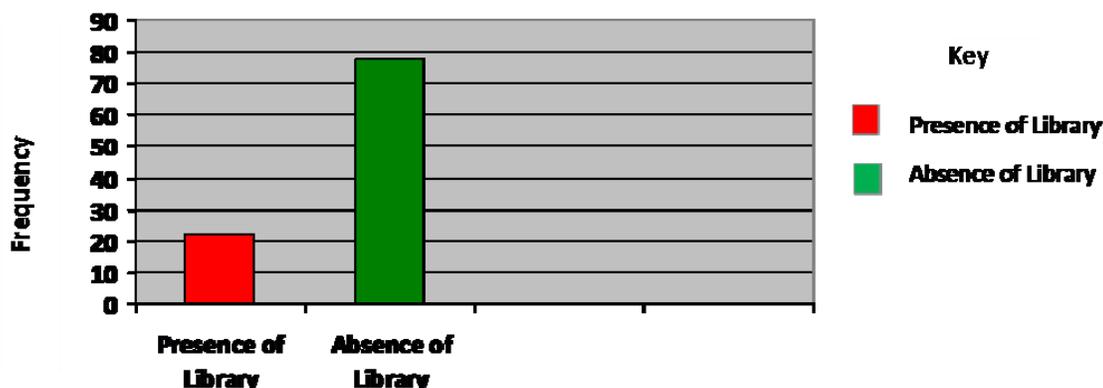


Figure 1: Availability of Library

reading is the only way in which learners can get access to language at their own comfort and read something they want to read, at the place they feel comfortable with, which allow them meet language enough times to pick up sense of how language fits together and to consolidate what they know.

From the above reviews, it can be deduced that extensive reading is very important in teaching and learning English. It is also clear that extensive reading is lacking in many of the English language programs examined at the same time experimental studies done showed that ER had positive impact on the respondents.

## STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in selected primary schools in Nyakach district. Nyakach district is one of the districts in Kisumu County. Like many other parts of the country, the performance in English language at the national examination level has been worrying (KNEC Reports, from 2010 to 2012) and this guaranteed the selection of the district for this study. Descriptive survey research design was used to gather data in this study. Kasomo (2006) defines descriptive research as a method concerned with conditions of relationships that exists. The population from which the sample for this study was drawn consisted of 351 class seven pupils and 45 teachers of English and 45 schools selected from 144 primary schools in Nyakach district. The study sample was arrived at after considering Kasomo (2006) who recommended that a sample size of 30% of the total population is desirable. This helped arrive at 45 primary schools while the sample size for pupils was arrived at using a table for determining sample size developed by (Krecie and Morgan, 1970 in Kasomo, 2006), which suggests that for a population of 4000, sample size should be 351. Therefore for a population of 3640 the researchers used the table to arrive at 351 pupils. The research instruments included: Questionnaire for class 7

pupils: where the questionnaire sought to establish the kind of reading materials that were available in libraries, if not in the library, where were they kept and how they were used? The observation checklist was used to observe and record on existence of libraries and reading materials while the interview guide was used for standard 7 teachers of English to gather details in relation to material in the libraries. All the instruments were tested for validity and reliability before administration.

## STUDY FINDINGS

### The availability of Extensive Reading Resources

#### Results from the questionnaire

Question one sought to find out the availability of a Library. The analysis of data showed that among the sampled schools (10) which represents 22.2% had libraries while 35 which represents 77.78% did not have libraries. These findings are presented in Figure 1 above.

The study then sought to find out the kind of reading materials found in the schools that had libraries. The Table 1 below captures the kind of reading materials that were available in schools.

For the primary schools that did not have libraries the findings revealed that the reading materials available included: textbooks, dictionaries, bibles, storybooks and past exam papers. However, it was noted that the story books, newspapers, magazines were very few and mostly owned by few pupils.

The study also sought to find out where the reading materials are kept especially for schools that do not have libraries. It was revealed that 33.1% of primary school that did not have libraries kept their reading materials at the head teacher's office while 41.3% kept the books in the staffroom and 25.6% kept the books in the deputy head teacher's office.

**Table 1:** Kinds of Reading Materials found in Schools Libraries

Type of reading materials	No. of schools that had reading materials	Availability of reading materials in %
Text books	42	93.3
Dictionary	8	17.8
Bible	10	22.2
Encyclopaedia	7	15.5
Story books	14	31.1
Newspapers	5	11.11
Magazines	6	13.33
Past exam papers	19	42.2

### Results from the interview schedule

The data collected from the teachers interview schedule revealed that (9) of the 45 teachers who represent 22% indicated that their schools had libraries while 36 teachers who represent 78% said that there were no libraries in their schools. All the teachers interviewed concurred that they did not have enough copies of storybooks. Out of 45 teachers, 10% indicated that their schools purchased newspapers everyday while 90% indicated that their schools do not have any provision for newspapers and magazines. For those who purchased the newspapers, the newspapers were used by the teachers; the pupils only accessed the newspapers after a week. The data from teacher's interview schedule also revealed that for extra reading, 10% of the teachers gave the pupils story books only, eight percent 8% indicated that they used newspapers while 5% used magazines.

The teachers further explained that through Free Primary Education (FPE) funding, their schools had adequate text books in almost all subjects. Little funds had been set aside for purchase of story books, newspapers and magazines. FPE provides funds for running of public primary schools. It is stipulated that only text books in the subject areas that is English, Kiswahili, mathematics, science and social studies should be purchased. No provision is given for story books, newspapers and magazines which the study considers the commonly available materials for ER.

The teachers interview schedule further sought to find out how often teachers gave their pupils an opportunity to read story books, newspapers and magazines in the class apart from comprehension passages in text-books. The findings revealed that 12 out of 45 teachers offered their pupils opportunity to read story books, newspapers and magazines in class. The teachers utilized library lessons while others allowed pupils to read during one of the lessons. 9 out of 45 teachers said that some of their pupils read story books and newspapers in class but they read on their own initiative. While 24 out of 45 teachers said that they only read comprehension passages with their pupils in class.

On whether pupils read at home the teacher's responses revealed that very few pupils read at home for pleasure. In school 36 the teacher said that most of the pupils use their time at home to help their parents and complete their homework and assignments. In school 33 the teacher said that the pupils do not relate good result in English to reading a lot of story books. The pupils are much concerned with passing examinations.

The interview schedule also sought to establish whether the teachers had put in place programs to ensure that learners read a lot of storybooks, newspapers and magazines after class. The data collected showed that 8 out of 45 teachers had devised different ways to enable pupils read many story books, newspapers and magazines. A teacher in **school 1** said that there was a record kept by both the pupils and the teacher which showed the number and titles of story books read by each pupil. Those who do not read many story books are advised and encouraged to read more.

In **school 1** the teacher said that he organizes forums once in a term where pupils narrate the stories they have read before the class. Those who narrate the stories well are then rewarded. In **school 8** the teacher said that he offers the pupils more reading materials, magazines and story books to encourage the pupils to read more.

The data revealed that in **school 1** the teacher talked to the pupils about the benefits of extensive reading. The teacher provided the pupils with newspaper cuttings from different newspapers on different topics and distributed them to the pupils.

### How extensive reading (ER) is used in Teaching and Learning of English

#### Results from the questionnaire

In section B of the pupils' questionnaire, question 1 (a) sought to find out whether teachers explained to the pupils the importance of ER. The findings of data revealed that 54 pupils who represent 15.3% of the pupils were informed of the importance of ER while 297 pupils

who represent 84.7% were not informed of the importance of ER by their teachers.

Data collected from question 1 (b) showed that teachers explained to the pupils that ER helps the pupils improve on spelling, vocabulary and gives the pupils ideas to write interesting compositions. They also indicated that their teachers informed them that ER makes pupils get informed. The pupils explained that they had found out that ER enabled them learn English in a better way.

Question 2 sought to establish whether pupils were offered a variety of story books, newspapers and magazines to choose from in what to read. Findings from the data revealed that 81 pupils who represent 23% of the pupils were provided with a variety of reading materials while 270 pupils who represent 77% were not provided with a variety of reading materials.

Question 3 sought to find out whether teachers guide the pupils on the choice of reading materials to read. The findings from the data collected revealed that 281 pupils who represent 80% of the pupils in the study were not guided on the choice of reading materials to read. While 70 pupils who represent 20% of the pupils said that they are guided. Those who are guided said that the teachers asked them to look at the title and read about the author and summary of the story in the blurb of the story book to determine whether the story would be of interest to them.

The pupils who were not guided said that they also look at the title and start reading, if they find the story not interesting they select another one. A pupil in school 13 said that there was no need to be guided since there is no choice, "When I get any newspaper or story book, I read it. I cannot choose because there are no books."

Question 4 sought to establish how pupils use reading of story books, newspapers, and magazines in learning, listening, reading and writing. Data collected showed that 46 pupils who represent 13% of the pupils use information they get through reading a lot of newspapers, magazines and story books when contributing to discussions in classrooms and even out of the classroom. Forty-two pupils who represent 12% of the pupils said they use information from ER to answer questions when asked by teachers a question that relate to what they have read. Two hundred and sixty-three pupils who represent 75% of the pupils did not relate ER to speaking.

The data collected also revealed that 28 pupils who represent 08% of the pupils explained that their teachers took some excerpts from newspapers, magazines and story books that they have read and use them for listening tasks. 323 pupils who represent 92% of the pupils said that ER they carried out was not used for learning listening skills.

Question 5 sought to find out whether pupils enjoyed their reading. The analysis of the findings showed that 344 pupils who represented 98.1% of the pupils in the

study enjoyed reading while 7 pupils who represented 1.9% of the students did not enjoy reading.

Question 6 (a) sought to find out the frequency of borrowing books and it is worthwhile to note that this section was meant for schools that had libraries. The analysis of the findings showed that 145 pupils who represented 41.2% of the pupils never borrowed books for reading, 67 pupils who represented 18.8% of the pupils hardly borrowed books, 64 pupils who represented 18.2% borrowed books once a month, 58 pupils who represented 16.4% borrowed books once a week while 19 pupils who represented 5.4% borrowed books more than once a week. Question 6 (b) (i) sought to find out the frequency of reading of different kinds of books including storybooks, textbooks in science, mathematics, English, social studies, Kiswahili, reference, encyclopaedia and workbooks at school. The findings are presented in Table 2.

Question 6 (b) (ii) sought to establish how frequently the pupils read different kinds of books at home. From data collected it is clear that pupils do read a lot of textbooks in specific subject areas than reading materials for ER such as story books. The findings obtained from the data are presented in Table 3.

Question 7 in this section sought to find out the approaches used in extensive reading especially in classrooms in the primary schools under the study. The analysis of the results revealed that 309 pupils who represent 88.3% of the pupils in the primary schools in this study undertook silent reading, 145 pupils who represented 41.2% said teachers read aloud to pupils in class, 138 pupils who represented 39.3% of the pupils read aloud, 71 pupils who represented 20.1% of pupils read in groups while 36 pupils who represented 10.3% pupils read their own stories. These findings are presented in Figure 2.

The analysis of the results on the preferred approach to extensive reading by pupils showed that they preferred reading silently.

Question 8 (a) sought to find out whether pupils kept a record of the storybooks, newspapers, magazines they read. The analysis of the results indicated that 10.2% of the pupils kept a record of what they read while 89.8% did not keep a record. The inquiry further revealed that of the pupils that kept a record 5% of their records were checked by the teacher.

Question 8(b) (i) sought to establish whether the teachers asked pupils about what they were reading. The study also found out that 8.2% of the pupils are asked questions about what they are reading by teachers while 91.8% were not asked anything about their reading.

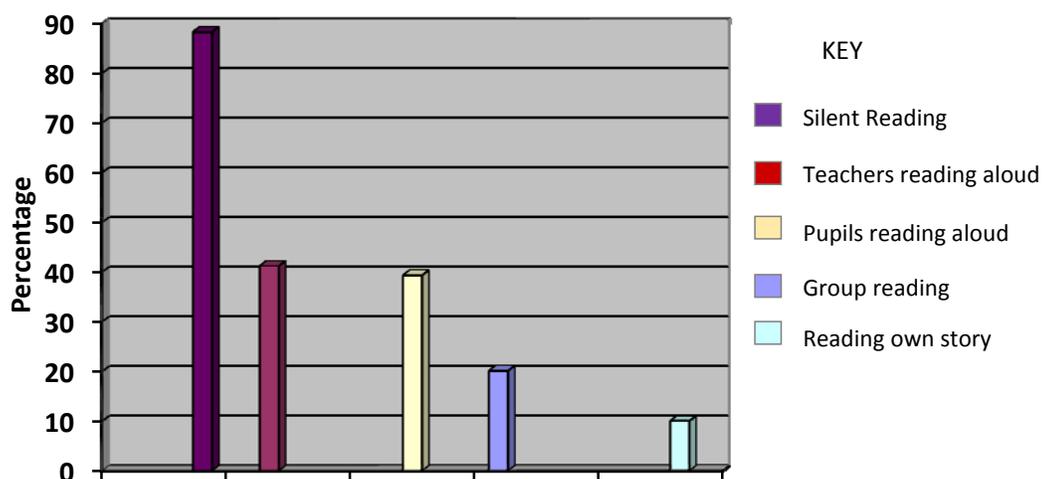
Question 8 (b) (ii) sought to find out whether parents asked pupils about what they read. The study established that 6.7% of the pupils were asked about what they read by their parents, while 93.3% of the pupils were not asked about what they read by their parents.

**Table 2:** Frequency of Reading Different Kinds of Reading Materials at School

Reading Material	Never	Once/ week	Twice/ week	Everyday
Storybooks	44.10%	33.60%	18.40%	3.90%
Science textbooks	10.10%	17.50%	33.60%	38.80%
Mathematics textbooks	19.60%	20.10%	32.70%	27.60%
English textbooks	14.10%	31.40%	29.40%	25.10%
Social studies textbooks	9.20%	22.40%	40.50%	27.90%
Kiswahili textbooks	10.40%	26.50%	39.90%	23.20%
References	60.10%	28.40%	7.90%	3.60%
Encyclopaedias	71.20%	14.50%	12.20%	2.10%
Workbooks	63.40%	24.20%	11.30%	1.10%

**Table 3:** Frequency of Reading Different Kinds of Reading Materials at Home

Reading Materials	Never	Once a Week	Twice a week	Everyday
Story books	52.10%	26.30%	13.40%	2.50%
Science textbooks	13.40%	19.70%	39.40%	27.50%
Mathematics textbooks	22.40%	18.80%	34.80%	24.00%
English textbooks	13.20%	38.70%	27.10%	21.00%
Social Studies textbooks	10.30%	21.20%	47.70%	20.80%
Kiswahili textbooks	13.20%	22.70%	40.90%	23.20%
Reference	75.60%	12.50%	11.70%	0.20%
Encyclopaedia	76.10%	11.20%	10.10%	2.60%
Work books	57.70%	30.10%	11.00%	1.20%



**Figure 2:** Approaches to Extensive Reading

## How Extensive Reading is used in Teaching and Learning of English

### Results from the interview schedule

In section B of the interview schedule for teachers, question (a) (i) sought to establish from the teachers of English whether ER improves learning of English. All the teachers (45) interviewed said that ER improves pupils learning of English. The teachers explained that by reading extensively pupils are able to learn new vocabulary on their own. Spelling of words is reinforced when the pupil come across the same word many times. The teachers also explained that the pupils were able to come across different writing styles that improve their writing skills.

Question (b) (i) sought to find out from teachers of English whether ER improves teaching of English. The finding from the data revealed that all the teachers interviewed held the view that when pupils read extensively teaching of English is enhanced. They explained that pupils who read extensively are more informed and therefore participate in class discussions actively. In such cases the teaching of listening and speaking is enhanced unlike pupils who do not read extensively.

Question (c) (i) sought to establish from teachers whether they explained to the pupils the importance of reading extensively. The finding from the data revealed that 12 teachers who represent 26.7% explained to their pupils the importance of extensive reading in classroom and even on assembly. A teacher in **school 1** explained that he had written a one page statement highlighting why it is important to read extensively and a copy is posted on the school notice board and in every class. Twenty (20) of the teachers explained that they tell the pupils to read extensively in order to improve in their English, however, they have not told them how, 13 of the teachers explained that they occasionally remind the pupils to read story books, newspapers, and magazines on assembly.

Question (d) (i) sought to find out whether teachers give pupils an opportunity to choose reading materials for ER. The findings from the data collected revealed that five (5) of the teachers interviewed provided the pupils with an opportunity to choose reading materials. The pupils are given time to go through a set of story books, newspapers and magazines, retell the stories they have read before choosing what they read next. In **school 16**, the teacher explained that after every month the pupils are asked to collect all the story books they have. The story books are then displayed for the pupils to choose the ones that they have not read. Forty (40) of the teachers however said they do not offer the pupils an opportunity to choose story books, newspapers and magazines. A teacher in school 22 said that she collects

newspapers from the library and distributes them to the pupils.

Question (e) sought to find out how teachers incorporate ER in the teaching of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The findings showed that through reading aloud to pupils the teachers enabled pupils learn proper pronunciation and rhythms of English language. The teachers also explained that they use vocabulary pupils learn in their ER to engage them in conversation where they practice listening and speaking. The teachers also said that they ask pupils to retell the stories they have read. The teachers also said that occasionally, they take excerpts from stories the pupils have read for comprehension exercises. The teachers interviewed also said they use ER to teach writing by asking pupils to write compositions about what they have read. A teacher in **school 1** said that every term he gives the pupils a composition about the most interesting story I have read. However, (25) of the teachers interviewed said that they were not aware of what their pupils read and therefore were not able to use their ER in teaching the four skills.

Question (f) sought to establish the role teachers play while the pupils are engaged in ER. Five (5) of the teachers interviewed said that they occasionally sat in the classroom or library with their own story book and read it while the pupils read. The data also showed that 6 of the teachers said that they occasionally sit in the classroom but use the time to mark exercise books. Thirty-four (34) of the teachers said that they do not at all go to class to participate.

The study sought to establish the extent to which the teachers allowed pupils to read their own composition stories to fellow pupils. The analysis of data collected indicated that 3 who represent 6.6% of the teachers asked pupils to read their own composition stories to other pupils, while 42 who represent 93.3% of the teachers did not. The teachers indicated that this exercise does not involve each pupil but only those that have written the best compositions. Those who do not allow pupils to read their own composition indicated that it was time consuming and most of the pupils don't write interesting stories.

The study then sought to find out how often pupils read aloud story books and other reading materials to the pupils in class. The analysis of data collected showed that 22.1% of teachers allowed pupils to read aloud to fellow pupils. Those teachers who allowed pupils to read aloud said that they did so to enable learners practice pronunciation and enable them to be corrected. Data collected also revealed that 77.9% of the teachers who did not allow pupils to read aloud said that some of the pupils are too slow while others have difficulties in pronunciation making the pace of their reading slow.

The study also sought to establish how often teachers read aloud story books and other extensive reading

materials, analysis of the findings indicated that 6 who represent 13.4% of the teachers read aloud to pupils twice a week, 9 who represent 20% read aloud to pupils once a week, 14 who represent 31% read to pupils aloud sometimes while 16 who represent 35.5% never read aloud to pupils. Those teachers who read aloud cited factor such as: providing role model for correct pronunciation, and adapting a captivating tone while reading to create interest in the pupils. Those who did not read aloud explained that it is time consuming and for large classes it was difficult to ensure each pupil concentrates.

## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **The Availability of Extensive reading Resources**

The study established that there are very few libraries. Inadequate library facilities make it difficult to carry out ER which is based on either class library or school library (Ayot, 1984). The available libraries have very few extensive reading materials. These libraries have more text books than storybooks, newspapers and magazines which are essential for carrying out extensive reading. The scenario is similar in schools that do not have libraries. Inadequate extensive reading materials affect negatively the use of extensive reading, yet Elly (1996) reports that abundant supply of high interest story books has a strong impact on children's language growth. The findings of this study also revealed that for the schools that did not have libraries, books and other reading materials are kept in the head teacher's office, deputy head teacher's office and in staffrooms. The storage of these books makes it impossible for the pupils to access them thus further hampering extensive reading. These findings agree with MOEST report (2006) which noted that most store rooms are untidy and mostly locked.

From the findings, the study revealed that only a few schools had library lessons. The teachers and the school can only verify that pupils are reading extensively if they offer them opportunity to read as a matter of policy in the school program. It was also revealed that the number of library lessons are not only few but also had been allocated little time. This is contrary to Elly (1996) who suggested that teachers should ensure that children interact with books daily and productively. Therefore pupils are not offered adequate opportunity to read extensively.

Another aspect was on whether pupils read extensively at home. The findings of the study revealed that pupils were hardly assigned extra work on reading by both the teachers and parents. Similarly very few pupils were found to carry out extensive reading at home or during their free time. Further, the findings showed that many pupils (71.3%) together with all the teachers are dissatisfied with the amount of reading undertaken.

These findings do not concur with Warring (2003) who said that learners have to meet language features a lot in order to learn them. Thus ER is not satisfactorily used in teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

### **The use of Extensive reading in Teaching and Learning of English**

In using ER in teaching and learning of English the teacher has to explain to the pupils the benefit of reading extensively (Wilkinson, 2011). The current study established that very few teachers explained to their pupils the importance of reading extensively. The pupils were told to read many story books, magazines and newspapers without informing them how it would impact on their learning of English. In absence of class explanations as to how ER would benefit the pupil, the pupil does not therefore give ER the seriousness it deserves.

The study established that all the teachers were aware of extensive reading and its benefits. The teachers explained that the pupils who read extensively participated in class discussion actively. They also read comprehensions and answered questions better than those who do not read at all. The teachers agreed that ER makes their teaching of English easier. The teachers also explained that ER enhances pupils learning of English language. The pupils learn vocabulary easily and continuously through ER. This was found to be in agreement with Grabe (1991) and Paran (1996) who said that ER increases pupil's knowledge of vocabulary.

Wilkinson (2011) said that pupils should be provided with a variety of reading materials to choose from. Since ER is reading for pleasure, its success can be ensured through pupils, choosing reading materials that interest them (Julian and Richard, 1997). However, this study established that pupils in primary schools are not offered adequate opportunity to choose reading materials for ER. This undermines the use of extensive reading in teaching and learning of English in primary schools.

The study also established that pupils were not guided in choice of reading materials yet Julian and Richard (1997) suggested that teachers should guide, suggest, recommend and avail reading materials to the pupils to facilitate ER. The teachers do not therefore play their role in guiding the pupils on which reading materials to read for ER. Therefore, in such a case the few pupils who carry out ER do so without the guidance of the teachers which affect the use of ER in teaching and learning of English negatively.

The study sought to establish how ER is used in the teaching and learning of the four skills. The study found out that few teachers use ER in teaching the four skills, (listening, speaking, reading and writing). This is contrary to what Julian and Richard (1997) who said that ER can be used in teaching and learning of English by engaging

pupils in classroom activities and post reading activities that support learning of the four skills. When ER is used in teaching the four skills, the pupils are able to appreciate the relationship between ER and the four skills they study every day. However a few of the teachers interviewed and the pupils questionnaires showed that activities such as reading aloud, narration and dialogue are used in teaching, listening and speaking. The teachers also indicated that they use excerpts from the stories pupils read in teaching comprehension. While in teaching writing, the teachers asked pupils to write compositions on the stories they have read.

The study established that pupils enjoyed reading; however, the frequency of borrowing books is very discouraging. Very few pupils borrow books, 21.8% of the pupils borrow a book every week. At the same time close scrutiny of the kind of reading materials indicated that most pupils read text books for class work which was not what the study considered ER yet Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) aver that content provided in textbooks, offer little reading for pleasure.

The study also found out that of the five approaches to ER (Cutting, 1996; Elley, 1991) that is; silent reading, teachers reading aloud, pupils reading aloud, group reading and pupils reading own stories were in place in varying proportions. Most schools adopted silent reading. This was partly because it was easy to administer and manage. Many schools did not have enough reading materials of the same kind; therefore silent reading enabled pupils to read whatever they have unlike other approaches which would require pupils to read the same kind of storybook. However, over reliance on silent reading denies the pupils the benefits of other approaches. For example, reading aloud which offers pupils time for enjoyment, broadening pupils horizons and stimulating imagination (Elley, 1991) is missing. The pupils miss out on the valuable practice at listening to sounds and rhythms of English language.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings above, it can be concluded that Basic ER facilities and resources were not adequately available. These included libraries, story books, newspapers and magazines. The pupils read text books and notes in core subjects which is only helpful in intensive reading. The few libraries available in a few schools were not in good condition. The chairs and tables were not well arranged and not comfortable for carrying out ER. For the schools that do not have libraries the books were not accessible to the pupils as they were kept in staffroom and offices under lock and key. Most of the schools do not have library lessons and in cases where there were, they were a few in number and the time allocated was not sufficient.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry of Education should direct all schools as a matter of policy to include library lessons on the timetable to ensure that pupils read extensively. The Ministry should also allow primary schools to purchase story books, newspapers and magazines alongside text books to ensure that primary schools have adequate reading materials for ER.

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