Teaching Reading Comprehension in Primary Classrooms

A Case Study of Teachers' Instructional Practices to teaching Reading Comprehension to Primary Three Classrooms in Uganda.

ARIONG Jean Florence

Master's Thesis

Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education
Department of Special Needs Education
Faculty of Educational Sciences

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Teaching Reading Comprehension to Primary Three classrooms: A Case Study of Teachers' Instructional Practices to Teaching Reading comprehension to primary three classrooms in Uganda.

ARIONG, Jean Florence

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers teach reading comprehension in primary three inclusive classrooms in Uganda. The study developed a theoretical framework from the literature review consisting of reading comprehension theories that directed the study and underpinned the methods and strategies that are used in teaching reading comprehension. The theories helped to clarify definitions and concepts about the teaching of reading comprehension. Qualitative approach was used with special reference to case study design. Following the qualitative approach, data were collected through individual teacher interviews and classroom observations in two schools, and five respondents were purposefully selected in order to get deeper understanding of the cases.

The data obtained was analyzed following data analysis procedures by Miles and Huberman (1984); Braun and Clarke (2006). The analysis and interpretations was guided by perspectives derived from the four main dimensions of the conceptual framework and these are: Teacher knowledge and understanding of reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of children; reading comprehension teaching strategies; classroom environment relevant for reading comprehension; and the challenges that hinder teachers' effective practice. The findings of the study highlight several notable trends. First, the major finding of this study is that the knowledge base for teaching reading comprehension has been articulated in superficial ways and without the guidance of a coherent theoretical framework. Secondly, while analysis of classroom data suggest considerable variability, regarding what counts as reading comprehension instruction, this variability can in part be attributed to the ways in which reading comprehension instruction has been characterized in policy, assessment and resources that are available to teachers. Importantly, analyses expose a fundamental disjuncture between how leading literacy scholars define reading comprehension and how reading comprehension is conceptualized in other resources.

Implication of the findings to this study is that, there is need for teachers to have an ongoing professional development, and teachers should pursue literature knowledge for reading comprehension instruction.

List of Abbreviations

CMS: Church Missionary Society

IMS: Instructional Materials

NAPE: National Assessment of Progress of Education

NCDC: National Curriculum Development Centre

NICHHD: National Institute of Child Health Human Development

NRP: National Reading Panel

MOES: Ministry of Education and Sports

RRSG: RAND Reading Study Group

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SNE: Special Needs Education

TE: Teacher Education

UPE: Universal Primary Education

UWESO: Uganda Women Effort to Save orphans

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1   Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how teachers teach reading comprehension to primary learners. It will present the background for the study (1.1); the statement of the problem (1.3) and the purpose (1.4) of the study as well as the research questions (1. 5). I will as well describe the significance of the study (1.6), my expectations for the study (1.7), and I will clarify some important concepts (1.8). Finally I will share my personal experiences concerning the teaching of reading comprehension (1.9), scope of the study (1.10), and the structure of the Thesis will be presented (1.11).

1.1   Background to the study

Due to the demands of the global world, the ability to understand and interpret information in both mother tongue and other language has become a main concern. A child's success at school and throughout life depends largely on the ability to read and understanding of texts. According to Anderson (1999), reading is an essential skill for students, as the development of good reading abilities will greatly help them progress in the development of their academic areas. This is supported by Snow (2002) who states that reading skills is *"the process of acquiring the basic skills necessary for learning to read, that is, the ability to acquire meaning from print" (p.11)*. The accuracy and automaticity of reading serves as a bridge between decoding and comprehension vocabulary. This is because a critical aspect of comprehension is vocabulary development. According to Verhoeven (2000), if a reader is not fluent in reading, it may be difficult to remember what has been read and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to his or her background knowledge.

1.2   Rationale for the study

The fight for education and literacy has become a priority globally. One now wonders how children perform in the core subjects such as reading and writing, mathematics, science and social studies since the content of these subjects is seen as a prerequisite for full participation in society and in school activities. Are there any gaps in children's education today which might prevent them from functioning as competent family members, skilled workers, and well- informed citizens? In short how well are they prepared for life? Looking at the situation of Uganda especially with the introduction of Universal primary education (UPE), there has been a lot of influx in enrolment of primary school children. Teachers have been faced with

several challenges which include among others: big class sizes, inadequacy in instructional materials, hence teaching reading comprehension has been seen as a challenge in Ugandan schools, and this has continued to present a lot of underachievement for pupils in primary schools. Significant numbers of students learn to decode text and identify main ideas but most never advance beyond basic levels of comprehension. With that in mind, this study is set with the conviction that teachers should be using relevant reading comprehension strategies in enhancing students' comprehension skills.

1.3   Statement of the problem

National statistics on reading achievement provide insight into the decision to focus attention on reading comprehension. The most recent National Assessment of Progress of Education (NAPE) indicates that 90 % of primary three learners in Uganda cannot read and understand even simple content for primary two learners (NAPE, 2010; UWESO, 2009). Educators and policy makers are seeking to improve this situation, however, they must wade through a massive body of literature to assess what is known and not known about children's reading. Although the NRP (2000), for example provides some guidelines for educators and policy makers, it does not tell us what interventions are best to teach students to comprehend information in the difficult textbooks they will encounter in school and to learn from that information. In Uganda, particularly in Bukedea district, this situation affects children in rural schools and who are from low- income households. That is why this study, has adopted a recommendation by Vaughn & Fuchs (2003) and Amutheazi (2000), to examine ways teachers teach reading comprehension to the primary school children with a view to finding a lasting solution to the problem, because teachers are expected to apply practices relevant to teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms and reinforce it with constant practice by using relevant instructional , materials and activities that are simplified to the level of each learner which Tronbacke (1997) described as easy to-read materials.

1.4   Purpose of the study

The major purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching of reading comprehension to primary three inclusive classrooms, focusing on how teachers teach it and what they use to teach reading comprehension. The study will also find out the challenges teachers go through while teaching reading comprehension.

1.5   Research questions

In order to gain insight into teachers' theoretical and practical orientations towards the teaching reading comprehension, two forms of questions were used to investigate the research problem and achieve the purpose of the study. These questions include the main question and the associated sub questions (Creswell, 2009:129).

My main research question was "***How do teachers teach reading comprehension in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process?***" This research question will be answered through four sub-questions.

1) What knowledge and understanding do teachers have about teaching reading comprehension and its importance in children?

2) What instructional strategies do teachers employ to teach reading comprehension?

3) What characteristics does a classroom environment for reading comprehension have?

4) What challenges do teachers face in teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classes and how are they supported?

1.6   Significance of the study

The findings of this study, of how teachers teach reading comprehension in Uganda, will be of great use to many people. I believe the findings will assist the teachers of reading comprehension in their professional development by connecting theoretical and practical knowledge. The study will expose to the teachers of English and other subjects how effective teacher practices influence the teaching of reading comprehension as well as development of the reading competences and comprehension among pupils thus, this will enable them to adapt the teaching methods and strategies suitable to their learners in order to develop pupils' ability for comprehension strategies.

With this theoretical basis as a guide the findings of this study will contribute to theories of expertise and inform teacher educators by helping them prepare novice teachers become effective teachers of reading comprehension. And most importantly to me as an investigator, the study has afforded me some insights into successful and practical reading comprehension strategies which I will apply to my daily training of teacher trainees.

The information gained from this study might assist in providing direction for the professional development of teachers who need support in implementing the best reading comprehension practices for their students' reading comprehension learning as was the goal of a project conducted by Marrow and Casey (2004). Morrow and Casey's project focused on helping teachers implement research – based practices, through professional development and on- site classroom support.

The study will as well be an eye opener to the policy makers to make them come up with appropriate recommendation about the teaching of reading comprehension. School administrators and teachers of reading will use the result for developing ways to evaluate teacher knowledge and practices for developing professional growth opportunities for reading teachings.

Finally, apart from adding evidence of the ways in which reading comprehension is taught this study will hopefully provide more insight into possible areas for further research study in any of the language skills.

1.7   *My expectations*

This study assumes that because the participants are trained and they have a wealth of experience to teach in the primary schools, they possess enough expertise in the domain of reading comprehension instruction. Teachers with expert knowledge influence students' achievement (Berliner, 1994). The study assumes that the instructional practices of the participants are exemplary, given the participants' background information.

1.8   *Clarification of concepts and operationalization of terms*

This section clarifies key concepts of the research topic and my interpretation thereof for application in this study. These concepts are the teaching of reading comprehension, reading comprehension strategies and inclusive classrooms.

Teaching is one of the means by which education is achieved. Teaching is an activity that aims at presenting specific learning content to somebody in such a way that those persons learn something from it. Learning, on the hand, is an activity in which the person being taught benefits from teaching and absorbs a particular content. These activities result in teaching –

learning events during which the process of teaching and learning are linked (Fraser, 1990, p. 30; Carr 1996). I believe the purpose of teaching is not to teach learners how to memorize facts, or to know all the answers, but to get learners to understand the facts (text). Therefore teachers need to be aware of how to apply reading comprehension strategies effectively. This follows a comment from Wharton – McDonald et al (1998), who confirmed Ericsson and Smith's (1990) position that individuals who are very good at performing complex tasks can often provide a great deal of information about how to do such tasks. For the purpose of this study, teaching may be defined as skills and or knowledge that a teacher needs to employ to deliver reading comprehension strategies to enable learners to read the texts with understanding.

Reading comprehension can be conceived as the understanding of a text by a reader; it can also be defined as: the understanding of words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs contained in the propositions of a text (Yang, 2002). According to Yang (2002), cognitive levels of understanding can be measured from the description of these propositions, because understanding comes from different levels, thus, while a person understands information at a lexical level another does it at syntactic level.

No doubt reading comprehension is a complex ability, composed of at least there elements: the reader, the text, and the context. During the reading process this elements interact and are inseparable. The reader brings to the act of reading his or her cognitive capabilities (attention, memory, critical ability, inferencing, visualizing); motivation (a purpose reading, interest in the content, self- efficacy as a reader); knowledge (vocabulary and topic knowledge, linguistic and discourse knowledge, knowledge of comprehension strategies); and experiences (Snow, 2002). It is therefore critically appropriate for teachers to understand how comprehension works, for example, Durkin (1993) concurs with the previous definitions as she clarified comprehension as "intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader." This implies that reading comprehension is a problem-solving process that requires the reader to be actively involved. Within the context of this study reading comprehension is understood as the ability to read any text with understanding and where difficulties occur, learners must use comprehension strategies.

According to research, the use of strategies during reading comprehension can help the reader to understand the text (NRP, 2000; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2000; Williams, 2007; Crawford & Torgesen, 2006; Adler, 2004;

Gibson, 2004). This is because strategies provide a language around comprehension processes which is a vehicle for expressing their thinking and monitoring their thoughts as they read any text. Duffy (2002 ; 2003); Duffy & Mclnyre, (1982) explain a strategy as a *plan,* you are to be thoughtful when you do it , and often adjust the plan as you go along to fit the situation.

According to Anderson (1991), what is important is that readers should know what strategies there are, and how and when to use them. Therefore, reading comprehension strategies then are *"conscious plans- sets or a set of steps e.g., making connections, creating mental images(Visualizing), of questioning that good readers use to make sense of the text; and helps learners become purposeful, active, readers who are in control of their own reading comprehension"* (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2003, p. 49). It is therefore important that teachers encourage learners to use strategies independently throughout their reading activities.

Inclusion means enabling pupils to participate in the life and work of mainstream institutions to the best of their abilities, whatever their needs. Skjørten (2001) stated that inclusive schools learn, and classrooms are where all children are members of the same group, interact and communicate with each other, help each other to learn, take considerations to each other, and accept the fact that o some children have needs that differ from the majority and will at one time do different things. In this study, this aspect is quite important in the teaching and learning of reading with understanding in primary schools.

1.9   *Personal experience*

Basing on my personal experience teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms is quite challenging. It is hard for the teacher to spend an equal amount of time working with all students. There are a lot of challenges associated with inclusive classrooms; such as learning problems, behavioral problems and disabilities. Throughout my outreach activities in primary schools many teachers in Uganda hold negative views of teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms. They feel it is difficult to organize activities and select method and strategies and content for these classrooms. They also find it difficult to develop the sub skills of reading such as; skimming, scanning, predicting, reading speed, analyzing and developing overall comprehension. This reflection commits me to consider in this study how teachers apply their practices to teaching of reading with much emphasis on how they enhance children's reading comprehension skills

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1.10   Scope of the Study.

This study was conducted in Bukedea district in Eastern region of Uganda between July and December 2012 through a case study design of a constructed cohort of trained Grade three teachers who teach third grade classrooms. The study was conducted in two selected primary government aided primary schools.

1.11   Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters:

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework and review of related literature.

Chapter 3: Context of the study: Reading comprehension internationally and nationally

Chapter 4: Methodology; Research design, methods used in the collection, organization, presentation and analysis of data are presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: This chapter is on presentation and analysis of the findings of the study. Data in the chapter has been put into themes, categories and sub-categories in reference to the topic, research questions, interview guide and theoretical frameworks discussed in chapter two.

Chapter: 6 Presents discussion of findings in relation to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 7: This chapter carries the summary, conclusions and suggestions / recommendations for improvement.

2 Literature review, Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present theoretical and conceptual frameworks which will determine the direction of this study. This study is focused on the teaching of reading comprehension to primary three learners in Uganda. The theories discussed in this chapter relate to the focus of the study and serve as a background and also assist as a basis for developing the interview guide and the observation schedule that were used as data gathering instruments.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by the assumption that a learner is a social being that can learn to read and understand only if there is guidance from a more knowledgeable adult or peer (Vygotsky, 1978). In this study the act of comprehending texts was seen as both a cognitively and a socially constructed process. This is the reason why this study has adopted Vygotsky's (1978) Early Social Constructivism theory to underpin teachers' practices in teaching reading comprehension. The theories will guide the discussion of the four main themes that were derived from the research questions.

2.3 Vygotsky's (1978) Theories of cognitive and Early Social Constructivism

This theory suggest that teachers serve as models and facilitators of verbal interactions that lead to internal understanding about comprehension processes (Vygotsky, 1964, cited in Palincsar, 1986). Palincsar and Brown (1984) built upon this theory by postulating that students would become more adept at using comprehension strategies through the use of shared group dialogue among small groups of readers who jointly build meaning from text through assistance and understanding from adults and more capable peers. Adults mediate cognitive as well as social processes so that the child is able to complete tasks he or she could not do alone. Human activities and relationships are seen as transactions in which individual and the social, cultural, natural elements interfuse. This is basic on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is essential in classroom teaching and learning and very relevant to this study. The contemporary interpretations of Vygotsky's theory uses concepts

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of "scaffolding", "apprenticeship" and "guided participation" when referring to how a child learns in the ZPD. According to Rogoff (1990), within socio- cultural theory scaffolding refers to the supportive situations adults can create to help children raise current skills and knowledge to a higher level of competence. Therefore using social tools and being in The ZPD refers to what an individual can accomplish with collaboration with others versus what he or she could have accomplished without collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

Most importantly, the central theme in Constructivism is that learning is constructed by building new knowledge upon a foundation of prior knowledge. The constructivists believe that students interpret new information using pre- existing knowledge, histories and typical ways of perceiving and acting (Pirie & Kieren, 1992). This therefore implies that students take what they can from their experiences and use their partial understanding as a base on which to build more complete and accurate understanding (Byrnes, 2002). In addition, Constructivist theories consider individual learning as well as developmental differences to create a well-rounded approach to learning and teaching. Therefore by looking at both individual and developmental differences in learning, constructivists teaching methods allow teachers to differentiate instruction based on student knowledge and developmentally appropriate tasks.

In this chapter, the theories will guide the discussion of the four main themes that were derived from the sub- research questions to answer the main question of the study. These are:

- Teacher understanding of reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of children.

- Methods and strategies for teaching reading comprehension,

- Classroom environment suitable for reading comprehension and,

- The challenges that teachers experience in teaching reading comprehension.

2.4   Teacher knowledge about teaching Reading comprehension and why it is important to teach it to Primary three learners

The concept of knowledge for teaching reading comprehension is grounded in the idea that teaching requires specialized knowledge unique to the profession of teaching that a teacher

has to know about subject matter differently in order to teach it, is an idea that has been readily taken up in the fields of mathematics and science, but has recently received attention in the area of reading comprehension (Snow, Griffin, & Burns, 2005).

By studying reading comprehension instruction, this study is concerned with understanding the instructional processes that support individuals in constructing and extracting meaning. Wittgenstein (1953/ 1997) and other analytic philosophers claim that an individual cannot "construct" a meaning. Sentences and the terms with which they are constructed are emergent, tacitly agreed to, and socially negotiated. For example, if the sentence reads 'The cat is grey' the constructed and extracted meaning cannot be 'The dog is grey' because 'cat' refers to something that is distinctly not a dog and this distinction has been agreed upon by those who play the "language game." This is perhaps what the RAND group was referring to when deciding to use the term "extraction" in so far as the sentences on the page have some meaning part from reader's "constructed" meaning. Texts offer the reader the opportunity to relate social, emotional and psychological experiences to their lives and in this sense they are "constructing" meaning in a way that is unique to their lives' experiences. The readers is also "constructing meaning" given the information in the text- includes terms and sentences that have been socially constructed and mutually negotiated.

By situating reading comprehension as a process of extracting and constructing meaning, the RAND group reminds us that the process of making meaning is not a passive endeavor. Many texts do not include the totality of information that would be necessary in order to successfully "construct" meaning. That is, the reader must make referential and casual / logical inferences that are not explicitly made in the text. This is the "constructing" part of the process (Van den Broek, 1994). The process of making, then, suggest a dance between the information that is available in the text and the information the reader already knows in order to construct meaning. This implies that reading comprehension will be established only when the learner has extracted and constructed meaning from the text. However, according to Herber (1978), readers can construct meaning at various levels of conceptual difficulty and thinking as illustrated in Figure 2.1 namely: a literal level, an interpretive level, and an applied level.

Applied

Using information to form new ideas and express opinions

Interpretative

Putting together information, making inferences, and perceiving relationships

Literal

Getting information explicitly from the text
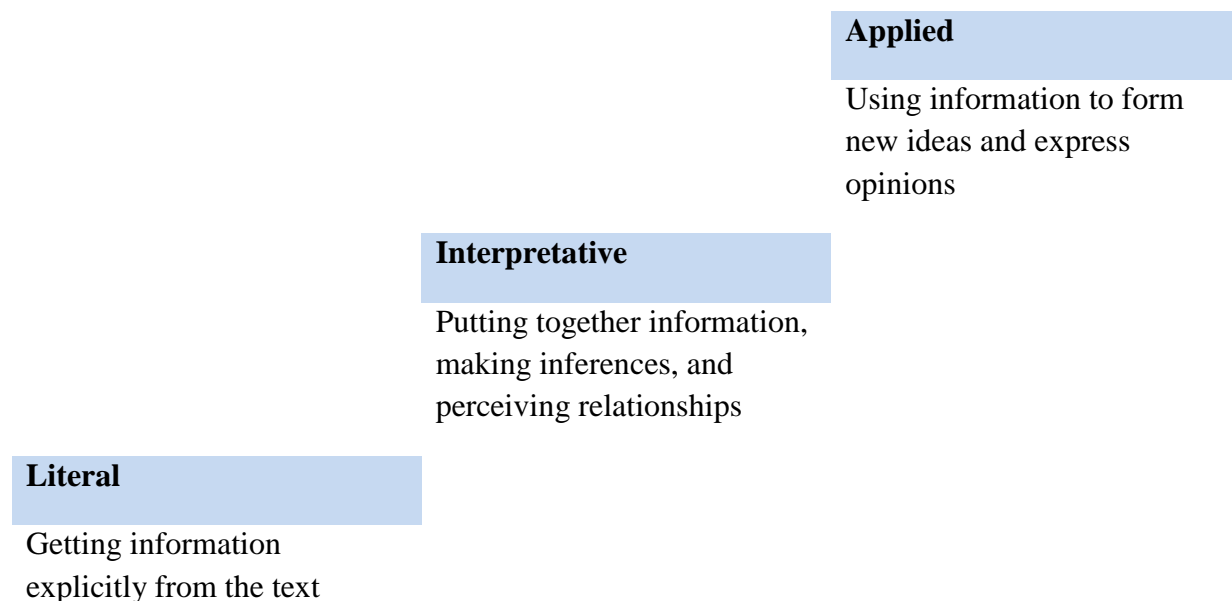
Figure 1 Three levels of reading comprehension (Bloom's Taxonomy)

At the first level, the literal level (low level), learners read the lines merely to extract the main idea and get the gist of the author's intention or message, recognizing words (e.g., sight words, phonics), fluency (rate, accuracy, and expression); and vocabulary (word meaning). In the interpretative level, leaners read between the lines and make inferences and some interpretations. At the third level and applied level, learners read beyond the lines. Reading at this level is akin to critical discovery and reflection, relating prior knowledge to text content and consciously learning, selecting, and controlling the use of several cognitive strategies for remembering and learning from text, the learners are able to synthesize information, to question and to evaluate the author, to think critically and to form new, fresh ideas from the text (Vacca & Vacca, 2009, pp. 25-27; Raphael, 1982). This is supported by Pressley (2000) who describes the development of reading comprehension as two- stage process: 'lower processes' and 'higher order thinking'. Therefore by situating reading comprehension as a process of extracting and constructing meaning, the RAND group reminds us that the process of making meaning is not a passive endeavor.

Basing on those arguments, Palincsar & Brown (1984) designed an instructional procedure to teaching reading comprehension called Reciprocal Teaching (RT). This approach focuses on four comprehension strategies to enhance learners' reading comprehension. The RT instructional process typically involves teachers and learners in a discussion or dialogue about the text. Giving the students and teachers to work together to co – construct the meaning of

texts (Palincsar, 2003).Through this method learners are taught how to apply the various comprehension strategies by the teacher who models that process. This method dictates that when children read a piece of text paragraph by paragraph, they learn to practice strategies and this practice enables them to make connections such as predicting what will happen in the next paragraphs and generating questions during and after the reading process.

This approach is in line with the Vygotky's ZPD. The ZPD which explicates the role of teachers as mediators. That is, teachers do complex tasks in meaningful contexts with students helping as much as they can. And then through repetitions of the task, students take on more and more of responsibility with the teacher helping as needed and naming the new strategies employed by the student (Clark & Graves, 2004; Kozulin, 2004; Lantolf, Poehner, 2008; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This is what Rogoff called scaffolding. The ZPD refers to: "*What an individual can accomplish when working in collaboration with others versus what he or she could have accomplished without collaboration with others (Zuengler & Miller, 2006, P. 39).* In this regard, reading which was viewed traditionally as a purely individualistic skill has been looked from a completely different perspective. Form the social constructive theory of learning, (Lantolf, 2006; Remi & Lawrence, 2012), consider reading as a social skill which requires an active participation and interaction of the learners involved in it. And scaffolding involves the provision of support that is focused on a learner's particular capacities within Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. According to Rogoff (1990, 2003) *scaffolding* is the gradual movement from teacher control of an explanation of how to do a strategy to students' control of the mastery as they apply it independently. The practice of scaffolding is directly associated with modeling that has a long history in psychology rooted in orientations of Bandura's (1977; 1989) Social Learning Theory.

It is also noted that research indicates that teaching children how to use combinations of comprehension strategies as they read, or multiple comprehension strategies (E.g., Guthrie, 2004; McKeown et al., 2009; Klinger, Vaughn, Arguelles, Hughes& Leftwich, 2004; NRP, 2000; Pressley, 2006) yields particularly strong results for improving children's reading achievement. This clearly points to the need for teachers to help students apply comprehension strategies in a variety of text types (narrative and expository) and genres (fairy tales, realistic fiction, encyclopedias, etc.) (Dymock & Nicholson, 2010). Thus, in this study, the key to successful instruction is delivering carefully structured learning activities that support children while they are developing the ability to use multiple comprehension

strategies to understand what they read (McKeown et al., 2009; Pressley, 2006; Reutzel et al., 2005). This is in agreement with Armbruster et al's (2003), provision of guidelines on how to teach reading comprehension strategies. They state *that "reading comprehension lesson should take various steps" (p.53).*

In addition, RT may be used to direct explicit lessons in the following strategies that are said to be most effective: comprehension monitoring, questioning, question answering, question generation, use of story structure, use of graphics and semantic organizers and summarizing (NRP, 2000).

Accordingly, good readers monitor while reading to see things make sense (Duke, 2003; Pressley & Hilden, 2002). But on the contrary, while some studies support that monitoring is important (Baker, 2002; Pressely & Afflerbach, 1995), other studies indicate that readers often mis-monitor (Eg., Baker, 1989; Baker & Brown, 1984; Kinnunen, Vauras & Niemi 1998). According to Baker &1989; Baker & Brown 1984; Kinnunen, Vauras & Niemi 1998), good readers have been found to both over- and underestimate their comprehension texts. So while monitoring is important, and as good readers seem to monitor successfully, teachers are cautioned to realize that mis-monitoring can affect meaning for less able students, they (teachers), have to play their role to provide additional support (modeling, scaffolding) needed especially in helping students know which strategies to select in repairing broken comprehension and when to use them. For example, learners should be introduced to the options available to them for repairing broken comprehension so that all of them comprehend successfully. Finally, monitoring strategies involve readers assessing or regulating their comprehension (e.g., comprehension confirmation; problem detection and problem solving) (Collins and Smith (1980).

Similarly, by using graphic and semantic organizers and having students develop questions on their own and within their groups, teachers can monitor student understanding and students can self- monitor. Graphic organizers are written "pictures" created to help students organize and identify important ideas from texts. By providing prompts and having students come up with their own interpretations and questions in the lesson encourages higher- order thinking and engages student interest in the text, as this anchors new ideas in reader's mind by connecting unfamiliar ideas and concepts to past experiences. Thus students need to be encouraged to recall ideas in a visual way in appropriate reading contexts and the teacher must ask learners to construct an image that represents the content (Pressley, 2000).

In addition, the teacher's questions strongly support and advances learners' learning from reading, keeps the learners engaged and enhances understanding (Fieldman, 2003). This is confirmed by Zimmerman and Hutchins (2003) that using questioning as a strategy indicates that "*questions lead readers deeper into a piece, setting up dialogue with the author, sparking in readers, minds what they care about. If you ask questions as you read, you are awake, you are interacting with words*" Zimmerman (2003, p.73). Therefore, questioning during reading becomes a strategy to help learners to learn to interact with the author of the text and so remain focused throughout the text. Teachers should ask questions that integrate information across different parts of the text and learners should be asked to evaluate their questions, checking that the covered important material, were integrative, and whether they could be answered based on what was in the text. This also calls for the teachers to provide feedback on the quality of the questions asked so as to assist the learners in answering the questions generated (Armbruster, et al., 2003; NRP, 2000).

Reading aloud is another great opportunity for students to learn vocabulary as well as reading skills and strategies (Cunningham, 2006). While working with students at emergent levels, teachers need to have a strong comprehension focus while reading aloud (Carnine et al., 2006). As the name suggests, The National Department of Education (2008, p. 26) defines Reading aloud as the time when the teacher reads to the whole class or small groups. Sipe (2008) recommends Read- aloud times to be well planned activity but not impromptu. The teacher should be well prepared, read to the whole class or small groups (Taale, 2003). Reading aloud is regarded as the best motivator for instilling the desire to read in learners. The speaking skills of the learners are enhanced by hearing good pronunciation and language use as well as their thinking skills through their comprehension of the text and experience with cause and effect including logical sequencing.

During the reading comprehension process, when the students are taught how to summarize texts, helps them determine what is important in what they are reading, and to condense information and to put it into their own words (Armbruster et al., 2003: 53). By so doing, learners identify or generate main ideas, connect the main or central ideas, and remember what they read. They learn to make connections among the main ideas through the text. Therefore this calls for teachers to teach learners to read the texts and synthesize the information. Routman (2000) refers to *"summarizing as the ability to state the main ideas in a text in a clear and coherent manner." (p. 140).* According to Palincsar and Brown (1984), a

reader who summarizes and questions information in a text activates his or her prior knowledge, integrates read information, pays attention, to maintain ideas, makes critical appraisal and evaluates the consistency of the information. He or she also makes prediction, confirms his inferences and activates his prior knowledge which in the end will lead to the construction of meaning (Armbruster et al., 2003: 13). It is therefore important that teachers explicitly model the strategy and give learners opportunities to practice the summarizing strategy before they apply it.

 On the other hand, Cooperative learning is one other approach that teachers can use to teach reading comprehension to the leaners. According to the NRP (2000), Cooperative learning and highly interactive discussions in which readers work together to learn comprehension strategies while interacting with each other and the teacher around a variety of texts is highly effective. It is important for the teacher to create multiple ways of creating and sustaining a cooperative and interactive classroom conducive to discussing texts.

According to Lenz (2005: 2) and Armbruster et al., 2003: 45- 57), it would be appropriate and easier for teachers to follow their ways of organizing comprehension strategies and to think about strategies that one might use before reading (phase 1), during reading (phase 2), and after reading (phase 3). This is because reading comprehension is a process, as such; it has various stages at which different tasks need to be performed.

2.5   *Classroom environment and organization for Reading comprehension.*

Effective teachers of reading comprehension engage in a diverse array of instructional practices (NRP, 2000; Pressley et al., 2001; Taylor, Pearson, Clark & Walpole, 1999). This panoply of practices results in a complex environment in which comprehension can be fostered. According to Wang, Haertel, and Walberg's (1994), contextual factors (i.e., teacher beliefs, classroom climate, instructional grouping) affect student achievement as much as student-dependent characteristics such as aptitude. This was confirmed by Lipson and Wixson (1997) who stated that *"perhaps no single factor influences the instructional setting more than a teacher's knowledge and beliefs about teaching and learning" (p.128).*

According to Englert et al., (1992), teacher's beliefs about literacy, learning, and instruction shape the classroom environment and the learning opportunities created for students. For example, different opportunities for learning are afforded students in interactive student-

centered classrooms than are available in teacher- centered climates. Classrooms where instruction and teaching occur collaboratively have the potential of capitalizing on the diverse strengths that individual student and teachers bring to a learning situation. Furthermore these classroom contexts may involve a variety of student grouping arrangements. Moreover, Elbaum, Vaughn, Hughes, and Moody (1999), consider peer tutoring and small group instruction to enhance the reading development of students. In a similar way, classroom where teachers establish a complex set of organizational and management routines in their classrooms, which they use to ensure a minimal amount of disruption and a maximum amount of time- on –task is what research supports (Johnsen, 2001, 2007; Rye, 2005). In such classrooms, learners are valued, they develop love of learning, competition and collaboration and care are evident (Johnsen, 2001; 2007). This is supported by Rye (2005) who contends that learners in a supportive environment have high levels of self- efficacy and self – motivation (Bandura, 1977; 1989). So it is the responsibility of the teacher to create an active environment which influences the lives of children through learning sessions.

Most importantly, explicit comprehension instruction occurs in richly contextualized instructional setting (Block et al., in press). The literature rich environment emphasizes the importance of speaking, reading and writing of all learners. This involves the selection of materials that facilitate language and literacy opportunities; reflection and thought regarding classroom design; intentional instruction and facilitation by teachers and staff (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1999). Literacy rich environment can be individualized to meet students' needs. Teachers need to create both independent and direct activities to enhance understanding of concept of print and word, linguistic and phonemic awareness, and vocabulary development. Reutzel (1997) advises that: *"Teachers must establish print- rich environments to provide children opportunities for language learning and development which stimulate and support literacy learning" (p.250).* The physical arrangement by the teacher provides the setting for learning and at the same time, acts as a participant in the teaching and learning process. Accordingly to make learning enjoyable and motivating, teachers need to provide their learners with practice of reading materials at their appropriate reading level

It is also important that teachers monitor learners' progress by using informal assessment because effective teachers continually assess their students' engagement, understanding, and behaviour throughout the day (Pressley, et al., 2003). By so doing, assessment of learners informs the lesson planning so as to meet individual learners' needs. Makin et al (2000),

support this practice and they, (Makin et al) suggest observation could be an appropriate technique to assess the needs of the leaners. The teacher therefore has a very big role to design various techniques to assess the learners' comprehension skills.

2.6   Challenges teachers experience when teaching reading comprehension

There are various factors militating the effective teaching and learning of reading comprehension in our primary schools. According to Oyetunde and Unoh (1986), there are impediments to positive reading habits and attitude. These include: lack of appropriate reading materials, poor preparation by the teachers, and lack of interest from the learners and the teachers' negative attitude to teaching reading comprehension, poor libraries or none at all, home background and lack of adult readers as models and the influx of big enrolments that won't allow the teacher to provide attention for the individual children.

According to (Brownell, 2000; and Brooks, 1997) they feel that teachers are likely to be faced with the challenge of having students who come from underprivileged literacy environments, which leads to their fewer oral language and emergent literacy skills, and prior knowledge. For example, some parents rarely take time to read to their children, or may not have the ability to do so. This challenges the well intentioned teachers to successfully educate the students (Brooks, 2004). Sometimes, different types of support are needed at different times in a child's reading development, but because of the overwhelming numbers of students in the classroom, the teachers do more of administration that teaching the learners (Brownell, 2000). Yet it is imperative that teachers teach decoding skills, build fluency, build prior knowledge, teach new vocabulary, motivate and engage students with the text in order to improve their reading comprehension (Pardo, 2004). This implies that the success of teaching reading comprehension in our primary classrooms will depend on how the factors that militate on the effective teaching are eliminated. Teachers need to increase schema in the classroom as much as possible.

2.7   Summary

This chapter gave the empirical foundations and relevant studies related to the topic. It gave understanding of the theories relevant to develop the reading comprehension in the learners; it explained the concepts as are used in the study, the review of related literature presented various scholars who have given some explanations, elaborations and suggestions towards

teachers' practice in various aspects to teaching reading comprehension, highlighting powerful reading comprehension strategies that teachers can employ to enhance students' reading comprehension (Pressley & Harris, 1990), and for that matter, the teacher must know and model during reading instruction.

Chapter three will discuss the state of reading comprehension in the international and national contexts.

3   Reading Comprehension In the National Context

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers developed learners' comprehension skills in primary three classrooms in Uganda. In this chapter, I will offer a review of literature by providing a summary of empirical studies related to the aspects of teaching reading comprehension in the international and national contexts.

3.1   *Location, size , and population*

Uganda is located in East Africa and lies along the equator. Uganda is a land locked country, bordered in the East by Kenya, in the West by Democratic Republic of The Congo, in the Southwest by Rwanda, in the South east by Tanzania and in the North by the Republic of Southern Sudan It is estimated to cover a total area of 236,040 sq.km (91, 135 sq. miles). In the southern part of the country lies Lake Victoria the largest lake in Africa and the position from which River Nile begins its flow (refer to Appendix I).

 The state of the World Population Report 2009 estimates the current population of Uganda to be 32.7 million, with a population growth rate of 3.3% per year. The report rates Uganda to be among the top five fastest growing population in the world (United Nations Population Fund [UNPF], 2009. Among the population are a significant number of people who are illiterate. The main implication of this high population is that it exerts pressure on the country's economy and hence, may create challenges to the provision of social services such as education and health. The effect of the high population is illustrated in the Human Development Index, 2011 which ranks Uganda among the Low Human Development Index countries in the world, with an average life expectancy of 54.1 years and an adult literacy rate of 66.8% (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2011).

Uganda is a multi- ethnic country with more than 50 ethnic groups that use different dialects. The differences in some of the dialects are so significant that one needs to learn another language in order to be able to communicate with people who use it. The implication of this multi- ethnicity is that unless they develop a shared language, children may experience difficulties in communicative interaction with peers. Owing to the diversity in dialects, Government has put in place a requirement that English should be used in education institutions because it is considered to be a unifying language for interaction among the various ethnic groups. But use the area language for instruction in lower primary classes.

3.2   Educational context of the study

Formal education in Uganda was first introduced by the Church Missionary Society of London in the 1886 mainly to serve children of the chiefs and the representatives of the colonial government. They set the syllabi, wrote curricular and set standards for the accomplishment for each grade. Their curricular was mainly to develop the 3RS [Reading, Writing and Arithmetic]. Their strategy was to educate elite cadres who would demonstrate the advantage of Christianity and thereby attract additional converts. Over the years, the post colonial government has shown commitment to providing basic education for all school- age children. But the education system has undergone various reforms from mission schools, to privately own schools all of which follow the same curriculum.

In 1997, the Government of the Republic of Uganda adopted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme to ensure universal access of primary education by children of school- going age from P 1- P. 7. The UPE schools are characterized by large numbers of pupils where the teacher- pupil ratio is 1: 100, lack of or inadequate instructional materials and equipment (UNEB, 2000). According to Wagana (1993), most pupils in UPE schools can not read and understand texts. Even with the few reading text materials available, in UPE schools, the proficiency in reading vis -a - vis comprehension is still very low (UNEB 2010). This affects pupils in primary grades especially those in lower primary classes, and it impacts negatively on the pupils' performance in and out of school, both in the language taught and other academic subjects (Gitachu, 2001). The other factors can be attributed to the nature of general physical facilities at home, and in schools, the attitudes of parents and teachers towards teaching reading comprehension, and an examination oriented education system.

 However, I examined a number of empirical studies and reports on reading comprehension related to primary grades in Ugandan context and other African contexts. Few studies have focused on measuring learner performance in reading in their mother tongue (L1) and there is little research on topic of reading comprehension. International and national studies, which focused on systematic evaluation, have shown that Ugandan learners are below international standards in both mathematics and literacy. With regard to SACMEQ11 (2004), found out that Uganda performs worse than its neighbours in both mathematics and literacy. Wagner (2010) argues that using SACMEQ reading scores, the quality of literacy instruction and achievement declined between 1996- 1996 and 2004 in Uganda. In a similar study conducted by the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) on National Assessment in Progress in

Education(NAPE, 2009) for primary three and six to ascertain the level of attainment in mathematics and literacy, shows that reading achievement is low (UNEB, 2010). Compared to a similar study conducted in two provinces in Kenya, children in Uganda score much lower on average both on oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

NAPE report 2010 did not differ from the earlier NAPE reports about children's inability to reach the required proficiency in literacy. Children's inability to reach the reading comprehension proficiency levels could directly be connected to the quotation from the Observer newspaper of 19.08.2012, on a study by Kyeyune (...) " *These teachers are not taught reading skills so they are unable to transfer them to their pupils and some don't realize that reading is a taught skill (www.observer.ug).*

It is clear that there are different educational situations in different countries regarding the teaching of reading comprehension. There are countries that are doing well such as Finland (PISA, 2006), Singapore (Singapore, Government, 2007), and there are those that are in similar situations as Uganda. In every situation there are lessons to be learnt. From the countries with very low score, we gain information. Those that are doing well can become our models. That is why this study has been set with a conviction that its findings will be used to cause change in the instructional practices of reading comprehension.

In this study, chapter 4 will present the research methodology and the research design.

4   Methodology and Research Design

4.1   Introduction

 The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers teach reading comprehension in primary three inclusive classrooms in Uganda with a focus of gaining insights into the teachers' instructional practices. A series of in-depth phenomenological interview and classroom observations (Siedman, 1998) were used as data collection methods to reveal the essence of human experience (Hatch, 2002b, p.30) of teachers who have demonstrated an advanced level of teaching experience and expertise. This study is qualitative in nature and I used an interpretative paradigm to understand the strategies teachers employ in teaching reading comprehension.

This chapter provides a description of the qualitative case study design (4.2) employed and the rationale for its use in the study. The chapter shares the details about the study area and population (4.3); methods (4.4) including the pilot study (4.5); the research instruments (4.6) are discussed. Gaining entry (4.7) data processing and analysis (4.8); validity and reliability (4.9) were discussed. Ethical considerations (4.10) were taken into account, and furthermore the limitations (4.11) were cited and a summary (4.12) of the chapter was elaborated.

4.2   Research Design

This study employed qualitative Case Study design. According to Stake (1995); Merriam (1998) and Yin (2003: 5) Case Study is *"an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real –life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident".* Case study was applied as a way of investigating an empirical topic by following a set of pre- specified procedures.

Case Study design was preferred in this study because it was applicable where the investigator got an opportunity to study the problem in an in- depth situation. In addition, the case study design allowed the investigator to focus on a real situation (teaching) with real people teachers) in a natural environment familiar to herself and the participants, (classroom) in order to answer the research questions. This was in line with Yin (1994) who emphasizes the importance of studying a phenomenon in its natural setting. In this case, the investigator identified the case of the study as the experiences of the teachers during the teaching of

reading comprehension to primary three classrooms. According to Merriam (1998), *"the value of a particular research design is intrinsically related to the motivation of selecting it as the most appropriate plan for addressing the research problem" (p.40).* She continues to argue that, one of the advantages of an instrumental case study is that, unlike experimental, survey, historic research, it does not favor any particular method for collecting data. As: "*Any method from testing to interviewing can be used in a case study to gather data" (Merriam, 1998: 28).* I saw this as a definite advantage to my study because it opened up the possibility for me to obtain information from a variety of methods and sources. On the other hand Merriam (1998: 42) claims that case study is limited by the investigator's sensitivity and integrity. She also asserts that although rich, thick description and analysis of a phenomenon may be desired, a researcher may not have enough time or money to devote to such an undertaking. Accordingly, I believe Merriam's claim may be right because there other limitations in data collection that may involve the issue of reliability, validity and generalizability.

4.3   Target Area and Population

According to Gall, Gall, & Borg, (2003), careful selection of a research site will help to ensure the success of a research study. They (Gall et al, 2003) added that field settings like schools are more appropriate for topics that are interested in educational research. For purposes of this study, before and when going to the field, careful thought and selection of the area was done while considering accessibility and the possibility of interacting with the informants. As a matter of procedure the research area was preferred on the basis of accessibility in terms of transport, communication, and the schools being government-aided primary schools implementing Universal primary education (UPE) hence working towards inclusion.

4.3.1   Sampling procedure and participants

In consistence with research ethics, it was necessary to ensure that access to the schools and informants was obtained in a way that would not be perceived to be intrusive (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; 2007). This was very important in this study. For this study, permission was secured through relevant authorities. The process started by the investigator obtaining an introductory letter from the Department of Special Needs Education (SNE), University of

Oslo. This letter was presented to the District Education Officer (DEO) of Bukedea district. It was accompanied with a letter of application for permission to conduct a study in two schools in the district with the primary three teachers. I could have got permission from the Ministry of Education (MOES), but since Uganda is practicing the decentralized from of governance I found it more convenient to ask for permission from the district since all the primary schools are under district leadership.

Purposeful sampling procedure was used to select the cases (Patton 1990). In purposeful sampling the main goal is to select cases that are likely to be "information- rich" with respect to the purpose of the study. Before sampling the schools for the study, meetings were held with the Inspector of Schools in charge Special Needs Education (SNE) and the District Education officer (DEO) in District Education officers' office. The purpose of the meetings was to get guidance and insight into the choice of schools for my study. Information provided revealed that they were two schools that met the criteria of selecting schools for my study. These schools were in rural area. I chose rural schools because of the common language of interaction and instruction, which the investigator also understands very well. At the same time the they were accessible in regard to transport and most importantly they were implementing the Universal Primary Education (UPE) where inclusion can be seen; they were also expected to be following the National curriculum for the primary schools, and they were all government aided. Government aided schools were preferred because they must follow the government programs and implement the government policies, and they all receive grants from the government to run the educational activities.

The samples for this study were teachers who were initially trained as Grade III teachers. The study utilized a type of purposeful sampling (Gall et al., 2003; 2007; Maxwell, 2005), called unique sample (Merriam, 1998). Merriam defines this type of sample as one that is based upon unique attributes of occurrences of the phenomenon of interest. This is also agreed by Gall et al. (2003; 2007) who define purposeful selection of cases as a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that cannot be forgotten as well from the choices. Since this was qualitative research, the sample size for this study comprised of three classroom teachers and two head teachers. The teachers selected fitted in these definitions as they were considered to be experienced, information rich and skillful in applying their practices toward the instruction of

reading comprehension. However, in order to ensure confidentiality I gave the samples pseudonyms to protect their identity and integrity as well as their schools.

All the teachers who participated in the study were well qualified with a wealth of experience in teaching primary school children and particularly primary three. The teachers were all primarily trained as Grade III general education primary school teachers. Grade III is currently the minimum qualification of any teacher who is trained to teach in the primary school in Uganda. The head teachers were also initially trained as Grade III primary school teachers but attained higher diplomas so as to be appointed as head teachers. For purposes of this study all the three main informants in this study happened to be females, ranging in instructional practice between 5- 29 years.

Through the teachers' profiles in this study it is likely that they are somehow abreast with the information about teaching reading comprehension in primary three classrooms. Their qualification and the length of teaching primary three classes, presents an impression that the teachers were well experienced in teaching reading comprehension. It was also seen that the teachers had taught this class for some good time therefore giving an impression that they were familiar with the pedagogical culture of the class. The information on teachers' background is also important for analyzing data for better understanding as teachers' qualification and experience may influence the teaching of reading comprehension.

Happy is a female aged 45 years, and she had been a general education teacher for 29 years. Happy was teaching at Fairway primary school, one of the newly established schools in the district, located in the rural area for 7 years. There were 12 boys and 14 girls between the ages of 8-10 in her class. According to Happy, some of her learners are relatively average readers but a majority of the learners are struggling and they need extra attention in regard to reading comprehension as well as other learning areas. Happy also disclosed she had had one major problem of one girl in her class whom she said had unique speech defects and always needed special attention when it came to pronunciation of words. Happy's school practices class teacher system where one teacher has to manage the class alone, teaching all the subjects. Her school also follows the thematic curriculum for lower primary classes, where emphasis is on using the area language as a medium of instruction. The school has adopted the Cooperative Learning pedagogical organization, with desks clustered together.

Charity is a female aged 35 years. She had been teaching as a general education full time teacher for 9 years. Charity was teaching in one of the oldest schools in the district, located in the rural area. There were 58 boys and 56 girls, aged between 8- 10 years in her class. Charity shares a class with Gift. According to Charity her class has the following categories of learners: A few learners can read and understand, and those who cannot read at all. Charity is the head of infants department and in her school there is a resource room for early childhood education and care where teachers in the district come to learn many things such as production of instructional materials using local materials and how to organize their classrooms. Like in Happy's school, Charity's school too practices class teacher system although she shares a class with Gift because of lack of classrooms. Charity told me she had attended training on materials production a reason why she was appointed to be in charge of the resource room.

Gift too is a female aged 30 years. She had been teaching as a full time teacher for 9 years. There were 58 boys and 56 girls aged between 8-10 years old in her class. According to Gift most of the learners in her class can read only single words, very few can read the sentences fluently. Gift like Charity teaches in Model Seed primary school, one of the oldest schools in the district located in the rural area and she is the head of SNE and she is expected to be the most resourceful person and give guidance to other teachers about SNE in the school. Gift shares a class with Charity. She narrated that her class was full of mediocre readers and those who were struggling and needed more attention as regards to reading.

The head teachers were included in this study because as managers they play a big role in determining the academic performance of their institutions and they are the immediate supervisors of the teachers. In this study, the head teachers were represented by the pseudonyms as Brian for head teacher of Fairway school and Innocent for the head teacher of Model Seed primary school.

Brian is a male aged 37 years old and trained as Grade III primary school teacher before he upgraded to acquire a diploma in primary education. And had been teaching as a full time teacher for 16 years. Brian is the head teacher of Fairway school one of the newly established schools in the district. His school has a total of 382 pupils, with girls 202 and boys 182. According to Brian, many of the children in lower and middle primary in his school experience difficulties in reading with understanding. Very few are fluent readers.

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Innocent is a male aged 43 and he is the head teacher of Model seed primary school one of the oldest schools in the district located in the rural area. His school is a grade one school and has 506 girls and 696 boys totaling to 1202 pupils. According to Innocent most of the children in lower and middle primary classes are not very fluent with reading. Very few are on average but majority need a lot of effort from the teachers.

Based on the information received from the various samples of teachers, these profiles have been summarized into the following categories in the table 4.1 below:

Table 1 Descriptive information about teachers, students and Schools

Teacher	Age	Sex	Qualification	School	Location	Teaching experience	No. of pupils
Happy	46	F	G.V, GIII, GII	FPS	R	29	B-12, G-14
Charity	35	F	G.III	MSPS	R	9	B-58, G-56
Gift	30	F	G.V, G.III	MSPS	R	9	B-58, G-58
Brian	37	M	GV, GIII	FPS	R	16	TSE B-182,G-202
Innocent	43	M	GT, GV, GIII	MSPS	R	26	TSE: B-696, G-506

Note: F= Female, GV= Grade five teacher, GIII= Grade three teacher, FPS= Fairway Primary school, MSPS= Model Seed Primary school, B= Boys, G= Girls, TSE= Total School enrolment

Schools in this study were both public schools. In an effort to conceal the identity of the schools they were coded as Fairway primary school and Model Seed Primary school. Both schools have good permanent buildings (Appendices J & K). There is a resource centre for Early Childhood Development and Care which is equipped with locally made instructional materials for the teachers to learn from. There is also a pre- primary class opened by the Church Non- Governmental Organization (NGO), within the school compound. MSPS has the biggest school enrolment OF 1202 pupils in the district, and it accommodates children from five parishes, who move from a close of five kilometers. While FPS has an enrolment of 382 pupils. There is a shortage of teachers in both schools; MSPS has a total of 17 teachers while FPS has 8 teachers. Both schools have good play grounds for both boys and girls. There are boreholes for water. Both schools are affiliated to different religious faiths. That is MSPS is

affiliated to the Anglican faith while FPS is affiliated to Islamic faith. MSPS has double classes from P.1 to P.2. The chalkboards are pasted on the walls in front of each classroom. P.3 class at MSPS is generally a big class with a total of 114 pupils.

Both schools follow the National Primary school curriculum designed by the National Curriculum Development Center (NCDC). For P.1 –P3, the schools were implementing the Thematic Curriculum where the local language is the medium of instruction in rural schools. The classrooms were quite spacious with some projects such as models of shops, clinic, and center of interest and nature corner. The general atmosphere of the classrooms had well printed charts displayed, desks were clustered to create group sitting. Boys sat together with girls. There were also other learning centers in the classrooms with different learning materials. Although the classrooms are built to the normal size of the classrooms, MSPS which has a big number of pupils as for example, in P.3 the class was so packed making it difficult for the teacher to move round helping the children individually. The entrance to the classrooms had ramps in each classroom, making it easy for the physically handicapped children to access the classrooms.

4.4   Methods of data collection

This study adopted a Case Study design (Yin, 1994) with an orientation of a qualitative data collection criterion. The following methods were used:

- Formal interviews

- Formal observations and

- Informal methods**.**

4.4.1   The formal interviews

During the process of the interview, I stated the purpose of the interview and the research question, which formed the basis for the discussion. All interviews were started by reassuring the informants that all the information to be gathered would be taken in strict confidentiality and that their names or those of their schools will remain anonymous in the presentation and discussion of the results of the study (Robson, 1999, Kvale, 1996, Gall et al., 2003).   I also ensured that before the interviews started the tape-recorder had been switched on, a lesson I

learnt from the pilot study. I listened attentively to the interviewees as they relayed their experiences as I was trying to manage the process so that I knew how much time had passed, and how much time was left. The time allocated for each individual interview was 35 minutes. Whenever, I realized that a question had not yielded much information, I followed it up by asking another question that would elicit more details. Probing was used throughout the interviews so that the interviewees would outline their experiences in connection with the subject under discussion.

Efforts of being in the interview room before the interviewees each time was made as this was one way of preparing to receive the informants. I also considered building rapport before each interview. Bailey (1994) considers rapport building as a relationship based upon mutual trust and it is important to consider when establishing a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this regard a few minutes were spent building rapport with each interviewee this involved the exchange of greetings and a brief formal introduction followed by brief informal / casual talk on other topics not related to the study to enable them relax and to set the mood for the interview.

Then I engaged the teachers with questions in semi- structured form on the phenomenon of inquiry as the intention was to gain access into teachers' experiences of teaching reading comprehension, and with the view that live face- to- face contact between the interviewer and the interviewee may provide an opportunity for eliciting sustained attention of the informants during the interview (Patton, 2002). Semi- structured interviews were considered in order to encourage disclosure from the informants about their experiences of teaching reading comprehension, May (2002). This would also allow the investigator to probe or follow up a respondent's answers to obtain more information and clarify vague statements (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The questions were presented one at a time following the interview guide and English Language was used for interviewing since this is an official language in Uganda, but the respondents were also informed they were free to use the mother where they were not clear. Interviews were conducted during intermission time; break and lunch break. This was in order to avoid disturbing the teaching schedules.

I requested the participants that I use a tape recorder to record the proceedings of the interview to ensure no important information was missed out in case it was not captured during interview sessions. I felt this could also be a simple way for me to secure validity of the data. According to Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003), tape recording interview is important

because by playing back; the interviewers can gain insights into interviewees' handling of questions and become aware of problems that were escaped during the interview itself. After the interview, I thanked the interviewees and promised that I would contact them again to seek clarification on issues raised if the need arose and to give them an opportunity to verify what I had transcribed was in line with what transpired during interviews.

The advantage of individual teachers' interviews for this study was that rich data was gathered from the interviewees. I noticed that through the interviews, new understandings on teaching reading comprehension were obtained. However, the disadvantage of interviews is they are prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer and can distort what respondents really mean (Cohen et al., 2000). This was the reason why I requested that I tape record the voices so as not to miss any important information and later transcribed the interviews.

4.4.2   Informal methods

In order to enhance data collection and get more information, informal conversation and informal observation were used as supplementary methods. According to (Gall et al., 2003), informal talks are a collection of information through spontaneous generations of questions during a natural conversation or interaction. In this study, informal talks were always conducted during break time when the teachers were not teaching. And they were basically on the teachers' experiences in teaching reading comprehension, and the kind of help the teachers required in order to be efficient in their practice. Information collected through informal conversation was used to validate interview data.

In a similar manner, informal observation was conducted throughout the field visit. Conditions of physical facilities in the institutions such as furniture in the classrooms, conditions of the classrooms, for example, sitting arrangements among others were observed. General infrastructure of the school compound such as play fields and paths, talking compound in relation to life skills and the hidden curriculum were also noted. According to Robson (1999), observation can be used as a supportive or supplementary technique to collect data that may complement or set in perspective data obtained by other means. It was important to note the kind of physical environment to confirm whether the sitting arrangement supported the methods of teaching reading comprehension and inclusive practices.

4.4.3   Formal Observations

In addition to interviews, observation was the other method utilized in this study. In this study, I conducted classroom observations and I adopted a naturalistic approach (Berliner, 1994) to studying teachers' techniques of teaching reading comprehension in the classroom. Classroom observation helped me to gain insights into the strategies teachers employed in teaching reading comprehension, since my intention was to understand more fully how teachers teach reading comprehension to primary three pupils in Uganda. As the respondents had narrated to me their experiences, classroom observation enabled me to corroborate the information that was mentioned with what was going on in the classrooms. At the same time, lessons were video- recorded so as not to miss out any relevant information as the videos would be used from time to time during the analysis (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003: 2007). On the other hand, I played the role of a non- participant observer, so as to give myself chance to observe the interactions in the classroom freely without influencing them.

4.4.4   Triangulation

Gall, Gall & Borg (2003), argues that triangulation refers to any attempt made to strengthen credibility and secure validity of the research data. This meant generating more evidence to validate findings. In this study, I hoped by using multiple methods and instruments, would minimize the element of bias that may arise as a result of relying on only one data collection method and instrument. In this case I used more than one informant and more than one data collection method to gain credibility of the research findings.

4.5   Pilot Study

In this investigation, a pilot study was carried out. The main purpose of the pilot study was to try out the instruments and to examine their quality, and clarity. In addition, the pilot study would enable the investigator practice interviewing skills and become familiar with interviews questions. Gall et al. (2007) describe pilot study as a small – scale *"preliminary investigation that is conducted to develop and to test the measure or procedures which will be used in the research"(p.648).* The schools for the pilot study were selected following the same criteria for selecting schools for the main study. The pilot study participants (N=3) were contacted and invited to participate on phone. The pilot study participants were recommended by their head teachers and described as excellent and honest teachers. Two of the pilot study

participants were teachers of primary two, and one was for primary three. After expressing interest in participating in the pilot study, the participants were given the Pilot Study Consent Cover letter (Appendix); two Informed Consent forms (Appendix), one of which was to be signed. Qualitative case study interviews tend to be open- ended and less structured (Merriam, 1998), which was the investigator's intent. The questions provided to the pilot study participants were similar to the ones used in the actual study.

However, there were lessons to learn from pilot study: Firstly, in the overall, the pilot study was useful in that it helped to highlight some of the challenges in carrying out classroom observation and the weaknesses in the instruments. Secondly, the pilot study helped me to refine my tools and data collection plans with respect to both content of the data and the procedures to be followed (Yin, 1994:74). Thirdly, the pilot study helped me to become familiar with the items in the interview guides and how to present them in a manner that would minimize anxiety among the interviewees. In addition, pilot study helped me gain the skill of eliciting in de-depth opinions of the interviewees. For example I learnt how to rephrase the questions where necessary.

However, some challenges were also realized during the interview process. For example, some questions were so long and others were not clear. It was also difficult for me to use the tape recorder and the video recorder. For the first time I never captured any video at all instead I was taking still picture. The same applied to the audio recorder; I found it difficult to replay the voices for the teachers to hear. But in spite of those challenges, the following adjustments were made:

- Questions were re –phrased, and more questions were formulated outside the interview guide; these were mainly probing questions which helped me to get the teachers to elicit more information. The questions that were long were recognized and divided into two sub-questions without changing their meanings.

- It was also relevant for me to find someone who had some technical knowledge on how to use the gadgets so that by the time of the real study he was ready to assist me especially with video recording.

4.6   Research Instruments

Instruments for this study were developed following the research questions which determined what data would be collected in a valid and reliable way (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003:251). Hence a list of topics to be explored in the interviews was prepared before data collection. The list was prepared based on the assumption that preparing the guides in advance may enable the interviewer to carefully decide how best to use the limited time available during the interview situation and to delimit , in advance the issues to explored. Therefore, interview guide was prepared in order to elicit information from the teachers of primary three and the two head teachers. The topics in the guide explored teacher knowledge of reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of learners, the teaching strategies for developing reading comprehension, characteristics of classroom environment relevant for reading comprehension, and the challenges teachers experience in teaching reading comprehension. However, the interview guide was not final. In line with the principle of semi- structured interviews and the qualitative case study design, other topics that emerged during the interviews were included in the initial guides and when they arose. In a similar manner, an observation guide outlined aspects to be observed. These aspects were related to classroom organization, classroom climate, classroom interaction, strategies and resources used, support for learners in the classroom as well as the challenges teachers face in teaching reading comprehension.

4.7   Data processing and Analysis

4.7.1   General analysis strategy

The data analysis process was explorative in nature. It was based on ideas presented by Mile and Huberman (1984), Charmaz (2000), Braun and Clarke (2006), and Boeije (2010). The process involved transcribing the field notes, segmenting the data into significant statements / issues and generating themes. Given that the study seeks to explore how teachers teach reading comprehension to primary three learners, I found it more appropriate to consider the dimensions presented in the research questions "how do teachers teach reading comprehension" and what instructional methods and strategies teachers use to teach reading comprehension) as the main framework for organizing the data. Analysis commenced from individual teachers' interviews then classroom observations. The actual words of the teachers were analyzed and interpreted. Themes and categories emerged from the teachers' responses to the research questions. I suspected there would be a repetition of certain themes. This

entailed transcribing the data in verbatim form. I read the entire transcript to get a sense of a whole impression of the content and to look out for more themes emerging from the text. I highlighted units of meaning with markers of different colours to denote related themes. In this study themes and categories were teachers' responses in which they reported on their live experiences. According to Braun and Clark (2006), *"thematic analysis can be a method that works both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of reality." (p. 81).* I incorporated categorized, related codes. These categories reflected themes, which I will use in the discussion of the topic. I developed five steps as proposed by Burns (1999), to follow during data analysis, namely:

In the first step, before the data analysis, the short notes from interviews were transcribed into detailed notes. In order to protect the informants the transcripts were typed into Microsoft word using my laptop computer, without including names of the informants and their schools. The transcripts did not include the linguistic detail desired for conversational analysis. The decision to transcribe the interviews without including linguistic detail was based on the view that meaning can be explored from interviewees'' responses without delving into linguistic detail (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). In line with this view, the intention in this study was to explore meanings from what the informants said, and that is expected to shed light about the research problem. In order to achieve this, all the talk by the informants was initially transcribed as a single unit under each question. Transcribing the interviews under each question was useful in that it gave insight to what was said about each topic in response to a certain research question.

During the second step of data analysis, I devoted time to explore and examine the data collected in order to become familiar with the interview information. This entailed reading the transcript several times line by line and divided it into meaningful analytical units (Maree, 2011), and developing codes to identify patterns about issues implicit to the study. This process of coding informed me to reduce the data collected and identify specific themes or categories. From this initial review of the transcript I began to see themes emerging from the data. Sections of the transcripts that reflect a theme were identified. I made notations to record ideas while reading data.

In the third step, I transferred teachers' responses on a large sheet of paper, this assisted me to have the responses for each question grouped together and I could see the ideas emerging. I made connections to the research questions to see whether the themes or research questions

were repeated or developed across different data gathering instruments. Then, I coded responses that were repetitive to see which themes were emerging from each instrument.

This also involved describing and further developing themes from the data to answer the major research questions. I revisited the themes identified in step 2 with the major question as a lens for analysis. The major research question for this study was "How do teachers teach reading comprehension in accordance with learners' different levels of mastery and need for learning?" In this part of the process it was necessary to triangulate all the information collected as a way to test the trustworthiness of the data and ensure on going reflections (Burns, 1999). According to Burns (1994), *"[...] triangulation of the data is a way of arguing that if different methods of investigation produce the same result, then the data are likely to be valid." (p.272)*. Comparison and categorization continued until saturation was reached regarding the themes and categories. When I finished categorizing and coding the data, I started interpreting and making sense of the meaning of the data. Lastly, I began presenting an account of the research findings of the data. Once I identified the major categories, I chose the excerpts that best suited them.

Data analysis was done progressively during and after field work. This encouraged the flexibility in thinking about existing data and to generate new strategies for collecting new and better quality of data. Data for this study was grouped to correspond to each question so as to answer it exhaustively. The following themes emerged as follows:

- Teacher knowledge and understanding about: Inclusion, Inclusive classrooms, and reading comprehension.

- Teachers' instructional practices.

- Characteristics of Classroom environment for reading comprehension.

- Challenges teachers experience in teaching reading comprehension.

4.7.2 Organizing the classroom observations

In order to facilitate analysis, field notes from each field observation were written into detailed descriptive notes. After making the transcriptions, the detailed notes were organized into segments considering their relevance to the research questions. (See extract in Table 4.3).

Table 2 Extract of field notes from one of the observation settings

Date: 22.10.2012	Activity: Reading comprehension	Duration: 30 minutes
This is a fully packed classroom with appropriately 114 pupils consisting of 56 girls and 58 boys. The pupils are seated in groups of four facing each desk each other. The desks are clustered to make a group sitting arrangement. The walls of the classroom are well provided with a variety of instructional materials. Notable were the flip charts, flash cards displayed on the reading tree, there were number friezes displayed in front of the classroom, the reading cards were hanging above the pupils' heads, there are a lot of materials made out of the local material, and this specifically represented mostly the vocabulary. The time table is displayed and the classroom rules and regulations were among the stuff displayed. Before the start of the lesson the teacher, asks pupils her riddle about the weather. The pupils quickly responded and one child went ahead to turn the pointer on the weather chart. Then the teacher leads the pupils to sing a song. After that she tells the pupils that were a welcome for them since they had been with the student teachers. The teacher than introduced the lesson by flashing the words and asking the learners to read the words, then she proceeds to tell the learners " *these are the words you will meet in the story"* The teacher then wrote the page number of the book where the learners would find the story. The teacher then read the story as the learners were listening, then she read it together with the learners, and asked them oral questions before the learners read it alone and finally, she gave written questions for learners to answer in groups.		

The segments were then presented in an observation protocols adapted from Creswell (2007). Each protocol had an identification code, the date of the field observation, duration and the time setting in which observation was carried out. The observation protocol consisted of three columns: The descriptive column, the theoretical column, and a column for methodology reflections. The descriptive notes column consisted of recounted descriptions of the significant issues in the setting observed. In the theoretical reflections column, initial interpretations (reflections) about each of the significant issues, particularly with regard to their contribution to the study or how the information relates to some existing theoretical propositions in the study were written. The methodology reflection column consisted of some reflections on how the procedure followed during the field observations may have influenced the issue or behaviour recorded (e.g., see extract in Table 4.4).

Table 3 Observation protocol derived from field notes in table 2.

Date: 22.10.2012	Activity: Reading comprehension	Duration: 30 minutes
Descriptive notes	Theoretical reflections	Methodology reflections
The classroom is fully packed with approximately 114 pupils, all seated in groups of four facing each other at each desk. The desks are arranged in cluster form to create a group sitting arrangement.	This is a large class, there is congestion, and the teacher finds it difficult to move round helping and checking what the students are doing. The teacher finds it difficult also to make instructional materials that are enough.	It was quite encouraging that the students were seated in groups, what I did not know was whether there was a criteria used to sit the students as they are.
The walls of the classrooms are represented with a variety of instructional materials	It was evident that the teachers are putting effort to see that children have more practice in reading even during their free time by visiting the learning areas, because displays in the classroom would elicit more interaction among the students with the information that is available on the charts, flash- cards.	This was my second observation in this classroom. The impression was that there was a lot of creativity in the making of reading materials from the local materials. But, I am also wary of the absence of text books, because what the teachers prepared for reading on the charts was really inadequate. But if pupils are to read from the books, it would also simplify the teacher's work.

4.7.3   Organization of Audio and video taped material

From the onset semi- structured interviews were held with the informants. The interviews were audio recorded on audio tapes which were labeled indicating the pseudonyms of the participants and the schools; the date of the interview and the teacher interviewed. Audio recording was done in order to preserve the data collected during the interview process (Robson, 1999; Gall et al., 2003; 2007). In my study, I preferred to use audio tapes because they provide a complete verbal record and can be studied much more thoroughly than data in form of interview notes. In addition audio tapes were also preferred because they speeded up the interview process thus reducing the need for extensive note taking (Yin, 1994). In a similar manner, tape-recording the interview was done so as not to miss important information which could not be captured properly during interview sessions. According to Gall, Gall, & Borg (2003; 2007), tape- recording interview is important because by playing

back, the interviewer can gain insight into interviewees handling of questions and become aware of problems that were escaped during the interview itself. Halloway (1997) & Hycner (1999) recommend that the researcher listens repeatedly to the audio recordings of each interview to become familiar with words of the interviewee/ informants in order to develop a holistic sense. These statements were very timely for this study, because there was need to play back the interviews to verify with what the informants said was really true.

4.8   Validity and Reliability of the Data.

In this study validity is referred to as the degree to which the instruments and procedures used in the study were able to maintain relevant data (Krathwohli, 1993; Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; 2007). Validity in research takes three forms, namely: construct validity, internal validity and external validity. Construct validity refers to establishment of correct operational measures for the concept being studied, internal validity refers to the degree to which the research findings can be influenced by extraneous variables, while external validity means establishing the domains to which the study findings are generalized (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003; 2007).

4.8.1   Securing Validity and Reliability

 In this study validity and reliability were secured through obtaining a chain of evidence that helped to draw linkages between interview guides, raw data and the findings. Pre- testing the instruments helped me to make necessary adjustments on the instruments ready to be used to find out the intended study (Yin, 2003b). I also carried out a pilot study which enabled me to redesign the questions in the interviews to suit properly the purpose of the study. Afterwards, face- to –face interviews were conducted with teachers which enabled me get required information. Interviews were conducted in English but where the teachers felt they were not sure, they were free to use the local language (Mother tongue).Another strategy that I used to strengthen validity was to allow the respondents listen to their voices (tape) and ask them to make a comment(s). Informal methods were also important in my study, because they were meant to get some additional information which could give some credible data.

4.8.2   Threats against validity and reliability in my study

 However, there are also factors that may threaten the validity and reliability of the research findings. For example, some questions may not be clearly structured to provide the required

response from the informants. Another factor is that the informants new the investigator as a teachers educator, who normally carried out some workshops and mentoring sessions to the teachers in the district. The necessary rapport was attempted but still the informants may have had the thought that I was wearing the 'coat' as an Inspector form Education Standard's Agency (ESA), since they knew I was pursuing another label of education.

4.9   Ethical Considerations

The qualities that make a successful researcher should be revealed through an exquisite sensitivity to ethical issues that are present when we engage in any moral act (Marshall & Rossman, 71-77). The main aim of this study was to obtain information from the perspective of the teachers about the phenomenon under study. This necessitates that ethical issues must be taken into account.   The following ethical considerations were made:

4.9.1   Following protocol

While in Norway, permission to carry out the study was sought from the Norwegian Social Science Data Service (NSD). This was achieved through presenting a detailed plan of how privacy of the informants and the schools would be protected in the data collection and analysis process. An introductory letter was also obtained from the University Of Oslo Department Of SNE, which I used for introducing myself to the relevant authorities.

In Uganda, permission to conduct the study in primary schools was sought from the District local Government. After obtaining consent from the District Education Office, letters were sent to the head teachers of the schools requesting for permission to conduct the study, and to involve the teachers as informants. Permission to observe the reading lessons was also sought.

4.9.2   Selection of the teachers

According to Gall et al. (2007), care must be taken to avoid possible resentment and loss of self- esteem by individuals who will not be involved in the study. They advise that participant must be selected equitably such that *"any individual in available population has a reasonable chance of being in the sample" (p.81).* In this study, it was not possible to use random sampling procedure in selecting the teachers, because of the focus of the study. Consequently, I used my own judgment to select the teachers, for this study.

4.9.3 Informed Consent

All the informants were requested in writing to participate in the study. The letters contained information about the purpose of the study and how information gathered would be utilized. Informants were also informed that they were free to withdraw from participating in the study if they so wished. In addition, consent of the teachers was sought before carrying out field observations in the classrooms.

4.9.4 Confidentiality

The letter written to the informants requesting their participation in the study included an assurance that all information provided would be kept confidential. One of the strategies used to ensure confidentiality was keeping memory sticks and hand written documents under key and lock. The information stored was deleted after the analysis process. Furthermore, names and personal information of the informants and the schools were anonymized in the thesis.

4.9.5 Consideration made during and after data collection

It was important to replay the audio and video recordings, to allow the informants own what they said and what they did. Teachers were also given to read the transcribed interviews. In addition, an appreciation was showed to all the informants who participated in the study by verbally thanking them and expressing sincere gratitude for their cooperation and support extended to me during the study. In a similar manner, the head teachers of the schools were thanked for having allowed me to their schools and the cooperation the teachers showed. It was also inevitable to thank leaners in the classes where the study took place. The issue of plagiarism was avoided through acknowledging the works of other scholars.

4.10 Summary

In this chapter four, I explained the research methodology adopted in this study. The chapter locates the study in the qualitative case study design. As part of naturalistic approach, I employed qualitative research because the study sought to examine teachers' understandings, experiences of, and responses to the teaching of reading comprehension. Consistent with qualitative research, the process of data analysis has been explicitly explained and a reflection of various methods used in data collection has been explained. I have summarized and described the methods, instruments and texts used in my inquiry. I explained how I attempted

to improve the validity and reliability of the data through various methods which were chosen for their suitability for the study. Ethical considerations have been considered at various levels.

5 Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

5.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to examine into how teachers teach reading comprehension in primary three classrooms in Uganda. The descriptions of the findings will be based on the four main themes: Theme: 1 (5.2) is about varied opinions, beliefs, knowledge and understanding of reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of learners. Theme 2: (5.3) identified the role of the teachers in how they teach reading comprehension. This theme has attempted to identify the methods and strategies teachers use when teaching reading comprehension. Theme: 3 (5.4) describes the kind of classroom environment that can support and enhance reading comprehension in learners. Theme: 4 (5.5) explores the challenges that are detrimental to teachers' practice toward teaching reading comprehension. The analysis will seek to highlight the common themes and distinctive perspectives within each case. There will be an exploration across the cases (5.6) of the common themes and distinctive differences between cases as suggested by Talbot and Edwards (1994) and finally a summary (5.7) will be presented.

The main guiding question for this study was: How do teachers teach reading comprehension in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process? To guide the understanding of the information expressed by the informants, themes have been used to introduce each category

5.2 Theme 1: Teachers' Knowledge and Understanding of Reading Comprehension and importance of teaching reading comprehension in Primary Three inclusive classrooms.

Across all the textual data theme 1 appeared critically important to the teachers, they seemed to understand the concept of reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of their learners. Even though they expressed it differently, each of them explained the importance of teaching reading comprehension to the learners. From the participants' responses Theme: 1 has two important words "reading and comprehension" which the learner must read and thereafter comprehend. This Theme emerged as expansion and explanation from interviews. They (respondents) indicated it in this way: Happy from FPS highlighted this when she said:

"... Reading with understanding, children read and internalize the story or text, or a sentence and find meaning in it."

When probed to clarify why she thinks it is important to teach reading comprehension to P.3 learners, this is how she put it: *"Teaching reading comprehension to me is important, because it helps the learners to increase their reading skills and understanding, thus, the learners will be able to know the purpose of the text, the learners can be able to complete activities based on the text as they will be able to explain what they have been reading."*

Charity from MSPS who also shared similar views said*:"... Reading comprehension is reading with understanding. The reader who is reading should understand the text. On top of that the reader should be able to identify difficult words and find their meaning from the text. Through understanding the text, the learners can answer questions which are directly related to the text."* While on the other hand Gift from MSPS considers looking at the two concepts *"reading"* and *"comprehension".* To her one cannot comprehend what he or she cannot read. This is how she viewed reading comprehension and why it is important to teach it to learners of P.3.

From the above sentiments, the beliefs and the goals for reading comprehension that were shared by the participants place an emphasis on helping the learners to be able to read with understanding so that they are able to relate the information to other situations. The participants seemed to relate reading comprehension to learners, meaning that the learners should be able to interact with the text and with understanding. In addition, the teachers seemed to understand that reading comprehension unlocked the doors to lifetime of reading, recreation and enjoyment, because if leaners understood the text well, they would be able to understand the world around them. The following remarks from the respondents during individual teachers' interviews are linked to this reflection as the remarks by Happy and Charity bear testimony. Happy from FPS had this to say: *"Learners read the text and know how to interpret it at the end they can implement the information in their lives."*

Similarly, Charity from MSS made her remark as: "*Learners can read the text, interpret, analyze and apply what they have learnt in various daily situations."*

The above statements clearly indicate that reading comprehension occurs when a reader reads with the aim of getting meaning from the text. Therefore reading comprehension involves

cognition. This implies that, the purpose of reading is to understand the written text. Therefore, it is important that children should be explicitly taught to read so that they can apply the knowledge they have acquired in other situations. This therefore calls on the teachers to be abreast with the theories concerning the reading comprehension which they should practically and explicitly impart to the learners.

5.3   Theme 2: Teachers' Instructional Practices In teaching Reading Comprehension

This theme specifically sought answers to how teachers teach reading comprehension. From the responses gathered from the informants and from data from classroom observations, evidence shows that teachers employed various instructional practices toward teaching reading comprehension. Prominent among the instructional practices mentioned were the methods and strategies used to teach reading comprehension. The data gathered revealed that all the teachers were not just using one "method" or one "strategy" but a combination of others. The methods that featured included the following: Demonstration, group work, discussion, direct instruction, role play, storytelling, guided practice, but also during classroom observation other methods that came into action were chorusing and reading aloud to the students while the students read after the teacher. The teachers also mentioned the following teaching strategies to help them enhance learners' comprehension: the reading process strategies, assessment of reading comprehension modeling and scaffolding, provision of instructional materials and differentiating leaners' content and activities.

5.3.1   Methods of teaching reading comprehension

Evidence revealed that the teachers had various ways (that they referred to as methods) of teaching reading comprehension. These methods were expressed by the informants as follows when Happy shared her experience as: "*I use a variety of methods in teaching reading comprehension. For example, I use storytelling, brainstorming, demonstration, group work and discussion."*

When interjected, why she used variety of methods in one lesson. Happy ably explained like this: *"When teaching an inclusive classroom you need to use many methods, because if one method suits "Jane", it is not automatic that even "David" will find the same method fitting his learning needs. When I use a variety of methods, it helps me capture every learner's*

learning ability. In most cases I use storytelling as an ice breaker when I am introducing the lesson and I make sure the story has some relationship with what the children are going to read. But also sometimes I ask the children to tell the story that is related to the theme of the lesson."

Charity FPS did not differ from what Happy highlighted as the methods that she uses to teach reading comprehension. She acknowledged that using variety of methods helps tap learners' learning needs. However, according to her she emphasized on using direct instruction and cooperative learning as the very effective methods that would benefit learners' achievement in reading comprehension. And she described the methods she uses as: *"I teach reading comprehension using direct instruction. This method helps me explicitly introduce the reading concepts systematically while at the same time giving the learners greater opportunities to practice reading. With direct instruction, you must teach with maximum amount of instructional materials which may be pictures, real objects flash cards, in addition to the text books if there are any. You must provide activities which bring meaning to the reader, then you also need to give proper demonstrations for the learners to copy, you must provide good explanations for the words learners are not familiar with."*

When probed to clarify on Cooperative learning and group work. Charity put it like this: *"When I use cooperative learning, I ensure that learners learn as a group by helping one another. In this way I also help develop learners' social skills. I don't see any difference between cooperative learning and group work because they complement each other."*

Gift MSS in her response to the above indicated:

"What I teach determines the method that I will use. Inclusive classrooms dictate that you have to employ variety of methods, and materials that can suit all the learning needs of the learners. In most cases I prefer using group methods because it helps these children to learn together as they help one another."

During classroom observations much as the teachers mentioned they used a variety of the methods in their teaching, it was clearly seen that throughout all the six lessons observed, the dominant methods that were seen in action were questioning and answering, reading aloud, group work and demonstration. Demonstration was very critical and all the teachers used as a vehicle for giving direction, presenting concepts to be learnt and demonstrating expected

behaviour (learning) performance , on the part of the learner. The lessons observed revealed that the teachers created discussion with the learners through asking and answering oral questions.

However, methods such as storytelling and discussion as mentioned by Happy were not utilized. Then I begin to ask why those methods were not utilized by any of the teachers. My assumption is that maybe they had not planned for them at that particular time or they were caught up by time. It also emerged that the teachers were aware that struggling readers were good at memorizing such that they encouraged learners to respond in chorus. These remarks made by Charity and Gift of MSS provide evidence when they said:

Charity of MSS: *"I cannot ask leaners individually to read aloud, but I make them read in chorus then I listen to them using the 1, 2, 3 technique, which helps me to identify the weak ones whom I will concentrate on later."*

When asked to elaborate on 1, 2, 3 technique. Charity responded that usually she uses this technique when teaching vocabulary, and therefore it simply involves:

"1 is whole class teaching, 2 is group, and 3 is the individual, I ask them to chorus as a whole class then I group them perhaps in pairs or with those who are really good"

The teachers' responses seem to indicate that the teachers understood the importance of asking the learners to chorus reading. At the same time they also seemed to value the importance of whole class and group teaching, even to pairing the learners in reading and what its benefits to the teachers as well as the learners were. The respondents expressed that grouping or pairing the learners assisted them to identify learners who were experiencing problems so that they could provide individual support. The learners assisted the teachers: If one makes the mistakes, the other one will help a friend. Related sentiments were captured from Happy, when she said:

"You tell him or her, this is your child, help him or her at all times. And I encourage each one of them to report about the friend's achievements or problems."

Through this statement the teacher evidently understood that cooperative learning is important in reading comprehension. The learners can learn to read and to comprehend the texts effectively while helping and guiding each other. The teachers indicated that when they used

groups and pairs they had an opportunity to attend to individual learners. This seems to be appropriate because when the learners are in groups, individual attention becomes easier for the teacher to engage them in individual reading as he/ she will find it easy to identify weak learner from small groups.

What I learnt from the teachers' use of methods was that they were employing some of the methods such as reading aloud and chorusing unknowingly. It was also interesting to note that the teachers understood the purpose of group teaching as well as individual teaching which was mainly to assist the learners, but in practice I did not see any paired groups or individual help to the learners. This discrepancy might be the result of lack of enough instructional materials and lack of knowledge on how to facilitate reading comprehension or it was due to the big numbers that the teachers were faced with in their classrooms. This therefore implied that, teachers required the theoretical knowledge of the methods in order to be able to accommodate every learner's needs in the classroom, since what seemed to emerge from these responses was that the teachers seemed to be aware that they taught learners with different comprehension abilities.

5.3.2 Reading comprehension teaching strategies

Findings revealed teachers' understanding of the importance of reading comprehension strategies, but they seemed to lack the understanding of what the strategies were. However, Happy from FPS explained what she did before the start of reading comprehension as:

When I teach reading comprehension, I start by asking the learners to identify what they see in the picture if there is any. Then I will teach that the heading of the story is call... Then I can ask them to describe the characters in the story as I jot down their sentences (Happy).

On the other hand, Charity and Gift from MSS concurred that strategies were indeed important and that teachers needed to know them and use them in various situations to address the needs of the learners in reading comprehension. According to the teachers' responses, findings reveal that the teachers introduced their reading lessons by telling a story that is related to what they are going to read, or learners are asked to tell news about the theme of the lesson, or the lessons were introduced with speech exercises or rhymes. They also reported that they always asked the learners to identify difficult words from the story they have read. Remarks made by Charity and Gift were representatives of this:

I always ask them to tell a story or news according to the theme of the lesson. I first tell mine then I ask them to tell theirs. As I progress with the lesson, I introduce difficult words which I think will be met in the story. We read them, make meaning out of them. Then I ask them questions when they have read the story, (Charity).

Before I start to teach reading I take my learners through speech exercises or rhymes, so that they get ready for correct pronunciation of words that they will meet in the story, (Gift).

When probed to clarify what happens when she starts the actual reading lesson? Gift reported that a lot demonstration has to take place. This is how she said it.

I demonstrate by reading the stories aloud while the learners are listening, then I ask them oral questions to check if they have been listening, then I read the story together with the children and then I ask them to identify difficult words. I give them to read individually, but in most cases they read in groups because our reading materials are not enough. Finally I give them to answer written questions. To further throw more light on this Charity and Gift also demonstrated that:

"I can employ different strategies for the learners to understand comprehension" (Charity).

"There is not only one strategy, one needs to employ different strategies; but most importantly I integrate strategies and methods in order to make reading meaningful and successful" (Gift).

The above statements reveal a general feeling that the teachers seemed to have varied styles of how to teach reading comprehension strategies and that there was no uniform approach among the teachers on how to teach reading comprehension. This was also revealed during classroom observations; teachers did demonstrate the reading but they did not prompt learners to discuss the strategies or teach learners strategies for comprehending the text. The common practice that was seen was asking the learners to answer oral questions after they had read the text. However, as was mentioned by Happy that she could ask children to describe pictures if any, I noticed that all the teachers' classrooms had pictures accompanied with words on the walls. During the reading comprehension, learners were given opportunity to talk about the pictures but they were not guided or informed that the pictures make up the story they were going to read. For example, in Gift's class learners were asked to describe different dressings

from the pictures and in Happy's class learners were asked to describe the different roles of boys and girls from the pictures.

Both interview and observational findings indicate that teachers used some strategies such as the pre- reading strategies unknowingly. These strategies were not mentioned by the teachers. The teachers' ability to ask the learners to describe the pictures before the reading was an indication that they were preparing them for the reading activity. This perhaps would be an assumption that pictures helped the learners to relate what they were going to read with their previous experiences. I also saw that pictures seemed to be important in aiding what the learners would expect to happen in the text. In this way, pictures activated the learners' prior knowledge as the learners used their experiences to understand the new information in the text before the actual reading. My concern still remained as to whether the teachers knew how to utilize the comprehension strategies.

5.3.3   Assessment

The respondents shared that assessment was important in measuring student progress. And they revealed that students were evaluated in both informal and formal ways. All of them explained that in reading comprehension assessment was ongoing conducted on daily basis and most often in the form of observation. According to all the respondents, assessment in P.3 was basically on the learner's competences "what the child can do". They said, they do this this while following the thematic curriculum guidelines. All the respondents indicated they used questions and filling in exercises. One of them indicated she goes ahead to ask the learners to find meaning of new words from the text, when Happy indicated like this: *"The child can read and explain meaning of the new words, or if a child can answer questions asked about the text, or if the child can fill in the missing information."* Charity also added that during the reading process, she asks learners questions at every step to ascertain their progress in the lesson. While Gift's submission corroborated with what Happy and Charity said when she maintained that she asks questions after she has read the story.

My perspective about the responses regarding using assessment as a teaching strategy for reading comprehension, shows that assessment is the common norm done to ascertain the level of learners' mastery of reading comprehension. This was confirmed during the classroom observations, data revealed that the common method of assessment was through asking and answering questions. Questions were asked orally and also they were written down

where the learners worked on them in groups of four. There was no exercise that involved filling in or identifying of new words. The questions that were asked were testing if the learners could find answers from the story.

5.3.4   Modeling/ scaffolding

The findings revealed that the respondents supported learners during lessons through showing the learners how to do things as one way they can help their learners develop some skills. When they are teaching reading comprehension the respondents all said it was important to model the right reading behaviour which the learners would learn form.. They modeled examples of correct pronunciation of words, diction, phrasing and pace of reading and how to answer the questions. Happy FPS expressed that teachers should dedicate a lot of time to their learners to provide a model for them in reading. This was echoed by Charity and Gift that it is important to help the learners grow and expand their horizons than just helping them learn.

Therefore giving models to the children helps them experience live skills which they will later implement. But Gift emphasized that comprehension strategies should be modeled in an integrated way. This is how she put it: *"There is not only one teaching strategy, one need to employ different teaching strategies in order to make reading meaningful. I employ different teaching strategies for learners to develop comprehension. I use various strategies to provide for individual differences of the learners. For example I read for them while they listen to me, then I ask them to read with me. Then they will read while I listen to them."* In addition, observation data indicate that the respondents seemed to use similar ways of modeling fluent reading by first reading aloud to the students. Teachers demonstrated this practice which enabled the learners to incorporate variations in pitch, pace, tone and pauses. I find this practice of an advantage in this study, because reading aloud enables the learners to see and hear how language works.

5.3.5   Instructional materials

The respondents further highlighted that instructional materials worked well in enhancing comprehension abilities in the learners. According to Happy (FPS) using instructional materials in reading spices her teaching and moreover they motivate the learners. In a similar manner, Charity equally values instructional materials as important in teaching reading comprehension. According to her, learners enjoy reading when there are instructional

materials especially when using those with pictures; or objects, even slow learners also get motivated. She reported that she also used teacher's guide to help her determine what action and area to cover regarding the syllabus. It was also interesting to note that the P.3 learners were being taught using real objects and the teachers explained that to bring the concept into children's lives you introduce a lesson with real objects or pictures which may prompt an object or picture talk. Happy of FPS alluded however to the fact that real objects could be used when she stated that:

"... And maybe you can even bring in different objects according to the lesson and ask them to discuss how they are used and by who," (referring to her lesson of the role of boys and girls). Charity made similar statements as Happy. An extract of an interview with Charity went as follows:

*Interviewe*r: *What kind of instructional materials do you use when you teach reading comprehension?*

Charity: Okay, we use textbooks, charts, flash cards, objects and the chalkboard.

Interviewer: I see those are the materials. Do you have any other equipment such as those for helping the visually impaired or those with hearing impairment?

Charity: *We don't have visually impaired children here.*

Interviewer: *Okay, so do you rely only on those you have mentioned?*

Charity: Yes, but I also use work cards.

Interviewer: What are work cards are they different from flash cards?

Charity: Yes, work cards have activities for the learners, such as questions, filling in missing words or letters, flash cards just have a word or pictures.

In addition, Gift's had a similar response as those of Charity and Happy. However, she indicated that instructional materials help the learners discover for themselves. She highlighted that: *"Instructional materials do not only encourage the teachers and learners to work collaboratively but also results in more cooperative learning activities amongst the learners as they use them to discover for themselves."*

During classroom observations I noticed that most of the instructional materials for reading were teacher made. The classes depended on the charts, flash cards and sentence strips made by the teachers. I saw this as a great effort the teachers had put in their classes to ensure that the learners benefit from incidental reading as well. The observational findings corroborate

with what the respondents mentioned about the use of instructional materials as a strategy for enhancing learners' achievement in reading comprehension. In addition findings indicate that the head teachers considered teaching learning materials to be very crucial for teaching learning purpose as stated by Brian head teacher of FPS: *"...the ministry of education has not supplied instructional materials, but we just to try to improvise."*

Brian sounded very concerned that parents were not even supporting in providing their children with simple readers. Brian reported that instructional materials that they used in their schools include: pictures, jigsaws, flash cards, work cards, wall charts and supplementary readers. Innocent the head teacher of MSS reported that they used course books alongside charts, flash cards and work cards. During classroom observation Charity for example, had only 20 text books which were shared among 114 students. This appears to be a crucial problem because if books are absent, then the teacher is overworked to write on the charts which consume time. The findings from the head teachers' responses corroborated with what their teachers said about the importance and the type of instructional materials for reading comprehension.

From the above responses what is critical is that real objects directly provided association of meaning as there were labeled objects such as desks, walls, cupboard, chalkboard, labels of each learning area. This was a way of making learners read with understanding since the objects were labeled. I also saw that the use of objects triggered natural learning and facilitated faster understanding. Creativity on the part of the teachers however, played a large part in relation to what materials were used.

A further analysis of the relationship between the data collected from classroom observation and from the interviews conducted revealed some discrepancies in use. In the interviews for example, the use of the chalkboard ranked low as was only mentioned by Charity, as a teaching learning aid. But during classroom observations, findings reveal that all the teachers were using the chalkboard for teaching learning purposes. Interestingly, real objects were mentioned by all the teachers during interviews to be crucial to teaching, and the lesson observations demonstrated that much as all of them mentioned real objects, not at any one time did the teachers during the lesson refer to any object that was available in the classroom. It was also important that the teachers use the curriculum, teacher's guides to guide them in the selection of content, methods, activities and instructional materials for reading comprehension.

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5.3.6 Motivation to reading

Findings from teachers' responses reveal that motivation was an important strategy in reading comprehension. The respondents felt that motivating learners can assist release the anxiety learners may be confronted with. During classroom observations teachers endeavored to use various means to motivate their learners during the lesson. Motivation was seen through singing, clapping, and rewarding pupils' responses with words such as 'thank you', 'well tried'. However, as regards the teaching, I did not see much of the motivation in content, e.g., differentiating content, methods and marking of pupils' books was only done to the pupils seated at the front. The responses also indicate that the respondents understood that comprehension had an emotional value and needs a relaxed free emotional environment that needs to be developed. Therefore, motivation if not developed can lead to the loss of interest in reading.

5.4 Theme: 3 Characteristics of Classroom environment for reading comprehension

The findings reveal the views of the teachers about the kind of environment that could enhance the development of reading comprehension. In their sentiments the respondents acknowledged the provision of positive learning environment which had reduced drop –out rate and escaping among the learners as they found themselves occupied going through materials on display. The observation findings further show that the teachers endeavor to create learning areas which they described as being integral source of literacy experiences. In addition, the respondents described classroom management as very important for sustaining a positive learning environment that is risk free, safe, and rich with learning opportunities for all diverse learning abilities. Data was justified when Happy made the following sentiments:

"I set rules and regulations which we develop together with the children. I have also created learning centers for each learning area, where I expect children to keep visiting whenever they are free. I have also put a variety of instructional reading materials those with interesting activities to encourage incidental learning" (Happy).

Also data from individual interviews revealed that the learning environment for reading comprehension should be anxiety free, it must look at every child, and above all it must have a collection of different types of reading materials to promote incidental learning. It also

emerged that incidental learning could be one of the strategies teachers used to enhance learners' comprehension competences. As both Charity and Happy disclosed when Charity emphasized and said: *"Positive learning environment motivates the children; we encourage them to read through association of the materials displayed in the classroom."* However, during classroom observations in both schools, the learners were not guided to exploit the opportunities of learning through association. The classrooms had well printed and attractive materials but they were underutilized.

In addition, findings showed that an environment which had good working atmosphere between the teacher and the learners and among the learners was considered to be an ideal learning environment for reading comprehension; an environment that recognizes children's efforts, and helps them improve on their comprehension levels through a number of constructive activities. The respondents understood the value of the kind of learning environment for reading comprehension. They were not only looking at the environment for only reading comprehension but an environment that initiates hope in the learner.

Moreover, classroom climate worked as an energizing factor for reading comprehension. The data collected, showed that the nature of the relationships in the classroom permeated the interaction among the students and the teachers and among the students themselves. This was reflected when the teachers cited several examples that they used in order to create a positive classroom climate.

According to the respondents, creating group seating arrangement was one way they could influence the learners to learn together and help one another. At the same time this kind of sitting arrangement helped them enhance children's social skills. This was supported when the respondents said this: *"I have made a group sitting arrangement where I have mixed these children in their ability and background levels"* (Happy). Charity and Gift had similar submissions that group sitting arrangement had eliminated discrimination among the learners. This was reflected when Gift said: *"We maintain group sitting so that some children do not look disadvantaged, and we try to eliminate discrimination among the learners."* Evidence from the observational findings indicates that the respondents demonstrated positive learning communities which reduced anxiety, discrimination but promote positive teaching and learning relationships which enhanced children's social skills as well.

5.5   *Theme 4: Challenges teachers experience when teaching reading comprehension and what solutions have been suggested for improvement.*

Throughout the textual data collected, the respondents revealed that they were faced with a lot of challenges towards their work particularly as concerns the teaching of reading comprehension. Findings indicate that the challenges that the teachers faced include: teacher attitudes, characteristics of the learners, overcrowded classrooms, nature of the school curriculum, government policies, and inadequate instructional materials, which are hereof presented with vivid evidence.

5.5.1   Teachers' attitudes

 Findings revealed that teachers seemed to bear negative attitudes which were attributed as challenges to teaching reading comprehension. It was found that, the differences teachers acquired in their training were part of their inability to use the reading comprehension strategies. This claim was expressed in the following ways: Brian Head teacher of FPS*: "As human beings we are bound by our own attitudes towards doing something or towards someone. What I discovered with my teachers is that they have some pedagogical gaps in teaching some subjects and reading is one of them. I think this inadequacy of the right methods and procedures to teach reading comprehension has also a bearing on the teachers' attitudes towards teaching reading comprehension."*

When probed how he was able to discover that, Brian simply said: *"My teachers are open to me I always have a dialogue with each of them about their expectations, and the challenges they have toward their work. But of course I also play my role as an administrator to once in a while pop in their classrooms to see what is going on there."*

 When I asked why that kind of behaviour when the teachers were well qualified and experienced in their work. Brian said: *"Yes, the teachers are qualified and experienced as parse but the truth is, most of the teachers in the lower primary section qualified in primary one class, so because of the shortage of the teachers I allocate them to any class not of their preference. Like the P.3 teacher she has all along been teaching in P. 1 class, but because I don' t have a teacher for P.3, so she has to take up the class, moreover, she has to help me with administration of the school."*

However, the teachers attributed their negative attitudes to the big class numbers that they had in their classes, and the frequent introduction of new methods that they are to implement before they have consolidated on the previously introduced methods. One of them even confided and revealed that at the time of her training, which was the time when there was a lot of insurgency in the region; their training was so much affected. This implies that, the teacher indicated that she hadn't been taught how to teach reading comprehension and apply the strategies.

5.5.2   Characteristics of Pupils

All the responses revealed teachers' opinions about their learners in the classrooms. They were aware of the reasons of learners' inability to read and understand, and of the challenges it caused to the teachers. The results exposed teachers' disappointments about the nature of the pupils that they taught. This according to the respondents was stressing, confusing and frustrating them. According to Happy, FPS teaching reading comprehension is a challenge, as each of them had this to say*: "There are many challenges especially those children who cannot read and understand. This is very frustrating"* (Happy). *"I am confused about how to teach reading comprehension because children who cannot read stress us"* (Charity). Gift on the hand has the same feeling about the children who cannot read, this makes her feel demoralized because politicians, educationists, parents alike always blame the teachers for children's inability to read and understand.

When asked how they would tackle such a problem, the responses reveal some promising ideas. Happy for instance thinks of pairing the learners, the ones who can read and the one who needs help. While Charity expects to give take home assignments that they will always have to read before beginning a new lesson and Gifts expects to introduce a checklist. However, the head teachers seemed to acknowledge what their teachers feel about children who cannot read and understand. Innocent head teacher MSPS said that most of the children in the Lower primary section were not proficient in their reading skills, thus were unable to understand what they read. He categorically put it in this way: *"We have a big problem in our foundation classes, children are not fully developed. They cannot read and examine the text."*

 He went on to suggest that he should introduce reading comprehension tests that they can use as yard stick for checking the children's proficiency in reading comprehension. Brian, the head teacher of FPS, also supports the teachers' concerns about children who cannot read, but

to him he felt that the teachers also faced the problems of identifying learners with Special Education Needs (SEN). When asked why it was difficult? Brian replied: *"Our teachers are general education teachers and with large classes they may not be so keen to identify children with SEN."* However, during classroom observations in both schools and with all the reading lessons that were observed, the following groups of learners existed in the classrooms: There were learners who could read the words correctly, understand and respond to the questions. There were those who were able to follow the teacher after she had read then they joined in chorus form because they had heard or listened when others were reading, there were those who could only answer the questions orally because they had heard them, but they could not read to show answers from the text. The other group was that of learners, who seemed to be frustrated, they could not read and it was difficult for them to listen while others were reading. The latter was the majority of the group. No wonder the teachers expressed disappointment about their situation, instead of feeling motivated about their practices, they instead stated that they were stressed, confused and frustrated to have learners who were unable to read and understand in their classrooms. An indication that the teachers were so much strained and almost lost morale in being effective in their practice.

5.5.3   Big class enrolment

Findings revealed that big class size was detrimental to teachers' practice towards reading comprehension. The large class numbers was reported to be cumbersome in terms of time needed for preparation and implementation of lessons where resources were also reported to be scarce. It was common that all the respondents reported their work was being affected by overcrowded classrooms which according to them gave them to do almost double work, they felt they were overworked, thus could not offer enough individual attention to each child since there was high pupil- teacher ratio. During classroom observations, evidence showed that the teachers were struggling with big class enrolments. Five pupils sat at a desk, for example, in MSPS where there were 114 pupils against 20 desks. And sharing one text book amongst 4-5 pupils. The teachers in these classrooms are mixed between teaching, and managing their classrooms. These were their expressions:

"We have to do almost double work, there is teaching then controlling the class. Besides that you cannot even help all the children the way you want" (Happy)

Charity could not help expressing her feeling when she said: "The *class is so big that when you go on helping each and every child, then you are almost conducting the lesson twice. And moreover, when you want to mark their exercise books, you will not manage to finish and give timely feedback"*

Gift shared the same feeling as other teachers when she said: *"You know when the class is big automatically you the teacher has to face much workload, to prepare the lesson, teach them, and mark their assignments if any. It is good we are two, so we tend to help one another control the big number. And sometimes we have to share marking the learners' assignments."*

5.5.4 The nature of the school curriculum

Another critical factor the respondents reported as a challenge was the nature of the school curriculum which all the respondents reported that it overburdened them. Evidence from the study emerged that reading was not taught across the curriculum hence the low reading comprehension amongst the learners. The following remarks by Happy of FPS represent these sentiments: *"Reading is not being taught across the whole school curriculum and this is very serious because learners cannot only wait for the literacy hour. When there are breaks in between it is a problem. They must read even throughout other subjects such numeracy."*

In addition, findings further revealed that reading comprehension strategies should be developed within and across other learning areas. The respondents seemed to believe that if reading comprehension could be applied even in other learning areas, learners would have enough practice and be able to read and understand texts. It is evident from the response that Charity from MSS suggested the aspect of curricular integration so that reading comprehension should develop alongside the subject taught. Her response was supported by the view that there should be integration. Gift from MSS supports this view as: *"These strategies should cut across and not to be used by literacy or language teacher during reading comprehension only, but I want to say may be that is why children cannot read and understand, because teachers wait or do reading comprehension during story reading time which is very little we all know that, let's do it even in other learning areas."* During classroom observations I could not observe integration in other subject areas because I was only available during the literacy hour sessions as this was my focus of the study.

5.5.5 Strict Government Policies

It was also evident that the respondents apportioned blame on the government. They cited the government policies that they said posed challenges in their practice. Their argument on the government policies were directly associated with automatic promotions which were identified with the implementation of the UPE program; and that, there was no policy or vigilant system to support and to monitor the implementation of reading comprehension. These concerns were bitterly articulated by the head teachers when they said: "*One major problem is the current government policy that has dictated on automatic promotions. Teachers have kept receiving children who are not ready for the next class*" (Brian of FPS). Innocent from MSS signified that government policy had done more harm than good to the lives of the learners as well as those of the teachers. He cited the advent of UPE which had resulted in influx of the classrooms and this was a distress to the teachers as they are overworked, and then the government did not plan well to ensure that the resources were adequately secured, and of course routine monitoring of the implementation of the curricular was not efficiently being done. These remarks were in congruence with Happy's remarks when she cited as one of the challenges they experienced when she said: "*The foundation of the children is weak; many children have very poor background of reading. We have no choice but we have to follow the government policy.*" The responses also seem to indicate that the teachers have given up on receiving children with weak foundation, because they seem not to have any voice toward the decision making arm of promotion of children to the next class. Gift testifies this when she said this: "*We have a big challenge on implementing the government policies. So I have nothing to do but at the end of the year, we will push them to the next class since the policy does not support repeating.*"

The above responses show that there is a big problem towards the foundation of students' learning. It was evident that the teachers have given up on the weak children; they would wish that the children with a weak foundation could be made to repeat a class, but they handicapped in that decision, so they found it inevitable to push them forward. This indicated a kind of laissez-faire attitude, which was one of the challenges cited as the teachers' attitudes. However, evidence from classroom observations serves to reveal those learners who could not read and understand may not have made it from their previous classes, and now they are posing challenges to their teachers as well as to themselves. It also seemed that the

government has not instituted modalities of monitoring performance to ensure the right learners go to the next class.

5.5.6   Reading materials are inadequate

Data revealed that there were very few reading materials in the schools. Teachers expressed frustration in regard to shortage of text books, the teachers relied on teacher made flash cards and work cards. They felt that if the issue of IMS was addressed by the schools and the Ministry of Education (MOES), they could favorably cope with the teaching of reading comprehension. The respondents also felt that if they had enough text books, it would be easier for them to put the books in the hands of the learners so that they keep practicing with their guidance.

Findings from classroom observations confirmed that teachers were facing a very stiff problem of text books. During classroom observations there was concrete evidence to corroborate the teachers' views with what was seen in the classroom. What was evident was that the teachers had tried to make reading materials from flash- cards, charts and work cards which were also not enough. Data revealed that Model Seed Primary school had a few text books which the learners shared among four children during the lesson process. This implies that the teachers' work cannot be so effective if the means for learners' success are limited.

5.5.7   Solutions to the challenges

In spite of the challenges as highlighted above, the teachers had developed some strategies to cope with numerous challenges. Some strategies could be institutionalized while others depended on particular individual teachers. Teachers and their head teacher have made efforts to improve their practices through improvising the instructional materials, they are also using cooperative learning (group work) to enhance the teaching and learning of reading comprehension in their classes as an effective strategy. Group work has been viewed to ease management and sharing of limited IMS. However, during classroom observations, little or no discussions went among the group members. In most cases learners attempted to work individually within the groups without any sharing or discussing. It was apparent from the lessons observed that such a strategy needed to be developed   further if the teachers were to tap its great potential to promote reading comprehension in the learners.

Findings from the interviews also suggest that the respondents felt that some professional development (CPD) can help them to refresh their skills. On the other hand the respondents felt that some challenges such class enrolment and policy on automatic promotion were beyond their level and therefore needed an intervention from the district stakeholders and the Ministry of Education (MOES) to chat a way forward. Brian's proposal corroborates with the teachers suggestions about the need to conduct refresher courses. The head teacher Innocent emphasized on the teachers to observe their teaching methods, assess the learners and make sure the few books are out into the hands of children with guiding instructions. While this proposal stood, during classroom observations I did not see the teachers assigning the books or take home assignments as a way of giving learners practice and also to enable them get assistance from home (from parents or guardians).However, giving learners take home assignments for practice is pedagogically accepted but this practice also pre supposes the presence of literate parents or guardians with time to attend to their children's home work.

The teachers also proposed to engage in team teaching/ co- teaching so as to manage the big numbers of learners. During classroom observation, I noticed this practice at MSPS where Charity and Gift share a class. They helped one another in keeping order and discipline, and in the distribution of instructional materials and marking of children's exercise books. As an investigator, I felt this practice was very relevant to my study. Team teaching or co -teaching just needs strengthening to tap its potential in enriching the teaching of reading comprehension.

5.5.8   Cross- case analysis of the teachers studied

Cross- case analysis was done to explore the similarities and differences that cut across between the respondents, and the schools. The schools where the study was carried were ordinary schools practicing inclusive education. Fairway primary school had a total enrolment of 382 while Model Seed primary school had an enrolment of 1202. Their classes were generally heterogeneous in term of learners with and without learning difficulties, in particular reading comprehension difficulties. There was a very big difference in class enrolment. While Happy had only 26 pupils in her class, Charity and Gift in their class had 114 pupils; an enrolment that was almost five times doubling Happy's class. But what is important is how the teachers teach reading comprehension to few or big numbers.

Both schools followed the national primary school curriculum, which was one of the criteria for selecting the schools for this study. Which means the current topic for this study could be answered by the teachers who were in active practice. Similar challenges were experienced by all the teachers. This could be the reason why there may be few children in P.3 who were able to read and understand. In both schools classroom environments were quite conducive, with a lot of charts, friezes, and reading trees displayed, implying that the teachers were trying to develop children's reading skills through incidental learning. Other projects such as models of shops were seen where children practices vocabulary associated with buying and selling. The classroom atmosphere in both schools promoted social skills. In both schools similar proposals to solve some of the challenges were suggested.

5.6 *Summary of this chapter*

The aim of this study was to examine how teachers teach reading comprehension in primary three classrooms in Uganda. In this chapter, I presented and analyzed data following the themes as they emerged from the research questions. The themes that emerged from the research questions that were presented in the analysis included: Theme 1 Teachers' understanding of teaching reading comprehension and its importance in the lives of learners. Theme 2 concerned reading comprehension teaching strategies. Theme 3 the learning environment for reading comprehension and the challenges teachers experience when teaching reading comprehension. An exploration of the similarities and difference between cases was presented and a summary of the chapter. Data was presented case by case simultaneously beginning with teachers' interview and then the observational data followed. Evidence of the findings was represented by the teachers' live utterances; their narratives provided thick descriptions of their characteristics and teaching practices.

The responses by the respondents showed that they did not have access to the research literature on reading comprehension. The teachers seemed to have little understanding of the reading comprehension strategies and how to apply them to assist learners for example; the respondents could not differentiate between comprehension strategies and teaching methods that promote reading comprehension. This was evident during classroom observations.

Chapter six will provide a summary and discussions of the data collected and answer the research questions.

6   Discussion

6.1   Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine how teachers teach reading comprehension to P.3 inclusive classrooms in Uganda. The study was guided by the main research question; "How do teachers teach reading comprehension in accordance with pupils' different levels of mastery and needs for support in the learning process?" This chapter therefore presents a summary of each research question and the discussion of the study findings. The chapter begins with a summary of each question then subsequently the discussion follows immediately. The discussion is presented following the themes that were derived from the research questions. The themes that will be discussed include: Teacher knowledge and understanding (6.2) of reading comprehension and teaching strategies (6.3), classroom environment (6.4) and the challenges (6.5) of teaching reading comprehension and contradiction (6.6) between theory and practice is discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary (6.7) of the chapter.

6.2   Teachers' Knowledge and Understanding of Reading Comprehension and its importance in the lives of the learners

This theme was to establish the views of the teachers about their understanding of reading comprehension and why they thought it was important to teach reading comprehension to their learners. The findings of the study showed that the teachers expressed some common knowledge and understanding of the concept of reading comprehension and why it is important to teach reading comprehension to P.3 learners as indicated in (5.2) when the teachers reported that reading comprehension is reading with understanding and children are expected to identify difficult words and find their meaning from the text. This finding is supported by various scholars (Wessels, 2010, Dole, 2002), when they propose that reading for meaning is the main purpose for reading comprehension. Therefore in this study, the teachers believed it critical that learners must be able to tread and understand in order to use the information in their lives. This is also in agreement with Durkin (1979), who said that reading comprehension is important academically and throughout learners' lives. Important as it may be, the teachers seemed to be concerned that there were learners in their classrooms who could not read and understand a text provided to them.

Because if readers can read the texts but do not understand what they are reading, they are not really reading (Block, Gambel and Pressley (2002; Snow, 2002); Armbruster and Osborn (2003); Harvey and Goudvis (2007). My understanding is that the aim of reading is to read the words, to understand them and be able to make meaning of the sentences in the text, as well as to comprehend the meaning of the whole text and apply and relate the information when needed. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) concur with this arguing that: "If the purpose of reading is anything other understanding, why read at all?" (p.13).

However, during classroom observations, teachers never explained the purpose of reading the text to the learners although they seemed to have similar mode of asking questions to the learners after reading the text. And moreover, the questions that were asked to the learners were directly answered from the text. There were no questions that allowed the learners to apply their own experiences to answer the questions. This was a clear indication that perhaps the teachers were incapacitated to explain what is expected during the process of reading. In essence giving a clear purpose for reading keeps the reader engaged (Gersten, Fuchs, Williams & Baker, 2001).

6.3   *Theme 2 Teachers' instructional methods and strategies*

This theme identified the role of teachers and revealed whether what they said during interviews was put into practice. While answering this question the teachers described the methods and strategies as the modes for the instruction of reading comprehension

The findings from both interviews and classroom observations indicate that teachers use variety of methods and strategies to teach learners to read with understanding. The following methods: demonstration, discussions, direct instruction, role play, group work, storytelling guided practice were reported to be being effectively used to enhance comprehension abilities of the learners. The teachers' approaches relate to what is reported in previous studies (NRP, 2000). In spite of their engagement in the teaching / learning situations, analysis demonstrated that the teachers' understanding of methods was inconsistent. While all of them reported to be using a variety of methods of teaching reading comprehension, evidence from observation showed the contrary. This reflection correlates with research evidence which shows that child outcomes in reading comprehension are related to the quality of instruction they receive which in turn reflects teacher preparation and an ongoing professional development (Block and Duffy, 2008).

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However, it was also noticeable that classroom observation findings demonstrate that teachers presented concepts to be learned through reading aloud, and through whole words. In addition, teachers mentioned several factors that they called strategies such as assessment, modeling and motivation that they used to support their instruction According to Shanahan et al., (2012), a strategy is "instructional mental actions during reading that improve reading comprehension," (p.11). It is critical that teachers know the strategies and apply them in their classrooms. However, the teachers in the study showed a lack of knowledge about teaching reading comprehension strategies. Zimmerman (1998) cautions that teachers must be strategic and accurate in the implementation of the strategy so that it can be helpful to the learners. For example learners should be, guided, assessed and motivated to read the text. It is generally accepted that the teacher plays a major role in determining the effectiveness of a reading instructional program. Duffy- Hester (1999) perhaps stated it best when she noted that the role the teacher played in helping children to learn to read: " I am convinced that the teacher is more important and has a greater impact than single fixed reading program, methods or approach" (p.492). Certainly, it is the teacher who should facilitate a vehicle for effective comprehension; hence the findings clarified the following factors: assessment, modeling, and motivating children to read alongside the strategies as relevant to enhancing reading comprehension in children: assessment, modeling and motivation.

Accordingly, the ability to teach students what they need to know requires that reading teachers continually use a blend of informal and formal measures to identify the students' strengths and weaknesses in interacting with the text (Barrentine, 1999). This is in corroboration with the teachers' responses (5.3.3) when they shared that assessment was important in judging student progress. They claimed to use the information collected from assessment to inform instruction and guide students, learning. This is was also reflected by Reutzel & Cooter (2004), who assume that effective planning for literacy instruction should include appropriate assessment because assessment of learners should inform lesson planning in order to meet individual needs of individual students. Based on those arguments, (Makin et al., 2000), suggest observation as a technique used to assess the needs of individual learners. These theoretical perspectives are in line with this study's findings when the respondents explained that assessment is ongoing conducted on daily basis and in most cases in the form of observation (see 5.3.3), a confirmation of Salinger's (2001) belief that observation should be a primary means of student assessment. Therefore this study takes the advice of Clay (1993) that "Observation involves more than hearing children read every day; it involves

being a teacher who interacts with the child who is reading" (p.4). Classroom observations confirm that the teachers used both oral and written questions as the common procedures for assessment to monitor their learners' comprehension progress and this practice is fully recommended by Stronge (2002). What was disturbing was that, according to the classroom observation the findings indicate that, teachers do not use other methods of assessment and providing adequate feedback to pupils is insufficient. However, in reality, without the teacher's pervasive concern for knowing and responding to learners' needs, reading instruction can be irrelevant and mindless drudgery for all concerned. This pervasive concern about assessment can be related to the fundamental concept of effective teaching. The teachers should provide instruction that reflects learners' level of reading development and proficiency in comprehension.

As a reflection in the theoretical framework, modeling strategies to the learners is one way learners can read with understanding. During the interviews the respondents claimed they supported their learners through modeling correct behavior of reading to them. The study findings in classroom observations (5.3.4) indicate the teachers modeled fluent reading before their learners, and they (teachers) claimed that modeling to the learners helped their learners experience live skills which they would later on implement on their own. Their claims during interviews were confirmed during classroom observations; when each one of them modeled reading aloud, and giving examples when clarifying on a few concepts to the learners. Research supports this practice and evidence is cited in the review of literature, quoting Shanahan (2006) who according to him, when supporting student learning in reading comprehension, demonstration must include a clear explanation of the strategy, a description of how and when to use it, and lastly explanation of why it is useful.

This relates to the theory of Vygotsky (1978) which considers learning as a shared joint process in a responsive social context. In the Vggotskian framework, known as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), children are capable of far more competent performance when they have proper assistance ("scaffolded learning") from adults. Therefore; the most important people in the context of this study are the teachers. If they do not serve as positive role models, the learners will never develop and be able to read and understand the text. It is upon this argument that teachers should be competent, since they are required to model and practice a given strategy and to give learners an opportunity to apply on their own (Sweet & Snow, 2002; Pressley, 2002; Texas Education Agency, 2002). After all, Piaget (1978);

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Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the guidance of more knowledgeable other as important to the learners to enhance reading comprehension, since they learn from the teachers or peers.

While supporting how reading comprehension should be taught, research supports the notion that literacy learning is influenced by a variety of motivational factors (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Eccles, 1983; Ford, 1992; Kuhl, 1986; Lepper, 19988; Maehr, 1976; McConbs, 1991; Wigfield, 1994). The respondents in the study described the importance of motivation to the learners in reading comprehension. Findings show that, the respondents believed that motivating the learners helps release anxiety learners may be confronted with. In a way they felt also that motivating the learners captures their attention (see 5.3.6). During classroom observations it was evident that the teachers endeavored to motivate their learners through various activities such as clapping, singing, using the instructional materials (see 5.3.5), and grouping the learners so that they work together (5.3.1). In addition by giving encouraging feedback which was administered verbally for example, saying thank you, good and so on when they had responded correctly, the teachers also recognized the learners challenges E.g. in Happy's class when she had to explain the meaning of the word "kitchen." Associated with these findings, teachers' responses and classroom observations indicate classroom practices that encourage learners develop interest, mastery ownership and belonging for reading. This is as well acceptable with empirical studies which are drawn from (CORI) For example, Guthrie, McRae, & Klauda, 2007) who view teachers who create units that focus on some conceptual theme based on student interest and mastery are encouraging students to enthusiastically read with sustained interest and engagement.

The results further revealed that teachers not only endeavored to develop their learners' comprehension skills, but also saw that it was important to develop their social skills as well. This was based on classroom observation that evidence saw the learners seated in clustered groups of five, they were sharing their learning aids, they read in unison or chorusing (see 5.3.2) and they were working together in the questions that the teachers gave them. As an investigator as well as an observer I felt this was a good opportunity to help learners develop some life skills as well as the social skills, since sharing reading is a social experience. It is a good thing to see teachers support this collaboration by allowing learners share ideas, and build knowledge together. Moreover, motivation to read is critical because it can influence and create interest , purpose, emotion or persistence with which the reader engages with the text so as to improve the reading ability and comprehension of the text (Guthrie & Wigfield,

2000; Stipek, 2002; and Brophy, 2004). It is therefore important that the teachers must motivate learners in such way that they develop love for reading. This behaviour can encourage learners to develop positive attitudes towards reading comprehension by motivating them all times.

6.4   Theme: 3. Characteristics of Classroom environment for reading comprehension

As indicated in the results chapter (5.4) observational data revealed that the sitting arrangement in the classrooms had all the desks clustered together, where the learners sat in groups facing each other. This kind of sitting arrangement was suitable for this class as it encouraged learners to have a more interactive atmosphere during the activities. According to interviews with the teachers, findings indicate the learning environment the teachers hoped to support reading comprehension development, should motivate the learners and it should see each child as an individual. Evidence by all the teachers (5.4) indicates that teachers were very serious and committed to providing an environment which motivates and self regulates the student learning.

Moreover the respondents emphasized on the classroom climate that permeated interaction; cordial relationship between the teachers and the learners and amongst the learners themselves. This is what Danielson (1996) when he describes the characteristics found in an effective classroom for teaching reading to include information on creating an environment that promotes respect, establishes rapport and culture for learning, management procedures for student behavior are put in place and organization of the physical space. Indeed, these characteristics were evidenced in all the classrooms which demonstrated collaborative working relationship between the teachers and their pupils, the teachers had also endeavored to provide print rich environments in their classrooms, by displaying charts, flash- cards, friezes and labels placed on objects, models of shops with price lists. Morrow et al (2003) claim that the characteristics of practicing teachers include their development of the print- rich environments. They (Morrow et al.) go on to say that one practicing teachers' philosophy of literacy instruction includes an environment that is supportive and accepting. Roberts (1998) further supports this as he claims that an environment that allows children's literacy development to flourish is one which allows children view themselves as readers. In my study

this was very significant as the teachers made efforts to develop the learning environment necessary to develop comprehension in the learners.

Therefore considerations for creating a positive reading comprehension environment include the need for sufficient space, ease of access for materials, objects and materials that are age appropriate and authentic, which help children build connections between what is already known and their new understanding (Roskos & Neuman, 2001).

But there is need for teachers to facilitate their classrooms with class libraries, the findings showed that this element was missing in all the classrooms. Morrow & Gambrell (2001) advise that a classroom should have classroom libraries with abundance of a variety of literary materials. This is confirmed by Abdulkarim (2003) who found out that having a print- rich environment was one of the seven practices exercised by an outstanding teacher. Piaget (1978) regarded the physical appearance of the classroom as important for enhancing reading comprehension. Learners must be able to see the classroom with a variety of books, charts, flash-cards, and worksheets and see and hear the teachers or peers modeling the behavior of reading and use of the strategies. This idea is echoed by Vygotsky (1978) and is relevant to reading. This implies that during reading comprehension the learners learn from the behavior of people around them, which in the context of this study are the teachers. Inevitably in this study, it was relevant that the teachers created a positive print- rich environment that could relate to promoting effective reading comprehension instruction.

6.5   *Theme 4 Challenges teachers experience when teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms?*

The participants in this study face similar challenges that are experienced by other teachers in Uganda. Common among the challenges include: teachers' negative attitude, non- existent elementary textbooks for primary schools, lack of appropriate teaching aids and overwhelming class enrolments. Within these circles, findings in both teachers' individual interviews and classroom observations stand out to be representatives this investigation.

Teachers have diverse training backgrounds on the reading comprehension content to deliver. Their own attitudes toward teaching comprehension may contribute to their inability to use the reading comprehension strategies. From the classroom observations, the teaching methods that were used were inadequately utilized, the students were not guided to discuss, and verbal

questioning was used as a common practice and a mode of delivery. Although there is an attempt to use group work, the activities to the pupils were rather general; there was no differentiation to cater for the very weak students as was mentioned during interviews. What was interesting was that the groups appeared to be sitting groups but not the learning groups. The teachers demonstrate an effort to see that the learners read and understand the texts, but they are also sometimes demoralized to be consistent in their work due to pupils' weak background, absenteeism, and the frequent disruptions in the teaching timetable due to other schedules on the school curriculum such as sports, music competitions and so on. It was also strange to learn from the teachers' responses that they held unfavorable attitudes regarding their training and familiarity with the reading strategies, a revelation that was expressed by Charity of MSS when she narrated her profile. Teacher's attitudes can have a significant bearing on their practice. Therefore, these research findings have far- reaching implications for teacher education in Uganda.

Characteristics of pupils retard the pace coverage of the content. The fact the majority of the pupils cannot effectively read (see 5.5.2) and understand texts by the time they are in P.3 spells out the problems of the ability to comprehend what they read. While this was a big problem to the children, but in this study, the pupils' weak background, inability to read and understand were a total disgrace to the teachers who were confused, stressed and seemed to have almost given up. While pupils' characteristics was a challenge to teachers' practice,, evidence form classroom observations reveal that large class size because of the introduction of UPE , the issues the teachers pointed out , negate their attitude towards the practice of reading comprehension. Certainly, when teaching large classes teachers provide fewer exercises and practices so as to reduce the amount of helping learners individually. Packed classes for example, MSPS in this study provide limited space to conduct group work that would benefit individual learners. In most cases the teachers are all the time engaged in discipline related activities in the classroom, and this may pose challenges to the completion of the syllabus and to practically attend to individual learners.

The current curriculum that does not cater for reading comprehension across other learning areas, which was the reason the teachers in the study attributed to the low reading comprehension amongst the learners. The teachers in the study felt they were overburdened to ensure that the learners read with understanding yet their counter parts were not playing any role to develop comprehension in the learners. In addition, during classroom observation, it

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was evident that the teachers lacked instructional materials as they had also expressed during interviews. The findings indicated that teachers used mostly: flash cards, charts, sentence strips and limited number of text books which were shared among five children (e.g., at MSPS). Lack of or inadequate instructional materials do not motivate the teacher, and it makes the teacher's work difficult, as she / he have to write the reading materials which also take a lot of time. Research supports the use of instructional materials in every teaching and learning situation who confirms that the most consistent characteristics in improving student performance is the availability of textbooks and other supplementary teaching materials such as flash- cards, work sheets and well trained , prepared, supervised and motivated teaches. Another factor to be considered is the government policies on education which have dictated on automatic promotions. If pupils are not shown academic growth, it is unwise to automatically promote them. Such a policy of automatic promotion needs to be reconsidered in the name of quality.

It was also necessary that the findings of this study sought solutions to the problems teachers experience while teaching reading comprehension could be solved by taking the teachers through professional development to help them revive some pedagogical skills. This was as suggested by Brian the head teacher of FPS. The idea of taking the teachers through professional development is supported by research within the assumption that an important ingredient of efficient comprehension strategies instruction is professional development for teachers (Block & Duffy, 2008). In CORI (Guthrie et al., 2004a) for example, assert that practicing teachers should always receive up 10 days professional development course to prepare them for high- quality comprehension instruction. This is also supported by Anders et al (2000) who recommend that research addressing the impact of professional development for practicing teachers is a critical need. In relevance of my study, I agree with the scholars because professional development and continuous education for teachers coupled with a focus on classroom practice and student outcomes, might help to ensure that, tenure in the classroom is associated with more effective teaching and stronger student outcomes.

6.6 *Contradiction between theory and practice of teaching reading comprehension*

During teachers' interviews the teachers indicated they understood reading comprehension and they regarded it as important to the learners in schools and in their lives. The classroom

observation however, showed the contrary. Findings indicate that the teachers were not clear about how to teach reading comprehension and especially which strategies to use when teaching. According to the data from all the instruments they teachers hardly indicated any comprehension strategy, but instead talked about, those strategies they would use to enhance comprehension. Classroom observation revealed the teachers were able to model fluent reading although this strategy was not mention during interviews. As an investigator I felt this was an indication that the participating teachers of my study seemed to be not aware that reading comprehension strategies have to be taught for the learners to understand the text. During interviews teachers expressed different ways that they presented their lessons. For instance Happy claimed she asked learners to identify what they see in the picture, Charity claimed to use stories or news related to the theme of the lesson, and Gift claimed to use speech exercises or rhymes (see 5.3.2). Their presentations did not indicate anywhere that they first explained the purpose of reading, the strategy and how to use it.

In the classroom observations, Pressley (1998) and Kin (2006) confirmed that while teachers provided learners with opportunities to practice, but if learners had not been taught, neither the strategies nor the utility of applying them could be achieved, many learners do not know how to use reading comprehension strategies. The general picture is that, during individual teachers' interviews teachers were not quite sure of how they taught reading comprehension, especially in utilizing the comprehension strategies. According to the teachers they needed some professional activation of their skills so that they are armed up to the current trends in their practice.

6.7   Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I summarized the research findings following each research question and subsequently a discussion of each theme followed immediately. The findings discussed came out as result from the data collected from both interviews and classroom observations. The findings tried to answer the main question of the study which was "How do teachers teach reading comprehension in according with pupils' different level of mastery and need for support in the learning process?" Theme 1 Discussed teachers views, goals on the concept of reading comprehension and what they felt was important for teaching reading comprehension to P.3 learners, Theme 2 identified the teachers' roles in reading comprehension utilizing the methods and strategies for teaching reading comprehension, Theme 3 described the kind of

learning environment that may support the development of comprehension proficiency in the learners and Theme 4 Explored the challenges that bogged the teachers' practice. The discussion was guided and supported by relevant literature that was cited from the literature review. Finally, the chapter tried to relate the teachers' theory and practice.

7   Summary, conclusion, ideas for future research and recommendations

7.1   Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study and it main findings and then discusses the contribution of the current investigation to the teaching of reading comprehension in Uganda. Suggestions regarding practical implications of teaching reading comprehension are made. Then the final focuses regarding suggestions for further research are discussed.

7.2   Overview of the Study

The recent study investigated the teaching of reading comprehension in P. 3 classrooms in Uganda. The study relied largely on qualitative case study using semi- structured and observation guides as the instruments for data collection. This task was carried out through beginning with pilot study and modification of instruments. Four research questions were examined in the study. Five teachers, of whom three were classroom teachers and two were head teachers were the primary respondents in the study.

 In chapter 1 I stated the problem of the study and explained my personal interest in the subject of inquiry. In chapter 2, the theoretical framework, related literature and theories that support the study were linked to the themes drawn from the research questions. The literature review was inevitable in order to explore the best practices teachers used and see what research has to say about the teaching of reading comprehension to P.3 learners in classrooms.

Chapter three discussed the contextual framework of the study and   Chapter 4 discussed the research design and methodology that was employed in this qualitative case study and the methods chosen for data gathering include: individual teacher interviews using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations using observation guides.

 Results and analysis were presented in chapter 5. Summary of the main findings and discussion of the findings were presented in chapter 6. The discussion was preceded by the summary of the findings which were presented following the research questions. And later the discussion was introduced by themes and supported with relevant literature. Chapter seven

presented the summary, conclusion, ideas for future research, and recommendations for improvement.

7.3   Conclusion

The essence of this study was to examine the teaching of reading comprehension to primary three classrooms. Drawing from individual teacher interviews and the classroom observations, the study concluded that teaching reading comprehension typically requires a variety of instructional approaches in order to make children educational experiences more productive. The literacy rich environments servers as a means to build basic skills necessary for literacy development by demonstrating to children the function and utility of language in an intentional , purposeful and intensive way.

While many students come to school with exposure of literacy in their everyday lives, students who may not have access or exposure benefit from the explicit instruction and intensity provided by the teachers in the literate rich environments. Given the support of a print – rich environment, students will be better prepared to work on literacy skills which include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

Finally, in the search for ways to ensure all learners (in Uganda) achieve an acceptable standard of literacy skills thus, comprehension, , it is crucially important to make connections with established bodies of knowledge about teacher effectiveness. In this context, it is important to note that pedagogical practices and strategies parse are not independent of the teachers who deliver them to students, whether or not those experiencing reading difficulties in the classroom (Hattie, 2003).

7.4   Implication for future research

The minimal inclusion of reading comprehension strategies would appear to have implication for teacher education and professional development. It may be prudent to make significant inquiry into how primary school teachers are trained in Uganda. The findings in this study further, beg for further investigation (research), more focused education policies and more support for teachers to improve pupils' opportunity to read and understand texts. More research on whether teachers' explicit instruction of reading comprehension strategies impacts students' outcomes such as performance on standardized tests is required.

7.5   Limitations of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine how teachers teach reading comprehension to primary three learners. It acknowledged that the study has a number of limitations. The first one is that although it was important to obtain information from many teachers who teach reading comprehension, only three classroom teachers could participate in the study. This implies that there was limited access to a variety of data that would permit a more rigorous analysis of the findings about the phenomenon under study.

Secondly, as might be noted from the literature review, this study may be one of the very few studies that are attempting to investigate this phenomenon in Uganda.
Another limitation was my position. Having been working in the same district for long, and being known to the respondents, as usual the respondents were a little bit doubtful as to whether I was on a study or on an inspection. This made the teachers fearful, and they expressed fear of not wanting to be seen teach. In a way there natural behaviour was not fully realized.

There were also cross- cutting issues, the schools I used were practicing schools for the Primary Teacher Training College, so at the time I arrived the student teachers had already picked topics, so I had to wait then to resume later when the students finished with their school practice.

7.6   Recommendations

The recommendations emerged from teachers' responses and classroom observations of the teachers in action. In line with this some recommendations are suggested to various stakeholders in Uganda:

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) should institute an on- going program for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers so that teacher development becomes an integral part of the teaching of reading comprehension (Guthrie et al, 2004a). In the same way an interpretation of the   educational policies to the implementers especially the teachers and always to make follow ups in the course of implementation in order to establish the strength and weaknesses of such policies should be done through this professional development programs.

MOES should secure a favorable vote to cater for appropriate reading materials for schools so that the teachers approach the curricular with simplicity. Because when the schools have enough instructional reading materials in different genres, considering text in both local and English language is the only way teachers can engage pupils in meaningful reading as they also put the books in the hands of the learners.

Teacher Education (TE) should develop a syllabus and a module on the teaching of reading comprehension as part of literacy course so that the practicing teacher educators help their students at Primary Teacher Colleges (PTC) to complete their training with the knowledge for competently teaching reading comprehension.

The DEO should collaborate with the head teachers, parents and teachers to ensure that the teaching of reading comprehension is meaningfully done. This should be followed with adequate staffing, provision of instructional materials, be in position to carry out his or her role to ensure correct staffing is done, so that classes that are over populated can be divided into streams. The head teachers should continuously, monitor, teacher performance in their schools through conducting appraisals and they should be part of the teaching team as they lay strategies to improve the teaching of reading comprehension in their schools, through holding review meetings, about the school programs, teacher performance and pupil achievement. In addition, collaborate with parents through parents' bodies such as School Management Committees (SMC), Parents Teachers' Associations (PTA), to see how they can help the teachers as well as the pupils.

Teachers should use more time in their teaching to model various reading comprehension strategies, so that the learners develop meaningful reading. The teachers need to live up to the current trends and new generic approaches, strategies of teaching reading comprehension. Therefore, they should endeavor to pursue knowledge and literature on reading comprehension. Teachers need to practice peer coaching, peer tutoring, mentoring so that they learn from one another.

7.7   Concluding comment

Comprehending is a complicated process, as discussed and explored in this study. Yet it is one of the most important skills for students to develop if they are to become successful and productive adults. Comprehension instruction in schools, beginning in kindergarten, is

therefore crucial. Teachers use their knowledge and understandings of how one learns to comprehend to inform classroom practices so they can most effectively help readers develop the abilities to comprehend text. It is hoped that the discussion in this study can open a dialogue with teachers and teacher educators toward this end.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Teachers' knowledge about Reading Comprehension

1).How do you understand terms reading comprehension?

2.) What do you regard as importance of teaching reading comprehension to primary three

   Pupils?

3) What language do you use to teach reading to your learners?

4) What characteristics do learners with low reading comprehension display?

5) How do you assess reading comprehension in your learners?

6) What kind of support do you give to learners who are slow to understand what they read?

7) What other necessary skills does one need to teach reading comprehension?

Teachers' practice in general teaching of reading comprehension

8) What kind of methods and strategies do you use when teaching reading comprehension? What do you do before reading, during reading and after reading?

9) Can you tell me the kind of instructional materials that you think are important in teaching

   reading comprehension?.

10) Which ones have you as a teacher made on your own?

11) How do your learners access reading materials?

12) How do you encourage children do develop reading comprehension?

13) What kind of motivational strategies do you use to encourage slow learners in reading comprehension to read with understanding?

14) Tell me the number of lessons you have per week, and how many are allocated for

   Reading comprehension?

15) How do you facilitate both teacher and learner interaction during reading comprehension

   lessons?

16) How do other learners assist those with low reading comprehension?

17) Do you practice individual or group teaching? Why do you think this your

preference?

Challenges in Teaching Reading Comprehension.

18) What in your opinion are the main reasons for the problems regarding the teaching of reading comprehension to primary three learners?

19) How do you think the problems regarding the teaching of reading comprehension can be solved?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHER

20) What strategies do your teachers use to teach reading comprehension?

21) What in your opinion are the main reasons for the problems regarding the teaching of reading comprehension to primary three learners?

22) How do you think the problems regarding the teaching of reading comprehension can be solved?

APPENDIX C: Classroom observation guide

Classroom characteristics

- Organization and management - sitting arrangement, behaviour management, provision of class rules and expectations, accessibility to all learners, safety in the classroom,

- Classroom climate – positive teacher – pupil relations, learner- learner relationships, classroom interactions.

- Availability of learning centres- provision of learning centre for small group reading instruction.

- Availability of reading materials- display of reading materials on the on the walls, availability of class library, reading tree, phonic friezes, alphabet strips flash cards, work sheets, sentence strips, pictures.

Teacher characteristics

- Teacher sensitivity , responding to learners' comprehension needs,

- Regard for learner perspectives

- Individual assistance to learners

- Provision of feedback

- Teacher- pupil interaction

- Use of verbal and non- verbal communication

- Time spent in each group.

Pupil characteristics

- Behaviour of pupils during teaching learning process of reading comprehension

- Participation of learners during the lesson

- Pupil- pupil interaction

- Pupil -to -pupil support

- Pupil –teacher- interaction

Teacher's instructional practices

- Use of explicit instruction

- Use of teaching reading comprehension strategies

- Use of instructional materials

- Logically using the reading comprehension steps- explanation, modeling, guided practice, and application.

- Encouraging learners, correcting them and giving constructive feedback

Appendix D: Letter of Introduction from University of Oslo

UiO : Faculty of Educational Sciences
University of Oslo

ARIONG, Jean Florence
Olav M Troviks vei 12 HO 314
0864 OSLO

Date: 15 June 2012
Your ref.:
Our ref: int./2012 JBH/db

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that **ARIONG, Jean Florence**, date of birth 06.06.1963, is a full-time student pursuing a course of study at the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Oslo, Norway, leading to the degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education (M. Phil. SNE). This is a continuous two-year programme run on the "sandwich" principle, which involves periods of study and field work/research in both Norway and the home country. The student has successfully completed both the first and second semester of the initial study period in Norway and will be working on the collection of data and the writing of a thesis during the autumn semester 2012. This involves a period of field work in Uganda. The student will return to Norway at the beginning of January 2013 and the period of study will be completed at the end of May 2013 in Norway.

The main responsibility for supervising the research, developmental work and thesis remains with the Department of Special Needs Education, University of Oslo, Norway. However, we would kindly request that the relevant authorities give the student the access required to the schools and educational establishments necessary in order to undertake field work and research. We would also be most grateful for any assistance that is afforded to the student which enables her to carry out this work, particularly the use of facilities such as access to telephone, fax, e-mail, computer services and libraries at the various educational establishments.

Yours sincerely

Jorun Buli-Holmberg

Associate Professor Jorun Buli-Holmberg

Academic Head of International Master's Programme

Department of Special Needs Education

INSTITUTT FOR SPESIALPEDAGOGIKK
UNIVERSITETET I OSLO
P.B. 1140 BLINDERN
0318 OSLO

Officer in charge:
Denese Brittain (+ 47) 22 85 80 75, d.u.brittain@isp.uio.no

The Department of Special Needs
Education (DSNE)
Postal addr.: PO Box 1140 Blindern, 0318
Oslo
Visiting addr.: Helga Engs hus, 4. etasje,
Sem Sælands vei 7, 0371 Oslo

Phone: (+47) 22 85 80 59
Telefax: (–47) 22 85 80 21
postmottak@uv.uio.no
www.uv.uio.no/isp/
Org. no.: 971 035 854

Appendix E: Permission to conduct Research Study Form Norwegian Social Services

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES

Vigdis Refsahl
Institutt for spesialpedagogikk
Universitetet i Oslo
Postboks 1140 Blindern
0318 OSLO

Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N-5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Vår dato: 26.07.2012   Vår ref:30990 / 3 / MAS   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 02.07.2012. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

30990	*Teachers' Practices in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Inclusive Classrooms. A Case of two Teachers in Primary Schools in Uganda*
Behandlingsansvarlig	*Universitetet i Oslo, ved institusjonens øverste leder*
Daglig ansvarlig	*Vigdis Refsahl*
Student	*Jean Florence Ariong*

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.
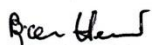
Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, eventuelle kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.
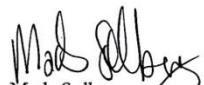
Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/forsk_stud/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/prosjektoversikt.jsp.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 30.06.2013, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Bjørn Henrichsen

Mads Solberg

Mads Solberg tlf: 55 58 89 28
Vedlegg: Prosjektvurdering
Kopi: Jean Florence Ariong, Olav M. Troviks vei 12, 0864 OSLO

Avdelingskontorer / *District Offices*:
OSLO: NSD. Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD. Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7491 Trondheim. Tel: +47-73 59 19 07. kyrre.svarva@svt.ntnu.no

Appendix F: Granted permission Letter from Education Office, Bukedea District

Telephone:
- Chairperson...........0772331811
- CAO...................0772497052

In any correspondence on this

Subject please quote Educ. 218/1

Republic of Uganda

Bukedea District Local Government
Office of the District Education Officer
P.O. Box 5026,
Bukedea

Date: 11/09/2012

ARIONG JEAN FLORENCE

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION/RESEARCH FIELD WORK

Focus is made into your letter dated 15th June, 2012 on the critical study Topic *"Teachers' Practices in Teaching Reading Comprehension in Inclusive classrooms in Primary schools in Uganda."*

It is prudent to inform you that all our 94 Primary Schools have children with Special Needs like; *Dyslexia, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment, Epileptic* among others, experiencing barriers to learning, growth and development; it there means that your visitation to these two schools (*Bukedea and Tamula Muslim Primary schools*) would have an impact especially on the school Administration and Staff, on Intervention measures for learners with Special Needs in an Inclusive setting.

However, as a skillfull and well informed professional in the field of Special Needs Education, you are kindly encouraged to provide tips to the staff (Teacchers) on classroom management for learners with Special Needs.

I appreciate for all your endeavours and greatly grant you permission to conduct the Research study at hand.

Wishing you the very best in the field.

Yours Sincerely,

INSPECTOR OF
SCHOOLS - EARS
BUKEDEA DISTRICT

24/09/2012.

OBUYA MICHAEL
EDUCATION OFFICER (INSPECTORATE) EARS.

Appendix: G. A letter requesting to conduct a research study in the district

The District Education Officer,

Bukedea District Local Government

Dear Sir/ madam

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN TWO SCHOOLS IN YOUR DISTRICT SCHOOLS.

I am Ariong Jean Florence currently a student at the University of Oslo- Norway, pursuing a degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Education. I am required to do research as part of my course. My research topic is on "Teachers' Practices on teaching reading comprehension in Inclusive classrooms in primary schools in Uganda". My supervisor is Professor Oistein Anmaksrud. The research design is Case study in qualitative approach. The samples will be purposefully selected. I shall need to have three teachers and two head teachers from two different primary schools to participate in the study.

 I will use the following methods to collect data:

- Interviews
- Observation
- Field notes (memos)

All information provided and obtained will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

I am therefore humbled to request for permission to collect data from the teachers and the head teachers of two primary schools of Bukedea and Tamula primary schools.

I shall appreciate your positive response.

Thank you,

Yours faithfully,

ARIONG JEAN FLORENCE.

Appendix H: Informed written consent to participants

Dear Respondent,

I am Ariong Jean Florence, a student at the University of Oslo- Norway, pursuing a Masters of Philosophy in Special Needs Education, 2011- 2013, (M. Phil. SNE). I am currently in Uganda, particularly here in Bukedea District to carry out a research study as part of the requirements for the award of a Degree of Master of Philosophy in Special Needs Educations. My Research topic aims at investigating teachers' instructional practices in teaching reading comprehension in inclusive classrooms in primary schools.

The responses that you will give , will only be used for purposes of this study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality, with association made to your name or your school during the project and after it has been published in the final Thesis in May 2013. Respondents will be referred to by pseudonyms, e.g., A, B, C ... For purposes of recording data there will be audio recording of our voices during the interview session (s), but this will be deled as soon as the project has ended. The reason for carrying out this study is to find out how reading comprehension is taught and use the findings to help the teachers implement the teaching of reading comprehension with ease.

 I am greatly humbled to request you to take part in this thirty five minute interview by answering the questions as frankly as possible. I am also stretching my request to further ask you to allow me observe your thirty minute lessons in Reading Comprehension.

 On the other hand, you may choose not to participate or even withdraw voluntarily at any time without explaining why?

Thank you for accepting to take part in the study. I Once again reassure you of utmost confidentiality in this process.

Yours faithfully,

 Ariong Jean Florence

Master student. University of Oslo, Norway.

Appendix: I. Map of Uganda showing Bukedea district where the study was conducted

Source: Google Search www.google.co.ug (2013)

Appendix J: MSPS where data was collected

Source: Field data (2012).

Appendix K: FPS where data was collected

Source: Field data (2012)

Appendix: L Time Framework (Work Plan)

Phase/ Activity	Time (Months)	Date (2012-2013)
Development of proposal	5	January- May, 2012
Development Pilot of Instruments	1	September, 2012
Data Collection	2	October- November, 2012
Data Organization, Analysis and Interpretation	3	December- February, 2013
Typing/ Editing/ Report Writing/ Submission	4	March – May, 2013

Source: The Investigator (2012-2013)

Appendix: M. Budget

No.	Item	Description	Estimated Amount (Ush)
1	Stationery, transcription of interview tapes, Printing and copying	5 reams of photocopy paper @20, 000= 5 diskettes tapes@ 10, 000= Video camera @ 500000 @ 500 per page	100000= 50, 000= 500, 000 = 10000= Sub -total 660, 000=
2	Domestic travel - Transport - Meal s	12 Journeys@10, 000= 4 Lunches @ 5,0000	120, 000= 20, 000=
3	Miscellaneous		100, 000= Sub-total 240,000= Grand total 900, 000=

Source: The investigator (2012- 2013)