

Cognitive Strategy Use for Explicit and Implicit Text Meaning By Urban, Peri-Urban and Rural Primary School Pupils in Kisumu Municipality

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Abstract

The study investigated two aspects of reading comprehension for the purpose of explaining some of the reasons for poor comprehension performance by primary school pupils. First, it investigated silent reading behaviors viewed to negatively affect comprehension. Secondly, it investigated gender, school level and home background differences in the use of cognitive strategies to construct explicit and implicit meaning from expository, narrative and documentary texts. An ex post facto design was used. Study subjects were 785 standard 5 and 7 pupils from three schools randomly selected, one each from an urban, peri-urban and rural area. Each school had 4 streams (2 in standard 5 and 2 in standard 7). From each stream, 6 pupils (3 girls and 3 boys) were randomly chosen for observation while silently reading text. The rest of the class did a group comprehension task testing implicit and explicit meaning from expository, narrative and documentary texts. Observation data was obtained using a checklist. Observed behaviors were categorized and reported as quantitative data in the form of frequencies and percentages. Some of the pupils showed the reading behaviors which negatively affect comprehension, such as not reading entire text before embarking on question-answering (42%), moving lips (61%), pointing at words (21%), moving head (42%) and mumbling (33%). Gender and school level differences in using strategies for explicit and implicit meaning and for different types of texts were tested at .05 level of significance using Independent Samples t test. One way ANOVA was used to find out if there were home background differences in strategy use for explicit and implicit meaning, and also for different types of text. For explicit meaning, there was no significant gender difference ($t(711) = -1.170, p > .05$). For explicit meaning, there was a significant difference with Standard 5 performing better than Standard 7 ($t(711) = 2.020, p < .05$). Significant difference was also found for different home backgrounds ($F(2, 710) = 184.015, p < .05$), with urban doing best and rural doing worst. For implicit meaning, there was no gender difference in strategy use ($t(711) = 1.25, p > .05$). Significant difference was found for school level in the case of implicit meaning ($F(2, 710) = 14.690, p < .05$) with Standard 7 performing better. In the case of home background, there was significant difference in strategy use for implicit meaning ($F(2, 710) = 107.786, p < .05$). Regarding the use of cognitive strategies for different types of text, no significant gender difference was found for expository text ($t(711) = -.732, p > .05$). For narrative text, also no significant gender difference was found in strategy use ($t(711) = -.677, p > .05$). Even for documentary texts, no significant gender difference was found ($t(711) = -2.14, p > .05$). Also concerning the different types of text, Standard 7 were significantly better than Standard 5 in strategy use for expository text ($t(711) = -7.675, p < .05$). Standard 7 did not differ significantly from Standard 5 ($t(711) = -.677, p > .05$). Standard 7 also did significantly better for documentary text ($t(711) = -2.014, p < .05$). In the case of home background differences, urban children performed best followed by peri-urban, with rural performing worst at .05 level for all the three types of text. It was recommended that reading be introduced as a subject in primary teacher training colleges, parents be more involved in their children's learning, teachers stop giving comprehension exercises instead of teaching comprehension strategies and further research be done on teachers and how they teach reading.

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