Exploring interactive strategies for addressing reading difficulties in english subject among standard six pupils in Tanzania: Insights from public schools in Kongwa District

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Abstract
This study investigates effective strategies for addressing reading difficulties among standard six pupils in English. It was informed by interpretivism philosophy with qualitative research methodology. Interview were used in data collection, that was then analyzed thematically. Findings reveal the significance of employing both interactive and direct instructional methods. Interactive strategies, such as group reading and collaborative discussions, facilitate peer modeling and enhance comprehension through shared learning experiences. Direct strategies, particularly questioning techniques, promote critical thinking and active engagement with texts. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of creating supportive learning environments that incorporate motivational practices, diverse reading materials, and technology. Regular assessments and tailored feedback are essential for identifying specific challenges and adapting teaching methods. The results indicate that a multifaceted approach, combining various instructional strategies and fostering a motivational atmosphere, significantly improves reading comprehension and develops a positive attitude towards reading among struggling students. Ultimately, the research underscores the need for educators to implement comprehensive, inclusive strategies to enhance literacy outcomes in the classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Reading difficulties, while defined differently in various contexts, fundamentally refer to an unexpected inability to read fluently. This includes issues such as mispronouncing, omitting, or substituting words, leading to decoding errors and challenges in comprehension (Karanja, 2021). Such difficulties not only disrupt the mechanics of reading but also hinder students' ability to engage meaningfully with texts in their everyday lives. The implications of these challenges are profound,

adversely affecting academic performance and cognitive development (Oducado et al., 2020). For example, students who struggle with reading may find it challenging to keep up with grade-level assignments, resulting in gaps in their understanding and retention of material across various subjects. This cycle of frustration can diminish self-esteem and motivation, ultimately impeding their educational progress. Therefore, early intervention is crucial for improving learning outcomes and fostering a positive academic experience.

Moreover, reading difficulties can significantly hinder cognitive development, impacting essential skills such as language acquisition and critical thinking (Oducado et al., 2020). When students face barriers to fluent reading, their engagement with the curriculum suffers, leading to feelings of frustration and disengagement. This not only affects academic success but also limits cognitive growth, as students miss vital opportunities to develop critical thinking and knowledge retention skills (Naafan, 2018). The emotional impact of reading difficulties can result in decreased self-esteem and motivation, perpetuating a harmful cycle of underachievement. Furthermore, stigma surrounding these challenges may lead to social isolation, further complicating the educational experience. Thus, it is imperative to identify and implement targeted interventions that support students facing reading difficulties, ensuring they receive the necessary resources and strategies to succeed academically.

Globally, reading difficulties among school-aged children are a pressing concern, with approximately 10 percent of pupils leaving school with limited reading abilities (USAID, 2015). This issue is particularly pronounced in the United States, where significant portions of fourth and eighth graders experience substantial reading challenges (Spencer & Wagner, 2018). Similarly, in countries like Uganda, Egypt, and Somalia, many graduating students demonstrate poor reading abilities, highlighting a widespread literacy crisis (Sywelem, 2015). In Namibia, grade six learners struggle with reading comprehension, with only 25 percent achieving the necessary proficiency levels (Naafan, 2018). These statistics underscore the urgent need to address the root causes of reading difficulties, which include inadequate instructional resources, untrained teachers, and socio-economic barriers. Thus, effective, tailored interventions are essential for ensuring that all students develop the critical literacy skills necessary for academic success and future opportunities (USAID, 2015).

Interactive strategies for addressing reading difficulties involve engaging students in collaborative and participatory learning experiences that enhance their reading skills. These strategies include techniques such as guided reading sessions, peer-assisted learning, and interactive storytelling, where students work together to decode texts, share interpretations, and discuss comprehension. By fostering a supportive classroom environment, these strategies encourage active engagement and provide opportunities for students to practice reading in a low-pressure setting. Techniques like using visual aids, manipulatives, and technology can further enhance understanding and retention. Importantly, interactive strategies also promote social interaction, which can boost motivation and self-esteem, making reading a more enjoyable and less daunting task for struggling learners. By integrating these methods into regular instruction, educators can create a more inclusive and effective approach to developing reading proficiency among students facing challenges

In Tanzania, where English language proficiency is crucial for academic and professional advancement—particularly in higher education where it serves as the medium of instruction (Tanzania Institute of Education [TIE], 2015)—reading difficulties can severely limit students' performance in English. This creates a paradox in which the importance of English proficiency is undermined by inadequate reading skills (Karanja, 2021). Notably, there exists a significant knowledge gap regarding the specific interactive strategies that can effectively address reading difficulties in the English subject among standard six pupils in Tanzanian public schools. Current research has not sufficiently explored

how these reading challenges specifically impact English performance at this educational stage. By investigating this relationship in the context of Kongwa District, the present study aims to provide valuable insights that can inform targeted interventions and support measures, ultimately enhancing reading outcomes and fostering essential English language skills among students.

METHODS

Philosophy, Approach, and Design

This research was guided by the philosophical framework of interpretivism, which posits that thought is the sole source of knowledge. Consequently, knowledge is formed through individuals' experiences, perceptions, reasoning, social interactions, and understanding (Turyahikayo, 2021). Interpretivism emphasizes a subjectivist approach to knowledge development, highlighting the significance of personal experiences, emotions, understanding, and perceptions (Creswell, 2014). Thus, the study aims to build knowledge by collecting participants' experiences, feelings, and perceptions regarding common reading challenges faced by Standard VI pupils. A qualitative research approach was employed to obtain detailed information about difficulties in English reading. The philosophical tenets, data collection methods, and research design informed the choice of this approach (Creswell, 2014; Grover, 2015). The qualitative approach offers numerous benefits, such as collecting data within participants' natural contexts, allowing for an in-depth exploration of complex issues that quantitative methods may not adequately address, and interpreting the experiences, opinions, and feelings of respondents to enhance understanding (Cohen, Manion, & Marrison, 2018; Rahman, 2016; Wilson, 2014). The study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design, chosen based on the data collection methods, data analysis approaches, and study objectives focused on exploring prevalent reading difficulties (Creswell, 2014). This design is crucial as it facilitates the collection of respondents' views, perceptions, and experiences, thereby enabling a comprehensive understanding of the study topic (Akhtar & Islamia, 2016). It also improved access to respondents, gathered sufficient realistic data, and collected non-quantifiable data (like attitudes and perceptions). The design employed qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and focus group discussions, allowed for triangulation in data collection, and utilized technology (e.g., tape recorders) for data gathering (Creswell, 2014).

Participants of the Study

The study's population consisted of School Quality Assurers (SQA) and Head Teachers (HT), totaling 10 participants. This purposeful selection was made as both groups play direct or indirect roles in implementing the primary school educational curriculum. By including these educational stakeholders, the study was able to capture a wide array of perspectives and insights, ensuring a thorough understanding of the educational processes and reading difficulties in public primary schools.

Trustworthiness of the Study

The study's trustworthiness was established through multiple key strategies designed to enhance validity. Triangulation in data collection—using interviews, observations, and focus group discussions—provided a comprehensive view of participants' perceptions, reducing bias (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). An audit trail facilitated transparency by making raw data and interpretations available for external review, which bolstered credibility (Cope, 2014). Peer examination by fellow PhD students and supervisors further validated the findings through critical feedback (Cope, 2014). Transferability was ensured by offering detailed contextual information about participants and methodologies, enabling readers to evaluate the findings' relevance to their own contexts (Nowell et

al., 2017; Stahl & King, 2017). Dependability was achieved by following systematic procedures in data collection and analysis, which would yield consistent results if replicated (Johnson et al., 2020). Finally, member checks confirmed the accurate representation of participants' experiences in the study outcomes, reinforcing the research's integrity (Moon et al., 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). Collectively, these strategies fostered a robust framework for understanding the reading difficulties faced by students, thereby contributing to the study's overall validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies to Address Reading Difficulties among Pupils

The fourth objective of the study aimed to explore the strategies for addressing reading difficulties among Standard Six pupils in the English subject. Interviews with teachers, head teachers, ward education officers, and school quality assurers were conducted to identify effective approaches to overcome these challenges. The study sought to understand the various strategies that could be implemented to improve pupils' reading abilities, such as targeted reading interventions, enhanced teacher training, improved teaching materials, and adjustments to the school timetable. By examining these strategies, the study aimed to provide actionable solutions to support pupils struggling with reading in English. The key themes with their sub-themes were identified as presented in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Strategies in Addressing Reading Difficulties among Pupils

Key Themes	Sub-themes	Category (s)
Instructional strategies	Interactive strategies	Group reading, repeated reading, teaching vocabulary and guided reading
	Direct strategies	Questioning
Learning environments	Motivations	Rewards
	Reading materials	Storybooks
	Use of technology	Software and apps
	Assessment and feedback	Tests and progress reports
	Teaching aids	Word walls and digital tools
Language of instruction		English language

Source: Field Data (2024).

As demonstrated in the table above, the findings indicated that there are various strategies that can be used to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils. The findings indicated that instructional strategies, creating enabling learning environments and language of instructions are the strategies that can be used to address reading difficulties among pupils. The key themes with their sub-themes were analyzed as follows;

Instructional Strategies

The theme emerged from the findings on the strategies used to address reading difficulties among pupils in English subject revealed that teachers use instructional strategies to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils. In this theme, two sub-themes emerged from the findings which are interactive strategies and direct strategies. From the above table, the findings indicated the strategies used by teachers to address reading difficulties in English subject among standard six pupils. Two sub-themes were identified and analyzed as follows;

Interactive Strategies

The sub-theme emerged from the data on the strategies used to address reading difficulties in English subject revealed that teachers use interactive strategies to address pupils' reading difficulties. In this sub-theme, several categories emerged from the findings which are group reading, repeated reading, teaching vocabulary and guided reading. The findings revealed that teachers use group reading as a strategy to address reading difficulties among pupils. One teacher had this to say;

> Group reading is an effective strategy for addressing reading difficulties among pupils, as it encourages collaboration and shared learning. In group reading, pupils read together, either in pairs or small groups, allowing them to support and learn from one another. This setting provides a comfortable environment for struggling readers, as they observe their peers' reading techniques, which helps them build confidence and reduce feelings of isolation **(Interview, Teacher, August, 2024).**

Similarly, the findings showed that head teachers suggested that teachers should use group reading activities to help pupils address reading difficulties in English subject by encouraging discussion and teamwork. Furthermore, the findings indicated that head teachers insist teachers to give pupils chances to read the same text multiple times to improve their understanding. Lastly, the findings showed that head teachers ask teachers to introduce new vocabulary in context as a strategy that helps pupils understand and remember new words more effectively. Head teacher remarked the following;

> Introducing new vocabulary in context helps students understand and remember new words more effectively. For example, when reading a story, the teacher points out unfamiliar words, offering definitions and sentence examples to clarify their meaning **(Interview, HT4, August, 2024).**

Likewise, the findings highlighted that quality assurers were of the views that teachers should use group reading strategy to assist pupils share their interpretations and understanding of texts, which helps them clarify confusing aspects and deepen comprehension through diverse perspectives. Also, the findings revealed that quality assurers encourage teachers to use repeated reading strategy to offers opportunities for the pupils addressing any misunderstandings or difficult vocabulary by ensuring that they comprehend the material. Lastly, the findings revealed that quality assurers were of the view that teachers should use guided reading strategy as a way of addressing reading difficulties in English subject among pupils. One quality assurer had this to say;

> Repeated reading help pupils to practice and reinforce their reading skills through consistent exposure to the same text. By reading a passage multiple times, students improve their fluency, accuracy, and speed, which builds confidence and helps them become comfortable with reading **(Interview, SQA, August, 2024).**

The quoted statements emphasize the consensus among teachers, head teachers, and quality assurers regarding the effectiveness of interactive strategies in addressing reading difficulties among sixth-grade pupils. Research by Konza (2016) highlights that group reading facilitates peer modeling, where students learn from fluent readers, improving their comprehension and reading skills through imitation. This collaborative approach not only enhances fluency but also fosters critical thinking, as noted by Wiggins and McTighe (2016). Fuchs and Fuchs (2017) further demonstrate that group reading allows struggling readers to benefit from peer feedback, creating an interactive environment that encourages active participation and boosts reading outcomes. Begeny et al. (2017) found that

group reading activities, such as paired reading, significantly enhance comprehension by providing peer support and discussion opportunities. Additionally, repeated reading practices improve fluency and comprehension by increasing familiarity with the text, as shown by Hempenstall (2014) and Therrien (2017). Explicit vocabulary instruction is also crucial for comprehension, with research by Snow (2010) and Nagy and Townsend (2012) indicating that pre-teaching vocabulary enhances students' understanding of texts. Guided reading approaches, as detailed by Fisher and Frey (2020) and Richardson and Dufresne (2019), offer personalized support and scaffolded instruction, helping struggling readers improve their comprehension through tailored, small-group interactions. Overall, the narrative illustrates that interactive strategies, including group reading, repeated reading, and explicit vocabulary instruction, are vital for fostering reading skills and comprehension among pupils facing difficulties.

Direct Strategies

Another sub-theme emerged from the findings about the strategies used to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils showed that teachers use direct strategies to address reading difficulties among pupils. In this sub-theme, one category emerged which is questioning. The findings showed that teachers emphasized that they use question-and-answer strategy to mitigate reading difficulties among standard six pupils. Also, head teachers as quality assurers they insist teachers to ask pupils questions before, during, and after reading to promote them with deeper comprehension by encouraging critical thinking among them. One teacher had this to say;

> The question-and-answer strategy is a valuable tool for addressing reading difficulties among pupils, as it actively engages them in the reading process and enhances their comprehension. By asking questions about the text before, during, and after reading, teachers guide pupils to think critically about what they are reading, encouraging them to reflect on key ideas, make predictions, and connect concepts **(Interview, Teacher, August, 2024)**

The narrative emphasizes the effectiveness of direct strategies in addressing reading difficulties among sixth-grade pupils in English, particularly through the use of questioning techniques. Research by Duke and Pearson (2020) demonstrates that questioning—such as prompting students to predict outcomes, infer meanings, and clarify understanding—significantly enhances comprehension by fostering engagement with the text and developing critical thinking skills. Tarchi (2020) highlights that self-questioning allows students to monitor their understanding and focus on key ideas, while Hill and Larsen (2020) found that open-ended questions during reading sessions encourage deeper reflection and connections between ideas. McKeown et al. (2018) support this by noting that frequent, targeted questions improve students' ability to extract meaning from texts. Additionally, Van Keer and Verhaeghe (2018) found that teaching students to generate their own questions enhances comprehension and helps identify gaps in understanding. Wright and Cervetti (2018) further assert that questioning about new vocabulary during reading improves understanding and directly contributes to enhanced comprehension skills. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of direct questioning strategies in supporting struggling readers and improving their reading comprehension.

Learning Environments

The theme emerged from the findings on the strategies used to address reading difficulties among pupils in English subject revealed that teachers create enabling learning environments as a strategy to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils. In this theme, five sub-themes

emerged from the findings which are motivations, reading materials, use of technology, assessment and feedback and teaching aids. As demonstrated in the table above, the findings indicated that creating enabling learning environments is an important strategy in addressing reading difficulties among standard six pupils in English subject. Five sub-themes were identified and analyzed as follows;

Motivation

The sub-theme emerged from the data on the strategies used to address reading difficulties among pupils in English subject showed that motivation can be used as a strategy in addressing reading difficulties in English subject. In this sub-theme, rewards emerge as its only category. The findings revealed that teachers believed that rewarding pupil is a key strategy for addressing reading difficulties among them as it influences their willingness to engage with reading activities. One teacher had this view;

> When pupils are motivated, they are likely to put in the effort needed to overcome challenges and persist in their reading practice. Teachers foster motivation by creating positive, supportive learning environment where reading is celebrated and seen enjoyable **(Interview, Teacher, August, 2024).**

The statement underscores the critical role of motivation in addressing reading difficulties among pupils in English. Research by Guthrie and Klauda (2016) highlights that motivation drives students to engage with reading materials, ultimately improving their skills. Unrau, Ragusa, and Bowers (2020) found that motivated students exhibit better reading comprehension and academic performance, while Logan, Medford, and Hughes (2016) noted that those who enjoy reading and are intrinsically motivated show greater gains in fluency. Guthrie and Klauda (2020) further emphasize that fostering students' belief in their reading abilities enhances both motivation and comprehension. Gambrell (2016) suggests that providing choices in reading materials and setting achievable goals can boost motivation and outcomes. Schiefele, Stutz, and Schaffner (2020) found that motivated pupils invest more time in reading, which helps mitigate comprehension difficulties. Wang and Eccles (2016) revealed that teacher support and encouragement significantly enhance motivation, leading to improved reading skills. García and Cain (2019) affirmed that teacher influence is vital in motivating students to overcome reading challenges. Overall, the evidence indicates that creating motivational learning environments is essential for supporting students with reading difficulties, as motivated learners engage more deeply with texts and achieve better comprehension outcomes.

Reading Materials

The sub-theme was about the learning environments in addressing reading difficulties among pupils in English subject revealed that availability of reading materials can help to address reading difficulties among pupils. In this sub-theme, one category emerge which is storybooks. The findings indicated that head teachers suggest that providing pupils with storybooks that match their reading levels and interests fostering a love of reading and improving literacy skills. One head teacher said this;

> When pupils are given materials that are both accessible and engaging, they are likely to feel confident and motivated to read. For instance, if a struggling reader has a particular interest in animals, offering them simple, age-appropriate stories about wildlife spark their curiosity and make the reading process more enjoyable. By aligning reading materials with students' personal interests, teachers create a positive association with reading, reducing frustration and encouraging consistent practice **(Interview, HT3, August, 2024).**

The narrative emphasizes the crucial role of accessible reading materials in addressing reading difficulties among pupils in English. Research, including a study by Mol and Bus (2019), indicates that students with access to books and diverse reading resources are more likely to engage in reading activities, which fosters literacy skills and enhances comprehension. McGeown and Wilkinson (2019) found that a variety of reading materials promotes a positive reading culture, encouraging regular practice that reduces reading difficulties. Similarly, McKeen and Goodman (2023) observed that classrooms with diverse materials increased students' motivation to read, leading to improved comprehension. Wigfield et al. (2017) noted that access to varied reading options significantly boosts engagement, particularly benefiting struggling readers. Neuman and Celano (2019) reported that a greater variety of books in classrooms fosters reading habits and enhances comprehension, while Rogers, Wang, and Beltran (2023) highlighted that digital reading materials further engage students and reduce difficulties. Hutchison, Beschorner, and Schmidt-Crawford (2019) found that digital resources improve student interaction with texts, contributing to comprehension development. Harris, O'Shea, and Johnson (2023) added that access to various genres fosters positive attitudes toward reading, enhancing overall skills, including comprehension. Davis and Ghosh (2017) noted that well-stocked libraries increase reading frequency and comprehension skills, while Mason and Krashen (2017) concluded that a wider range of books correlates with higher literacy skills. Overall, the evidence underscores that providing ample and diverse reading materials is essential for overcoming reading difficulties and improving comprehension among students.

Use of Technology

Another sub-theme emerged from the data on the learning environment as a strategy in addressing reading difficulties in English subject among standard six pupils demonstrated that use of technology can be used as a strategy in addressing reading difficulties. In this sub-theme, two categories emerged from the findings which are software and apps. The findings revealed that head teachers insist the use of technology in addressing reading difficulties in English subject. For example, head teachers emphasized the use of software and educational apps to support pupils reading skills in English subject. One head teacher had this view;

> Additionally, using educational software and apps that make reading practice fun through games and activities, like those on platforms such as Reading A-Z, ensures that pupils can learn at their own pace. By using these resources, teachers create an engaging learning environment that encourages pupils to read **(Interview, HT7, August, 2024).**

The statement highlights the effectiveness of technology as a strategy for addressing reading difficulties among pupils in English. Research supports this notion, with Kelley and Zernikow (2019) demonstrating that digital storytelling platforms significantly enhance comprehension by fostering a connection with texts. Smith and Jones (2021) found that incorporating videos and interactive activities into reading lessons notably benefits students with reading challenges. Similarly, Zhang and Wang (2016) and Kumar and Singh (2019) reported improvements in comprehension among students using interactive e-books, particularly those featuring audio support. Gonzalez and Karp (2019) confirmed that combining videos and interactive elements with traditional texts not only improved comprehension but also made learning more enjoyable. Rojas and Ochoa (2022) noted that mobile reading applications effectively assist struggling readers, while Alfawzan and Aljohani (2022) highlighted that interactive e-book features, such as read-aloud options, further enhance comprehension. Other studies, including those by Singh and Gupta (2022) and Dixon and Biddulph

(2017), found that engaging with digital storytelling and educational apps leads to significant progress in reading skills. Overall, the consistent findings underscore the positive impact of technology on improving reading comprehension, particularly for students facing difficulties.

Assessment and Feedback

The sub-theme emerged from the findings on learning environments in addressing reading difficulties in English subject among pupils revealed that regular assessment and feedback is an effective strategy in addressing pupils' reading difficulties. In this sub-theme, tests and progress report emerged from the findings as categories. The findings indicated that head teachers believed that reading tests can help mitigate reading difficulties among pupils. The findings indicated that head teachers added that providing feedback about pupils' reading progress is an important strategy that help them improve in reading in English subject. One head teacher claim;

> Regular classroom assessments such as tests or exercises help identify specific areas where pupils have trouble with comprehension and allow for personalized feedback. For instance, giving quizzes after reading assignments can reveal which areas students struggle with, enabling teachers to focus on those specific issues **(Interview, HT3, August, 224).**

The narrative emphasizes the critical role of regular assessment and feedback in addressing reading difficulties among pupils in English. Research by Sonmez and Cetinkaya (2022) indicates that frequent assessments and timely feedback significantly enhance reading comprehension, with students who engage in this process performing better on comprehension tests. The importance of real-time feedback is further supported by Büyüköztürk et al. (2017), who found that regular assessments lead to improvements in understanding reading materials. Mercer and Keller-Margulis (2015) highlighted that weekly assessments foster substantial gains in comprehension, while Christ et al. (2022) demonstrated that consistent monitoring over 10 to 14 weeks yields considerable improvements, particularly through personalized feedback that addresses individual needs. Jenkins, Graff, and Miglioretti (2022) concluded that feedback from frequent assessments allows teachers to adapt their instructional strategies based on student performance. Additionally, Clark and Graves (2019) noted that targeted feedback encourages students to reflect on their learning, thereby addressing specific challenges. Studies by Smith and Douglas (2019) and Johnson & Turner (2019) confirm that regular assessments and immediate feedback lead to significant gains in reading comprehension and effective instructional adjustments. Brown and Harris (2019) further emphasize that formative feedback aligned with assessments is crucial for enhancing student engagement with reading tasks. Overall, the evidence underscores that systematic assessment and personalized feedback are vital strategies for improving reading comprehension among primary school pupils.

Teaching Aids

Another sub-theme emerged from the findings on the learning environments indicated that the use of teaching aids helps to address reading difficulties among pupils in English subject. In this sub-theme, two categories emerged from the findings which are word walls and digital tools. The findings revealed that head teachers insist teachers to use word walls and digital tools as a strategy of addressing reading difficulties among pupils. One head teacher had this view;

> Using teaching aids like word walls and reading digital tools also improves understanding by giving students a visual connection to the story. For example, a picture showing the setting of a story helps students imagine the place and

characters, making the story easier to follow. By combining these methods, teachers create a rich learning experience that builds critical thinking, communication, and a deeper love for reading **(Interview, HT5, August, 2024).**

The comment highlights the significance of teaching aids in addressing reading difficulties among sixth-grade pupils in English. Research supports this, with Smith and Kumar (2023) finding that students using visual aids like charts and flashcards exhibited better reading comprehension than those who did not. Visual aids simplify complex concepts and enhance understanding, as noted by Taylor and Rogers (2018). Additionally, Brown and Martin (2023) demonstrated that digital tools offering personalized feedback and adjustable reading levels significantly improved comprehension, while Warren and Fitzgerald (2016) found that digital storytelling tools increased student engagement and comprehension through visual and auditory reinforcement. Combining physical aids, such as word walls, with digital tools was shown by Hernandez and Lee (2023) to effectively reinforce comprehension, with Smith and Anderson (2018) noting that frequent interaction with word walls improved word understanding. Furthermore, Anderson and Carter (2020) highlighted that digital tools provided engaging, personalized learning experiences, utilizing features like text-to-speech to assist students with reading difficulties. Overall, the integration of various teaching aids—both visual and digital—profoundly enhances reading comprehension skills among students facing challenges.

Language of Instruction

Another key theme emerged from the findings on the strategies used to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils in English subject indicated that prioritizing English language to be the language of instructions could help pupils mitigate reading difficulties in the subject. In this key theme, English language emerged as the only category. The findings showed that teachers suggested that English language should be prioritized as the language of instructions in primary schools it will help pupils improve reading skills. Also, teachers emphasized that pupils should be regularly exposed in English language to make them proficiency in the language use. One teacher remarked the following;

> Using English as the primary language of instruction is vital for improving reading skills among pupils. When English is consistently used in teaching and learning, pupils are immersed in the language, which enhances their reading abilities and language proficiency. This approach ensures that pupils are regularly exposed to English texts, vocabulary, and sentence structures, helping them develop a stronger grasp of the language **(Interview, Teacher, August, 2024)**

The statement emphasizes the importance of prioritizing English as the medium of instruction to enhance students' reading skills, particularly comprehension. Numerous studies support this view, indicating that consistent English instruction leads to improved reading outcomes. For instance, research by Alonso and Garcia (2020) and Wang and Hu (2016) shows that students who are taught primarily in English demonstrate better comprehension abilities and engagement with reading materials. Chow and Lim (2020) found that such instruction fosters exposure to academic vocabulary, which further enhances reading skills. Additionally, studies by Smith, Johnson, and Lee (2020) and García and Wei (2018) confirm that prioritizing English in classrooms creates an immersive environment that boosts reading achievement and confidence. Overall, the evidence suggests that early and consistent exposure to English in academic settings significantly improves literacy outcomes compared to instruction in native languages.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights the critical importance of employing a range of instructional strategies to effectively address reading difficulties among standard six pupils in English. The findings underscore the value of both interactive and direct strategies, such as group reading, repeated reading, and explicit vocabulary instruction. Interactive strategies, including peer modeling and collaborative discussions, foster a supportive learning environment that encourages students to engage with texts actively. Teachers, head teachers, and quality assurers all recognized that these methods not only enhance fluency and comprehension but also build confidence among struggling readers. The data revealed that when students are exposed to diverse reading materials and encouraged to participate in group activities, they develop critical thinking skills and a deeper understanding of the texts, ultimately leading to improved literacy outcomes.

Additionally, the study emphasizes the role of creating enabling learning environments through motivation, the use of technology, regular assessment and feedback, and effective teaching aids. Motivation emerged as a key factor influencing students' engagement with reading activities, with rewards and recognition encouraging persistence in overcoming challenges. The integration of technology, including educational software and digital tools, provided dynamic and interactive avenues for learning, making reading practice enjoyable. Furthermore, the findings indicate that systematic assessment and personalized feedback are essential for identifying specific challenges and adapting instructional strategies accordingly. Overall, the research demonstrates that a multifaceted approach, combining various teaching strategies and supportive learning environments, is vital for enhancing reading comprehension and fostering a love for reading among pupils facing difficulties in English.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that educators implement a comprehensive approach to address reading difficulties among standard six pupils in English. This should include the integration of both interactive and direct instructional strategies, such as group reading, repeated reading sessions, and explicit vocabulary instruction. Teachers should foster collaborative learning environments that encourage peer support and engagement through structured group activities. Additionally, the incorporation of technology, including educational apps and digital storytelling tools, can enhance motivation and make reading practice more enjoyable. Regular assessment and personalized feedback should be prioritized to identify individual students' challenges and tailor support accordingly. Lastly, establishing a strong focus on motivating students through rewards and recognition will further encourage their participation and perseverance in reading activities, ultimately leading to improved literacy skills and a lasting love for reading.

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