

Language Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in Enhancing Learners' Strategy use for Reading Proficiency in Selected Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

This study addresses the issue of language teaching, specifically the use of reading strategies for comprehension in secondary schools in Kenya at a time when concern is being expressed about declining reading habits in the institutions of learning. It investigates language teachers perceptions about teaching the use of reading strategies, the perceived reading strategies and how these are reflected in their classroom practices. This was done to establish the consistence in practice or any inconsistencies and the reasons for the disparities. The study was a descriptive survey and the sample was randomly selected using stratified random sampling from two counties: Nairobi and Kitui. Data was collected from 18 public secondary schools using questionnaire which was responded to by 36 teachers of English teaching Form 3 in the 18 secondary schools. Eighteen (18) classroom observations were made, 18 semi-structured interviews were conducted with same teachers and 18 FGDs with learners was done. Analysis of data was done using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables and percentages and Chi-square tests were done to establish the significance between the variables using SPSS. The analysed data revealed individual variations across the teachers theoretical perceptions about teaching use of strategies in reading and their classroom practices. Teachers perceptions revealed that teachers were knowledgeable about the importance and necessity of reading strategies. However, these stated perceptions were inconsistent with their classroom instructional practices. Their knowledge was not reflected in their practice. There was a tendency of language teachers to rush learners in to reading exercises without adequate preparation. The choice of reading materials was not varied. Teachers tended to rigidly use the prescribed text-books to teach reading. Enrichment forums were few and learners practice of learnt strategies was not encouraged. Although teachers faced many challenges when planning to teach reading strategies, there is need for updating teachers classroom practice in order to match theory and practice.

Keyword: Teachers' Perceptions, Practices in Enhancing Learners', Strategy, Reading Proficiency, Secondary Schools, Kenya

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