THE USE OF TEXTBOOK ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEACHING OF READING COMPREHENSION: A STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KATHIANI DISTRICT– KENYA

ANN NDINDA JOHN[*]

Prof. P.L. Barasa[**]

Dr. Carolyne Omulando[***]

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the classroom practice of teachers and learners of English and their understanding of the use of teaching and learning resources during classroom instruction. Specifically, the paper examines the use of textbook illustrations in the instruction of reading comprehension passages. These are the underlying issues that emerge out of a research that was conducted in Kathiani District in Kenya, 2010-2011. This was accomplished through three objectives. However, this paper focuses on one only, namely: to investigate the use of the available textbook illustrations in the teaching of reading comprehension. The theoretical framework was based on Piaget's cognitive development theory and Anderson's schema theory of learning which support the use of instructional media in education. According to Piaget, people interact with their environment through two unchanging processes known as assimilation and accommodation. In accommodation, an individual either modifies an existing schema or forms a new one to account for the new event. In assimilation an individual interacts with an object or event in a way that is consistent with an existing schema. The study used a descriptive

[*] P.O BOX 513-90100 MACHAKOS- KENYA
[**] SeniorLecturer, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational MediaMoi University, Eldoret
[***] Lecturer, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media, Moi University, Eldoret

survey approach of research which is suitable for the study of behavior, attitudes, values and characteristics. The target population constituted 26 registered secondary schools in Kathiani district. Stratified random sampling was used to select 24 out of the 26 registered secondary schools in the district. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling was used to select form two streams and one teacher of English in the sampled schools. The study sample comprised 24 form two teachers of English from the sampled schools. The instruments of data collection were: a learner reading task, classroom observation and questionnaires. The research instruments were pre-tested to establish their reliability and validity. The data collected was analyzed and interpreted using descriptive statistical techniques. It was presented using tables, percentages, and a pie chart based on the study objectives. This study found out that very few students and teachers use textbook illustrations effectively during the instruction of reading comprehension passages. The findings of this study will enable learners, teachers, curriculum designers, course book designers, ministry of education, science and technology and Kenya institute of education to review their attention in the use of textbook illustrations in the teaching of reading comprehension.

Key words

Challenges: Difficulties that have to be dealt with

Reading comprehension: level of understanding of a text/message

Teaching: Imparting knowledge, skills and attitude in a classroom setting, using TBIs.

Textbook illustration: It is a visual aid such as drawing, painting, photograph, picture, graph, table or other work of art that emphasizes/enhances the conceptualization of content presented in textual form.

Introduction

This paper is a report of a study carried out to find out the classroom practice of teachers and learners of English and their understanding of the use of teaching and learning resources during classroom instruction. Specifically, the paper examines the use of Textbook Illustrations (TBIs) in the instruction of reading comprehension passages. English is the medium of instruction in Kenyan schools. It is a very important subject both in our curriculum and as a service subject, Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2002). In the teaching of English, the emphasis should be on the acquisition of communicative competence and not simply on the passing of examinations.

Stern (1983) argues that reading widely helps learners to develop a word bank of vocabulary and exposes them to new ideas and sentence structures that are used later to communicate both verbally and in the written form. Educational goals are shifting from mere acquisition of facts and information to development of reflective thinking and intelligent manipulation of materials (Richards, 1990). Ornstein (1997) indicates that visual resources are needed in order to give a clear concept of information given and to avoid overlapping in decoding information. Having students to use TBIs stimulates their imagination, their poor attitude towards reading is also changed and they come to see how they can understand and comprehend written material; how they can read fluently and efficiently and also appreciate the importance of reading for a variety of purposes. This then ignites the students' ability to develop a life-long interest in reading on a wide range of subjects.

TBIs can be used to activate the schema and also act as pre-reading activities for reading comprehension. Adequate exposure to TBIs helps the students to read and comprehend literary and non-literary materials. Students' ability to read fluently and efficiently is hampered by their lack of comprehension skills highlighted in the syllabus which are: recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, summary and note taking (KIE, 2002). These are skills that can be improved by use of instructional media resources, especially the use of diagrams, charts, pictures and photographs in the textbooks.

Statement of the Problem

English is examined in three papers in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Paper 1 covers functional skills which are: functional writing, cloze test and oral skills. Paper 2 tests reading comprehension, literary appreciation and grammar usage while paper 3 has 3 questions on essay writing which tests the literary skills, responsiveness to the literary genres, their receptive concerns and the ability to present clear, reasoned and illustrated arguments and are covered under reading. The Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC, 2008) examination

report revealed that students do not perform well in English. A more detailed analysis also revealed that students do not read and understand the questions well.

This report further revealed that those questions that tested candidates' ability to infer meaning of words and phrases in context were not well answered and that most candidates were unable to get the meaning of words. Teachers of English were therefore advised to derive meanings of words and phrases from the context, they were also advised to involve students to work out meaning for themselves which is then checked and agreed with the class/teacher's version. It was revealed that most candidates fumbled with questions and earned less marks than they ought to. Teachers were urged to advise candidates to be precise and definite about what they say by illustrating it (KNEC, 2008). English is an alien language and plays no meaningful part in the traditional institutions of the communities from which most learners come from. Consequently its learning provides relatively more problems to learners compared to other subjects. The use of TBIs is therefore, an indispensable component in the teaching and learning of English, in particular reading comprehension.

Lack of communicative competence is evident among university students. Barasa (2005) points out that the matter of poor English is more than what the university classroom can correct. He adds that the universities have voiced concern about receiving *"freshers"* who are unable to speak, read, write or hold discussions in English. The problem of learners' failure to read efficiently and effectively in English therefore needs urgent address and the question that arises is, how effectively are the available textbook illustrations used in the instruction of reading comprehension? This question was at the heart of the problem for the present study, with the assumption that, by undertaking a study in the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension, development of reading competence could be improved.

Significance of the Study

The research sought to investigate the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension in secondary schools. The findings of this study would benefit learners, teachers, teacher-trainers, curriculum designers, course book designers and KIE in a number of ways, namely: to provide data to curriculum developers, the KIE, the inspectorate unit and ministry of education, science

and technology (MOEST) on the study of the use of media resources in the instruction of reading comprehension in Kenyan secondary schools; to sensitize teachers on the need to effectively use media resources in English pedagogy. This would motivate learners, lead to higher student performance and proficiency in English; to help teacher-trainers who might want to consider putting more emphasis on the secondary school teachers' professional competencies, particularly in the use of TBIs which is largely ignored by teachers today; and to contribute to the world of knowledge that exists on usefulness of TBIs in English and pave way for further scholarly research.

Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in selected secondary schools in Kathiani District of Eastern Province, Kenya. The target population included, English classroom teachers, and form 2 students. Form 2 students were chosen because textbooks used at this level have many illustrations compared to those used by the form three and form four students. The data was collected in January and February and the researcher felt that the form one students were not well versed with the syllabus since they report to secondary schools at the same time.

The study investigated the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension in secondary schools in Kathiani District. The findings of the research are expected to apply to other areas in the country. This is because teachers of English in the study were viewed as a representative sample of the larger population of teachers of English in the country, since they are trained in the same institutions and use the same syllabus and textbooks for instruction. Students chosen for the study were also assumed to be representative of the larger population of students in the country. Variables in this study were use of TBIs and the instruction of reading comprehension. Study variables are factors that can take different values and influence the outcome of the research (Kombo and Delno, 2006). This study adopted two study variables for its execution; the independent variable and dependent variable. An independent variable is a factor representing the value (Factors) being manipulated or changed. The dependent variable is the observed result of the independent variable being manipulated, (Kothari, 2004). The independent variable in this study is the use of textbook illustrations and the dependent variable is instruction of reading comprehension.

Limitations of the Study

The research area looks quite small compared to the whole country. The results obtained were analyzed and generalized based on the data collected.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on two theories: Piaget's theory of cognitive development Wardsworth (1984) and the schema theory of learning as developed by Anderson (1998) which support the use of educational media in education. These two theories support the concept of Schema (background information). Readers combine their own background information in a text to comprehend that text. This is an important concept in English as a second language (ESL) teaching especially when teaching reading comprehension. TBIs can be used to form part of the pre-reading task. This is because the act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world as well.

Schemata and the Reading Process

In the process of reading, comprehension of a message entails drawing information from both the message and the internal schemata until sets are reconciled as a single schema or message (Anderson et al.,1982). The process begins much earlier than this. The environment sets up powerful expectations in that, we are already prepared for certain genres but not for others before we open a newspaper, a scholarly journal or the box containing some machine we have just bought (Swales, 1990).

The reading process, therefore, involves identification of genre, formal structure and topic, all of which activate schemata and allow readers to comprehend the text (Swales, 1990). In this, it is assumed that readers not only possess all the relevant schemata, but also that these schemata actually are activated. Where this is not the case, then some disruption of comprehension may occur. In fact, it is likely that there will never be a total coincidence of schemas between writer and reader such that coherence is the property of individual readers (Wallace, 1992). Although there will never be a total coincidence of schemas between the writer and the reader, the TBIs can be used to aid in the understanding of the written information.

Schemata and Differences in Comprehension

Differences between writer intention and reader comprehension is most obvious where readers have had different life experiences from the writer's. Teachers should therefore strive to explain to the learners some of the illustrations in their texts especially during reading lessons in order to make them relevant to the learners and enhance understanding of the written material. Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) point out that one of the most obvious reasons why a particular content schema may fail to exist for a reader is that the schema is culturally specific and is not part of a particular reader's cultural background. It is thought that readers' cultures can affect everything from the way readers view reading itself and the contents. Some key concepts may be absent in the schemata of some non-native readers or they may carry different interpretations.

For learners reading at the limits of their linguistic abilities, if the topic is outside their experience or base of knowledge, they are adrift on an unknown sea (Aebersold and Field, 1997). When faced with such unfamiliar topics, some students may overcompensate for absent schemata by reading in a slow, text- bound manner; other students may overcompensate by wild guessing (Carrell a, 1988). Both strategies are an inevitable result in comprehension difficulties. Research by Johnson, (in Carrell and Eisterhold, 1983) suggested that a text on a familiar topic is better recalled than a similar text on an unfamiliar topic. The use of TBIs can aid in recall of the content learned if effectively used by the teachers and students.

Application of Schema Theory to ESL Reading

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) suggest that every culture-specific interference problem dealt with in the classroom presents an opportunity to build new culture-specific schemata that will be available to the EFL/ESL student outside the classroom. Thus, rather than attempting to neutralize texts, it would seem more suitable to prepare students by helping them build background knowledge on the topic prior to reading, through appropriate pre-reading activities (Carrell b, 1988). Some of the pre- reading activities may include discussing TBIs which a teacher should use to encourage students and prepare them to read and understand a comprehension passage.

Carrell a (1988) lists numerous ways in which relevant schemata may be constructed. These include lectures, visual aids, demonstrations, real-life experiences, discussion, role-play, text previewing, introduction and discussion of key vocabulary, and key-word/key-concept association activities. Examples of such contextualization include, showing pictures of a city before asking the students to read a text about that city, or playing a video clip from a film adaptation of the novel the class is about to study. Although helpful, these pre-reading activities are probably not sufficient alone and teachers will need to supply additional information to enhance learners understanding of the written text. This additional information can come from TBIs during reading lessons.

Reading problems are not just caused by schema deficiencies and the relevant schemata must be activated (Carrell b, 1988). In other words, readers may come to a text with prior knowledge but their schemata are not necessarily activated while reading. Therefore, pre-reading activities must accomplish both goals: building new background knowledge as well as activating existing background knowledge, (Carrell a 1988). Particularly useful and popular here are questioning and 'brainstorming', where learners generate information on the topic based on their own experience and knowledge, (Aebersold and Field, 1997). This can be achieved through the use of TBIs.

Another relevant point is that, because lower level students may have the schemata but not the linguistic skills to discuss them in the second language (L2); the first language could be used to access prior knowledge but teachers must introduce the relevant vocabulary during the discussion, otherwise a schema has been activated but learning the L2 has not been facilitated (Aebersold and Field, 1997).

Functions and Roles of Instructional Media

Davies (1980) divides the function of media into two kinds. They are aids to instruction and aids to learning. The first function is that instructional media serve to help teachers and instructors manage instruction more efficiently. Media assist teachers to communicate more effectively and take over the operating role of instruction from teacher and instructors. The second function is that media serve to help students learn more efficiently, promote understanding, assist in the

transfer of training and assist in assessment. Media can also be used in assessing performance. All the above functions of instructional media also apply to TBIs and learners and teachers of English should make use of illustrations in their textbooks because of their educative value. If effectively used, TBIs can enhance comprehension during reading lessons.

Still Pictures and Illustrations

Still pictures are photographic like representations of people, places and things. The still pictures most commonly used in instruction are photographs, postcards, illustrations from books, periodicals, catalogs and so on, (Heinich, Molenda, and Russel, 1993). They also stated the advantages of using still pictures. For example, non-projected still pictures can translate abstract ideas into more realistic format a concept advocated for by Piaget in his theory. Still pictures are easy to use because they do not require any equipment and they are relatively inexpensive. Many can be obtained at little or no cost. Furthermore, pictures play an important role in facilitating the teaching and learning process. Wright (1989) states that pictures are very important to help students to retell experience or understand something since they can represent place, objects and people.

Media Selection

Wright (1989) mentions some consideration in selecting media. First, it should be easy to prepare, it should be easy to organize in the classroom, it should be interesting to the students and the teachers, the language and the way the teacher wants the students to use media will be authentic to the activity and the activity must give rise to a sufficient amount of language in order to justify its inclusion in the language lesson. A teacher should also consider the importance of the media in attaining the objectives of the work and the availability and effectiveness of the media as compared with other media. It means that in using the media, the teacher must be sure that the media used are really important, good and suitable for the class condition and material given.

The Research Design

A research design refers to the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. The function of research design is to provide for the collection of relevant evidence with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money (Kothari, 2004). The researcher had to work within a

research design because it facilitates the smooth sailing of the various research operations thereby making research as efficient as possible yielding maximal information.

The present study adopted a qualitative survey research design. A qualitative study is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher's insights and impressions, and such an approach to teach generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari, 2004). Cohen and Manion (2003), state that the intention of a survey research is to collect data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. Kerlinger (1978) adds that surveys are useful for educational fact-finding and provide a great deal of information that is accurate.

Through descriptive survey, views, opinions, attitudes and suggestions for improvement of educational practice have been collected (Kerlinger, 1978). A descriptive survey is a way of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaire and using observation on a sample of individuals (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The design focuses attention on the following: formulating the objectives of the study, designing the methods of data collection, selecting the sample, collecting the data, analyzing the data and reporting the findings. The researcher chose this design because of the nature of the investigation. This study was concerned with investigating the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension in secondary schools in Kathiani district. The researcher used data collection tools which lent themselves well to qualitative design. The research tools used were questionnaires, observation schedules and reading task suitable for a qualitative survey research design.

Study Area

This study was carried out in Kathiani district in Machakos county, Kenya. Educationally, the district is divided into three zones namely: Kathiani, Mitaboni and Iveti each under an Area Education Officer (AEO). The district has 26 registerd secondary schools of which 4 are private and 22 are public secondary schools.

Study Population

The study population consisted of English language teachers and form two students from 26 secondary schools in Kathiani district who were in school during the year of study. The rationale for the choice of form two students was based on the premise that textbooks used at this level have many illustrations. The teachers of English were involved because they are the main participants in the teaching of English and are therefore best suited to give information about the use of TBIs in the teaching of reading comprehension.

Sample size and Sampling Procedures

Scheaffer, et al. (1990) defines a sample as a collection of sampling units drawn from sampling frame. In other words, a sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole. According to Mugenda and mugenda (2003), a sample size is the size which is part of the study population that has been procedurally selected to represent it. Sampling procedures are processes of selecting units for example people or organizations from a population of interest so that by studying the sample, we may fairly generalize the results back to the target population from which they were chosen (Kombo and Delno, 2006).

A sample size of 24 secondary schools was selected from the total number of 26 secondary schools in the district. The researcher used teachers of English and form 2 students from 24 schools. These teachers of English and form 2 students were purposively selected then actual number was randomly selected using simple random sampling technique. Two schools from the district were left out during the main study because they had been recently registered and had only form 1 classes yet the study involved form two students. In the case of schools that had more than one stream, one class was randomly selected to participate in the study. During the study, 24 reading comprehension lessons one from every school were observed and both the 24 teachers and the form 2 students were administered with questionnaires and observed during English language lessons. A reading task was also administered to the form two students.

Data Collection Instruments

The research instruments used for collecting data in this study were questionnaires, observation schedules and a reading task.

Questionnaires

Cohen and Manion (2003) indicated that the use of a questionnaire is the best form of survey in carrying out an educational inquiry. The researcher used questionnaire because it is free from bias and answers are in respondents' own words. In addition, there is low cost even when the population is widely spread geographically and large samples can be used. Therefore, the results can be made more dependable and reliable (Kothari, 2004). The researcher was also aware of the fact that there was the possibility of ambiguous replies or omission of replies altogether to certain questions (Kothari, 2004). The researcher prepared and administered two different sets of questionnaires to gather data related to the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension in secondary schools. These two sets were the secondary schools English teachers' questionnaire (SSETQ) and secondary schools form 2 students' questionnaire (SSESQ). The questionnaires comprised closed type items which required the respondent to select one option from the five given alternatives. A reading task and observation schedule were used to minimize the above shortcomings of questionnaire.

Observation

Under the observation method, the information is sought by way of investigators' own direct observation without asking from the respondent (Kothari, 2004). The researcher used classroom observation schedule to collect data during the actual teaching of form two English language lessons. This was necessary to verify responses from the questionnaires and reading task. The researcher observed the use of TBIs by both the teachers and the students during reading comprehension lessons. Observation technique provided a conceptually adequate analysis of classroom life based on factual recording and description. It becomes a scientific tool and a method of data collection when it serves formulated research purposes. It is planned systematically, recorded and subjected to checks and controls on validity and reliability (Kothari, 2004).

A reading task

In order to determine the use of TBIs in reading comprehension, a reading task was used. A reading task is a constructed examination from texts designed by the researcher and aimed at assessing the degree to which readers understand what they read using TBIs. The reading task

included open ended questions. The learners were administered with 2 reading comprehension passages. One with pictures and another one without pictures and then answered the questions which were set. It was administered to the form 2 students, marked and rated in-terms of those that used TBIs effectively and those that did not use TBIs effectively. It was marked out of 25 marks. Scores between 1-12 marks were those that did not use TBIs effectively and scores between13-25 were those that used TBIs effectively. The standardization of the task was ensured through the use of a comprehension passage for the same level of students from one of the textbooks recommended for use in teaching and learning English language in form 2. The questions were centrally marked in collaboration with teachers of English in the selected secondary schools.

Piloting of Research Instruments

Pilot study is the replica and rehearsal of the main survey. Such a survey brings to the light the weaknesses (if any) of the survey techniques. From the experience gained in this way, improvement can be effected, (Kothari, 2004).A pilot study was conducted on the two sets of questionnaires, the learners reading tasks and the classroom observation schedule two months before the main study after the researcher obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology and clearance from the District education office (DEO), Kathiani District. The pilot study was conducted among form 2 students and form two teachers of English in three secondary schools in the neighbouring Kangundo district. This was because the schools in Kangundo district did not constitute the final sample for the main study.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

Sound measurement must meet the tests of validity and reliability. These are the major considerations one should use in evaluating a measurement tool. (Kothari, 2004). The classroom observation schedule, the questionnaires and the reading task were pre-tested in order to find out whether they had any problems in the framing of questions and recording events in the classrooms. This helped to eliminate ambiguous items, repeated items and irrelevant items. The research instruments were piloted to check on their validity and reliability before they were used in the study.

Validity

Validity indicates the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2004). Best and Khan (1989) concede that validity of an instrument is the right question framed in the least ambiguous way. The research instruments were formulated based on the objectives, literature reviewed and assumptions of the study. The researcher established content validity of the research instruments outlined above before the main research. This helped to eliminate ambiguous items, repeated items and irrelevant items. The researcher consulted experts and specialists in Curriculum, Instruction and educational media, School of Education, Moi University. The suggestions from the experts were used in making the necessary improvements and corrections on the instruments.

Reliability

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describes reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher piloted the data collection instruments in three secondary schools in the neighbouring Kangundo district to test whether they were reliable two months before the actual research. The reliability was established through the test re-test method for the questionnaire and the reading task. Tuckman (1978) discussing on the test-retest reliability approach for determining reliability says, one way to measure reliability is to give the same people test on more than one occasion and then compare each person's performance on both tests. In doing so, one actually wants to establish the extent to which the test or instrument in this case is measuring stable and enduring characteristics of the test taken. This particular study employed a similar approach. Data from the pilot study was analyzed and interpreted with reference to the research objectives and questions. Using the results obtained, the researcher with the help of experts in school of education, Moi University made the necessary adjustments on the questionnaires, reading task and the observations. The research instruments were then deemed ready for the actual research study.

Data analysis and presentation

Data analysis deals with the organization, interpretation and presentation of collected data; a postulate of how the data was analysed (Oso and Onen, 2009). The data obtained was analyzed

to determine the use of the available TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension. From the data collected, the study discussed the study findings based on the study objective.

Study findings

There were several study findings which were reported based on the following themes: teachers and learners use of TBIs during reading comprehension instruction from the questionnaires, teachers and learners use of TBIs in language teaching from classroom observation and learners responses towards the reading task.

Teachers' use of TBIs during Reading Comprehension Instruction

The teachers acknowledged that they use TBIs when teaching reading comprehension passages. In expression of their views through the questionnaires, the following ideas are highlighted. The teachers referred students to TBIs every time they were reading comprehension passages, they used TBIs to create a lively reading comprehension lesson, tell students to discuss titles of passages in relation to textbook illustrations and asked students to discuss what they can see in the pictures before they read a comprehension passage. The teachers also ask their students to relate the title of a passage to what they can see in the illustrations, ask students to predict the message in a text from what they can see in the pictures and they also ask students to practice conversations in the textbook illustrations. They also reported that students in their class predict characters in a comprehension text from what they can see in the pictures, discuss comprehension questions basing their argument on the pictures in the textbooks, compare their predictions about a written text with the message in the pictures and ask students to write a composition from what they can see in the pictures. Teacher ask students to construct sentences from what they can see in the pictures, to give meaning of words in relation to what they can see in the pictures, to formulate comprehension questions based on the pictures in the textbook and to come up with topics for debate based on the illustrations in the textbooks. However, teachers do not ask students in their classes to dramatize what they can see in the TBIs, to form nouns and language games from TBIs and to narrate stories in the TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

Student's use of TBIs in Reading Comprehension

Responding to the questionnaires, the students stated that they use text book illustrations in reading comprehension lessons, note down and discuss what they can see in the pictures during reading comprehension lessons, relate the title of the text to what they can see in the pictures and predict the message in a comprehension from the pictures in the textbook. In case a picture has a conversation, the students practice the conversation in class, predict characters in a comprehension using illustrations in the textbook and discuss comprehension questions basing their argument on the illustrations. After reading a comprehension passage, students compare their predictions with the message in the passage, give meaning of words used in a passage in relation to the textbook illustrations, construct sentences from what they see in TBIs and write creative compositions from what they see in the pictures. However, students do not dramatize what they see in the pictures in the textbooks, do not form nouns and language games from the TBIs, do not hold narration sessions basing their stories on the pictures in the texts and do not use TBIs to practice language items on the blackboard.

Teachers and learners use of TBIs in language teaching from classroom observation

The researcher observed TBIs were used to help students to understand the message in a passage. This involved giving meaning of words used in a passage in relation to TBIs and answering comprehension questions. This high usage compared to the others could be associated with the examination oriented curriculum where teachers drill learners on how to answer exam questions and pass their examinations. TBIs were also used to stimulate interest. This involved attracting students' attention and creating a lively reading lesson. Creating interest fosters a conducive climate where learners' attention is attracted and this stimulated mental activity. By doing this, the teachers varied stimulus such that communication between the teacher and learners and learner-learner was enhanced making learning lively. When learners' attention was attracted and the lesson became lively, learners portrayed a better comprehension of the passage.

The researcher also observed that TBIs were used to encourage students' participation. This included holding discussions and predicting comprehension messages. This was important because it encouraged whole class participation and learners could make attempts to share their ideas with the others in class. TBIs were also used to provide medium for individual or group

reports. This included constructing sentences from TBIs, practicing conversations and writing compositions. These uses of TBIs were seen to encourage active learner participation and enhanced learning.

The learners observed in this study used TBIs to help them understand the message in a passage and the teachers expected them to make use of TBIs to support their answers. This involved giving meaning of words and answering comprehension questions using TBIs. Learners used TBIs to make a classroom dynamic and relevant. This included relating titles of passages to illustrations. Learners also used TBIs to create a lively reading lesson. This stimulated their interest and heightened their curiosity to read. Generally, some learners made use of TBIs as observed during the reading comprehension lessons.

Learners responses towards the reading task

The data from the reading task was analyzed through the use of descriptive statistics to determine the use of TBIs and levels of comprehension during reading comprehension lessons. The results from the reading task showed that learners do not use TBIs effectively. This was also revealed by the responses from the teachers' and students' questionnaires. Learners and teachers should use TBIs effectively because they assist them in the learning process. From the results, the learners would not recall and relate what was in the picture with the message in the comprehension passage.

Summary of Findings

Based on the presentation of data from the questionnaires, observation and reading tasks, the following summary based on the objective is made. The objective was to investigate the use of TBIs in the teaching of reading comprehension. The findings revealed that teachers and students of English use TBIs during reading comprehension lessons. The study revealed that teachers agreed with the opinion that students in their class come up with topics for debate based on the illustrations in their textbooks. Teachers also agreed that students in their class do not dramatize what they see in the illustrations during reading comprehension lessons.

The study further showed that teachers disagreed with the opinion that students in their classes form language games from the TBIs and narrate stories in class in relation to the pictures in the

text. The above findings in the teachers' questionnaire were also in line with the findings in the students' questionnaire which showed that students do not dramatize what they see in the pictures in their textbooks and they do not hold narration sessions basing their stories on the pictures in the texts. The study further showed that students derive topics for debates from the illustrations in their passages.

Study Conclusions

- Some teachers refer students to TBIs every time they are reading a comprehension in order to create a lively reading comprehension lesson.

- Teachers tell students to discuss titles of passages and ask them to construct sentences from what they can see in the TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

- Learners discuss comprehension questions and give meaning of words used in a passage in relation to the TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

- Students predict the message in the passage and write creative compositions from what they see in the pictures during reading comprehension lessons.

- Teachers do not ask students to dramatize and to form language games from the TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

- Students do not hold narration sessions basing their stories on the pictures in the textbook during reading comprehension lessons.

- Students do not form nouns and do not practice language items on the chalkboard using TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

Recommendations

- The government should reconsider employing more teachers to schools to help ease the teachers' teaching loads. This will ensure that teachers have ample time to prepare to teach reading comprehension lessons using TBIs.

- Head teachers should encourage teachers to use media resources in their lessons, in particular the use of TBIs during reading comprehension lessons.

- The course book designers should ensure that the books to be used for instruction of reading have relevant illustrations to support the instructional interaction between the teacher and the student to achieve the lesson objectives.

- The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) should guide the teacher on how to interpret and implement the English syllabus through use of the available TBIs.

- Teachers should stop using their current drilling mode of teaching and also allow students to acquire concepts and skills practically through the manipulation of TBIs during the instruction of reading comprehension.

- The Quality Assurance should organize seminars, symposia and workshops for teachers of English. These forums will enable English teachers to share views and experiences as regards use of instructional materials in particular the use of TBIs in the instruction of reading comprehension

- The teachers aim should always be to make students understand concepts and deliver massive information. As a result, the teachers will find instructional materials to be the best alternative to doing this.

- Learning should be learner-centred where learners are given opportunity to use TBIs during instruction.

REFERENCES

Aebersold, J.A., & Field, M.L. (1997*). From reader to reading teacher.* Cambridge: CUP.

Anderson, R.C., & Pearson, P.D. (1984). "*A Schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading comprehension"*, in Carrel!, P.L., Devine, J. and Eskey, D.E. (eds) (1988) *Interactive approaches to second language reading.* Cambridge: CUP.

Barasa, P.L. (2005). *English language teaching in Kenya, policy, training and practice.* Eldoret: Moi University Press.

Best, J.W. & Khan, J.V. (1989). *Research in education.* Prentice Hall International Inc., Englewood Cliffs.

Carrell, P.L. (1983a). *"Some issues in studying the role of schemata, or background knowledge, in second language comprehension.*" Reading in a Foreign Language, 1:81-92.

Carrell, P.L. (1988a). "*Some causes of text-boundedness and schema interference in ESL reading,*" in Carrell, P.L, Devine, J. and Eskey, D.E. (eds) (1988).

Interactive approaches to second language reading. Cambridge: CUP.

Carrell, P.L. (1988b). "*Interactive text processing :Implications for ESL/second language reading classrooms"* in Carrell, P.L., Devine, J. and Eskey. D.E.(eds)(1988). *Interactive approaches to second language reading*. Cambridge: CUP.

Cohen, L., & Manion, C. (2003). *Research methods in education.* London: Croom Helm Ltd.

Davies, I.K. (1980). *Instructional technique.* New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Donald K., Kombo, & Delno L.A. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing. An introduction.* Paulines Publications Africa: DonBosco Printing Press.

Gachathi, J.P. (1976). *Report of the national committee on educational objectives and policies.* Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

Heinich, R., Molenda, M., & Russel, J. (1993). *Instructional media and the new technologies of instruction*. Canada: John Willey & Sons, Inc.

K.I.E., (2002). *Secondary education syllabus. Volume one.* Nairobi: Kenya Instituteof Education.

Kerlinger, F.N. (1978). *Foundations of behavioural research.* New York: Surfeit Publications.

K.N.E.C, (2008). *The year 2007 K.C.S.E examinations candidate's performance report*. K.N.E.C, Nairobi

Kothari, C.K. (2004). *Research methodology: methods and techniques.* New Delhi: Wiley Eastern Ltd.

Mugenda, O.M., &Mugenda, A.G. (2003). *Research methods. Quantitative and qualitative approaches.* Nairobi: ACT Press.

Ornstein, A.L. (1997). *Foundation of education.* Chicago: Rand Me Nally College Publishing Company.

Oso, W.Y., & Onen, D. (2009). *General guide to writing research thesis.* A handbook to beginners. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

Richards, J.C. (1990 a). *Listening comprehension: Approach, design, procedure.* TESOL Quarterly, vol. 17 No. 2 pp219-240.

Richards, J.C. (1990 b). *The dilemma of teacher education in second language*

teaching. In J.C. Richard and D. Nunan (Eds.). *Second language teacher education.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sheaffer, R.L., Menden, H.W., Ott, L. (1990). *"Elementary survey sampling"* 4th Ed., California: Duxbury Press.

Stern, H.H. (1983). *Fundamental concerns of language teaching.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Swales, J.M. (1990). *Genre analysis*. Cambridge: CUP. *The internet TESL journal, Vol. VII, No. 11*, November 2001.

Tuckman, B.W. (1978). *Conducting educational research*. Harcourt Brace Jonavovich Inc: New York.

Wallace, C. (1992). *Reading*. Oxford: OUP.

Wardsworth, B.J. (1984). (3rd ed). *Piaget's theory of cognitive and affective development.* New York: Longman.

Wright, A. (1989). *Pictures for language learning* (5th ed). Australia: Cambridge University Press.

Wright, A. (1994). *1000 pictures for teachers to copy.* London: Thomas Nelson & Sons Ltd.