ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION THROUGH TEXT STRUCTURE BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE IN BUNIA SECONDARY SCHOOLS, ITURI D R CONGO

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this research report is my original work both in substance and in style and has never been presented to any university or institution of higher learning for an academic award.

.....

CWINYA'AY UNEGA

1/6/2018

.....

Date



APPROVAL

This research work compiled by Mr. CWINYA'AY UNEGA has been done under my supervision and guidance. His work is now ready for submission.

.....

Dr. J. KALEMA

1-6-2018

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father Pascal UKECA MUTHI for the numerous sacrifices he made for his children during his lifetime.

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ABSTRACT

Product oriented approach to reading which assumes meaning exists in the text itself is unproductive in terms of delivering an efficient comprehension of the text because it fails to consider students' schemata in reading comprehension process. This omission raises the problem of students' poor performance in reading and undermines their reading skill development. This research has raised the problem of the omission of students' background knowledge in the teaching of reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools, Ituri Province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The research poised itself to demonstrate that the background knowledge of text structure has positive effects on the students' comprehension of a text because reading is an interactive process that goes between the reader's prior knowledge and the text. The study was conducted via an experimental design. Intervention was conducted in Bunia secondary schools whereby experimental teaching took place. Students' awareness of text structure and rate of understanding was gauged before and after intervention. Moreover, comprehension lessons were attended by the researcher. Lesson attendance revealed that Bunia secondary school teachers use a product-oriented approach to reading comprehension teaching. This approach considers understanding the product of the text and leads to students' poor performance in reading because no linkage is made between the students' prior knowledge and the textual material. The present research found that background knowledge of the text structures has positive effects on the reading comprehension of students. It enhances comprehension rate of students, optimizes comprehension speed, reduces response time, boosts response accuracy, helps students make prediction and concentrate on the unknown, develops the discernment skill, and increases students' ability to assess narratives by using text structures indicators(signal words). The study made the following recommendations: pre-reading activities to awaken students' background knowledge of text structures, textbook structure renovation, and incorporation of text structures in reading comprehension instructions. In conclusion, students' awareness of text structures is crucial for efficient understanding of texts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, hypothesis, and scope of the study and the significance of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical background

Reading comprehension is one of the essential language skills which correlate with elements beyond textual materials. Indeed, the understanding of written stretches of language is not solely dependent upon the words, of which they are composed, but also on the reader's schemata constructed progressively over a relatively lengthy period of time. According to Heidi (1998), reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. He continues saying that the text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is.

This study was concerned with the teaching of reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools in Ituri province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The research was initiated following end of school year 2016-2017 examination report which indicated that S-6 students in Bunia secondary schools performed poorly in reading comprehension. Indeed, the exam result showed that only 1897 students (25.4%) out of 7464 succeeded in the exam. Therefore, the research was undertaken to discover the root causes of the failure and envisage possible solutions to the problem.

In fact, in Bunia secondary schools, English is taught and learnt as a foreign language. Historically, the teaching of the English language has always been consistent with a national program which sets the materials to be taught and learnt by students as well as the textbooks to be used by teachers. Teachers of English select texts for reading comprehension from specific text-books devised for this purpose. The English language teaching is organised as follows. After a new text is selected by the teacher, the first lesson to be introduced is vocabulary whereby difficult words are taught. Grammar lesson follows vocabulary. Here some grammar points embedded in the text are identified and taught as well.

Reading comprehension is taught after vocabulary and grammar lessons. It is assumed that these lessons equip students with the necessary resources to understand the text. Reading comprehension is based on silent reading plus questions strategy. Once a text is announced, students are instructed to read it silently. Thereafter, they answer questions written on the chalkboard. Silent reading time depends upon the length of the text. If the text is long, students are given up to 15 minutes for silent reading. The text may also be divided into 2 or 3 parts. Questions are asked on each part. Students read the questions on the blackboard and answer them either orally or in writing. The main idea of the text is derived from the answers to the questions.

As can be noticed, the approach used by Bunia secondary school teachers in teaching reading comprehension is product-oriented. It considers understanding as the product of the text, i.e. the meaning is in the text. As the text is considered the only available resource for understanding, students' prior knowledge is disregarded. This teaching practice often leads to pupils' poor performance in reading because no linkage is made between the students' prior knowledge and the textual material.

Therefore, the research problem of the present study originated from a preliminary investigation conducted in Bunia secondary schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo where a gap has been noticed in the approach used in teaching reading comprehension. The method used was opaque. It omitted vital components deemed to promote an efficient understanding of presented texts. It was observed that the essence of reading comprehension instruction was the focus on the text content. The structure of the reading lesson was silent reading plus questions and subsequently a summary of the read text. It was noted that pupils' background knowledge was not considered in the reading instruction. No connection was made between students' prior knowledge of text structure and the specific text set to be read. Additionally, no reference was made to background knowledge of the content. Instead, vocabulary items and grammar points were discussed. Therefore, in Bunia secondary schools, reading comprehension disregards the above mentioned elements that are crucial for the improvement of the pupils' reading skill.

Considering the need for enhancing students' reading skill, this study will investigate the effects of prior knowledge of the text structure on students' reading comprehension in Bunia secondary

schools in Ituri province in the Democratic Republic of Congo where English is taught as a foreign language.

1.1.2 Theoretical perspectives

Reading comprehension has been insightfully broached from various theoretical perspectives. The following perspectives, for example, have been suggested to explain the quintessence of reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension as Cognitive-Based Processing

There are several models based on cognitive processing. For example, the LaBerge-Samuels' Model of Automatic Information Processing emphasizes internal aspects of attention as crucial to comprehension. Samuels (1994) defines three characteristics of internal attention. The first, alertness, is the reader's active attempt to access relevant schemata involving letter-sound relationships, syntactic knowledge, and word meanings. Selectivity, the second characteristic, refers to the reader's ability to attend selectively to only that information requiring processing. The third characteristic, limited capacity, refers to the fact that our human brain has a limited amount of cognitive energy available for use in processing information. In other words, if a reader's cognitive energy is focused on decoding, attention cannot be directed at integrating, relating, and combining the meanings of the words decoded, then comprehension will suffer. "Automaticity in information processing, then, simply means that information is processed with little attention" (Samuels, 1994). Comprehension difficulties occur when the reader cannot rapidly and automatically access the concepts and knowledge stored in the schemata.

One other example of a cognitive-based model is Rumelhart's (1994) Interactive Model. Information from several knowledge sources (schemata for letter-sound relationships, word meanings, syntactic relationships, event sequences, and so forth) are considered simultaneously. The implication is that when information from one source, such as word recognition, is deficient, the reader will rely on information from another source, for example, contextual clues or previous experience. Stanovich (1980) terms the latter kind of processing interactive-compensatory because the reader (any reader) compensates for deficiencies in one or more of the knowledge sources by using information from remaining knowledge sources. Those sources that are more concerned with concepts and semantic relationships are termed higher level stimuli; sources dealing with the print

itself, that is phonics, sight words, and other word-attack skills, are termed lower level stimuli. The interactive-compensatory model implies that the reader will rely on higher-level processes when lower-level processes are inadequate, and vice versa.

Reading Comprehension as Sociocognitive Processing

A sociocognitive processing model takes a constructivist view of reading comprehension; that is, the reader, the text, the teacher, and the classroom community are all involved in the construction of meaning. Ruddell and Ruddell (1994) state, "The role of the classroom's social context and the influence of the teacher on the reader's meaning negotiation and construction are central to this model as it explores the notion that participants in literacy events form and reform meanings in a hermeneutic [interpretation]circle."

In other words, this model views comprehension as a process that involves meaning negotiation among text, readers, teachers, and other members of the classroom community. Schema for text meanings, academic tasks, sources of authority (i.e., residing within the text, the reader, the teacher, the classroom community, or some interaction of these), and sociocultural settings are all brought to the negotiation task. The teacher's role is one of orchestration of the instructional setting, and being knowledgeable about teaching/learning strategies and about the world.

Reading Comprehension as Transactional

The transactional model takes into account the dynamic nature of language and both aesthetic and cognitive aspects of reading. According to Rosenblatt (1994), every reading act is an event, or a transaction involving a particular reader and a particular pattern of signs, a text, and occurring at a particular time in a particular context. Instead of two fixed entities acting on one another, the reader and the text are two aspects of a total dynamic situation. The 'meaning' does not reside ready-made 'in' the text or 'in' the reader but happens or comes into being during the transaction between reader and text. Thus, text without a reader is merely a set of marks capable of being interpreted as written language. However, when a reader transacts with the text, meaning happens. Schemata are not viewed as static but rather as active, developing, and ever-changing. As readers transact with text they are changed or transformed, as is the text. Similarly, "the same text takes

on different meanings in transactions with different readers or even with the same reader in different contexts or times" (Rosenblatt, 1994).

Reading Comprehension as Transactional-Sociopsycholinguistic

Building on Rosenblatt's transactional model, Goodman (1994)) conceptualizes literacy processing as including reading, writing, and written texts. He states, texts are constructed by authors to be comprehended by readers. The meaning is in the author and the reader. The text has a potential to evoke meaning but has no meaning in itself; meaning is not a characteristic of texts. This does not mean the characteristics of the text are unimportant or that either writer or reader is independent of them. How well the writer constructs the text and how well the reader reconstructs it and constructs meaning will influence comprehension. But meaning does not pass between writer and reader. It is represented by a writer in a text and constructed from a text by a reader. Characteristics of writer, text, and reader will all influence the resultant meaning. In a transactional-sociopsycholinguistic view, the reader has a highly active role. It is the individual transactions between a reader and the text characteristics that result in meaning. These characteristics include physical characteristics such as orthography, the alphabetic system, spelling, punctuation; format characteristics such as paragraphing, lists, schedules, bibliographies; macrostructure or text grammar such as that found in telephone books, recipe books, newspapers, and letters; and wording of texts such as the differences found in narrative and expository text. Understanding is limited, however, by the reader's schemata, making what the reader brings to the text as important as the text itself. The writer also plays an important role in comprehension. Additionally, readers' and writers' schemata are changed through transactions with the text as meaning is constructed. Readers' schemata are changed as new knowledge is assimilated and accommodated. Writers' schemata are changed as new ways of organizing text to express meaning are developed.

According to Goodman (1994) how well the writer knows the audience and has built the text to suit that audience makes a major difference in text predictability and comprehension. However, since comprehension results from reader-text transactions, what the reader knows, who the reader is, what values guide the reader, and what purposes or interests the reader has will play vital roles in the reading process. It follows that what is comprehended from a given text varies among readers. Meaning is ultimately created by each reader.

Reading Comprehension as Influenced by Attitude

Mathewson's (1994) Model of Attitude Influence upon Reading and Learning to Read is derived from the area of social psychology. This model attempts to explain the roles of affect and cognition in reading comprehension. The core of the attitude-influence model explains that a reader's whole attitude toward reading (i.e., prevailing feelings and evaluative beliefs about reading and action readiness for reading) will influence the intention to read, in turn influencing reading behaviour. Intention to read is proposed as the primary mediator between attitude and reading. Intention is defined as "commitment to a plan for achieving one or more reading purposes at a more or less specified time in the future" (Mathewson, 1994). All other moderator variables (e.g., extrinsic motivation, involvement, prior knowledge, and purpose) are viewed as affecting the attitude reading relationship by influencing the intention to read. Therefore, classroom environments that include well-stocked libraries, magazines, reading tables, and areas with comfortable chairs will enhance students' intentions to read. Mathewson (1994) states, "Favourable attitudes toward reading thus sustain intention to read and reading as long as readers continue to be satisfied with reading outcomes."

1.1.3 Conceptual perspective

Elements of the independent variable and the dependent variable crucial in the understanding of this study are conceptualised below:

{1} Background knowledge or schema

Bartlett (1932), quoted by Brewer and Nakamura (1984), defined a schema as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response". He holds the view that people's understanding and remembrance of events is shaped by their expectations or prior knowledge and that these expectations are presented mentally in some sort of schematic fashion. Reader's schema is organized knowledge of the world, which provides information for comprehending, remembering ideas, and learning.

Moreover, Anderson (1984), quoted by Wiseman (2008), defines a schema (pl. schemas or schemata) as an individual's collection of prior knowledge that provides a context for meaningful interpretation of new information. Schemas have also been defined as abstract knowledge

structures that organize vast amounts of information (Gagne &Yekovich, 1993) and as cognitive constructs that organize information into meaningful systems (Anderson, 2005; Schunk, 2004). Bruning et al (2004) identified schemas as scripts or representations for events that provide plans for action in particular situations, such as a student having a script to prepare for a test. Scripts contain procedural knowledge and often have information about physical features, people, and typical occurrences. As individuals encounter new information, they add this information to their schemas, which are organized into different interrelated categories (Cooper, J., 2006).

Background knowledge has been conceptualized by Stevens (1980) as what one already knows about a subject, all knowledge learners have when entering a learning environment that is potentially relevant for acquiring new knowledge. Simply put, in this study background knowledge or schema should be understood to mean what students already know about a narrative, all prior knowledge about a narrative structure they have when they are asked to read a new narrative.

{2} Text structure

In this study, text structure should simply be understood to mean how the information within a narrative is organized. It refers to the content of a story and the form used to tell it. The structure selected for the study is chronological sequence.

{3} Reading Comprehension

According to Anderson et al (1985) reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information. Oxford English Dictionary (11th ed.) defines reading as the action or skill of reading.

David Crystal (1987) maintains that comprehension is to do with meaning. It is to be found everywhere in language. RAND Reading Study Group (2002) define reading comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. They use the words extracting and constructing to emphasize both the importance and the insufficiency of the text as a determinant of reading comprehension. They maintain Comprehension entails three elements:

(1) The reader who is doing the comprehending

(2) The text that is to be comprehended

(3) The activity in which comprehension is a part.

This study conceptualises reading as an interpretation of a text in order to grasp its meaning.

1.1.4 Contextual perspective

English is undoubtedly a global language whose mastery has become irreversible. Alireza, Farahnaz, and Mohammad (2013) say "English is an international language, and it is increasingly important for non-English speakers to learn English to be competitive in this information age." Considering its importance, the D. R. Congo has adopted English as a foreign language and integrated it in its education system to allow its citizens to benefit from the communicative advantages associated with the English language. It is learnt and taught in all secondary schools and tertiary institutions as well as in private primary schools. The Congolese program of English aims at developing four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The mastery of these basic skills is compulsory to access the vast amount of literature in English. This study was concerned with reading skill. The study demonstrated the effects of background knowledge of the narrative text structure on the reading comprehension of students in Bunia secondary schools in Ituri province in the D R Congo where the teaching of reading comprehension is opaque and monolithic. Students' background knowledge of the text structure is considered in the language teaching programme. Another issue that was raised in the study was the approaches to reading comprehension. Teachers of Bunia secondary schools resort to product oriented and top-down approaches to reading which do not cater for Students' schema. Students have no knowledge of the text structure because it is not taught.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Product oriented approach to reading which assumes meaning exists in the text itself is unproductive in terms of delivering an efficient comprehension of the text because it fails to consider students' schemata in the reading comprehension process. This omission raises the problem of students' poor performance in reading and undermines their reading skill development. According to Wiseman (2008), "for students to effectively process information, their existing schemas related to the new information need to be activated. This activation stimulates prior knowledge and, in turn, students are better able to process the new information and link to it".

The problem identified by the current study is that students' background knowledge is not considered in reading comprehension instructions in Bunia secondary schools. This disregard of students' prior knowledge impact negatively on their reading comprehension. Indeed, in Bunia secondary schools reading comprehension is taught via product-oriented and top-down approaches to detriment of process oriented approach. These approaches consider that meaning is text-based. Students' inputs are not considered during reading. Consequently, Bunia secondary school students fail to comprehend texts effectively because they are not given opportunity to link the idea in the text to their own experiences and belief and to the things happening in the outer world. To promote an effective comprehension of textual materials, the study advocates for a process oriented approach to reading which establishes a link between students' background knowledge of the text structure and its content. The study demonstrated that the integration of students' schemata of the formal structure in the reading process is crucial in the understanding of a text.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the background knowledge of text structure and reading comprehension of students in Bunia secondary schools.

1.4 Research objectives

In line with the above mentioned purpose, the specific of objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To assess the background knowledge of text structure of students in Bunia secondary schools
2. To establish the effects of background knowledge of text structure on reading comprehension
3. To find out the reading comprehension approaches used in Bunia secondary schools
4. To suggest the incorporation of text structures in reading comprehension curriculum

1.5 Research questions

This study was guided by the following questions.

1. What is the students' level of awareness of text structures in Bunia secondary schools?
2. What are the effects of background knowledge of text structures on reading comprehension of students in Bunia secondary schools?
3. What are the approaches used in teaching reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools?

4. How should text structures be incorporated in reading comprehension curriculum?

1.6 Hypothesis

There is effect of background knowledge of text structure on reading comprehension.

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1 Geographical scope

This study was conducted in Bunia secondary schools. Bunia is the headquarters of the north-eastern province of Ituri in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The town is located near Lake Albert and at 60 miles from the Ugandan District of Ntoroko.

1.7.2 Content scope

This study was concerned with background knowledge in reading comprehension. It established a linkage between background knowledge of textual material format and its meaning and showed the positive impacts of prior knowledge of the text structure on the comprehension of the text. The study focused on the examination of the formal structure of a prose text. The prose text type that was considered is a narrative. The study emphasized the chronological format in which a narrative appears. The study thus sought to fill in the gap in the area of reading comprehension teaching methodology.

1.7.3 Time scope

The study was carried out from September, 2016 to June 2017. This the period the study participants were available and could be contacted easily in Bunia secondary schools, the school year starts in September and ends in June. Therefore, it was crucial for the researcher to conduct study within this time limit.

1.7.4 Theoretical scope

The study discussed how prior knowledge of the formal structure of a text can help students understand it efficiently. It was based on the schema theory by Bartlett (1932).

1.8 Significance of the study

The beneficiaries of this study were as follow:

{i} Teachers of English in Bunia secondary schools who are expected to use process oriented approach to reading where meaning is obtained through a successful interaction between the reader and the text, and it is inside-the head factors that play an important role in comprehension. The

study sensitized teachers to consider students' textual structure schemata in reading comprehension by giving them opportunities to relate their schemata to the reading material. Eliciting students' text structure background knowledge is productive in terms of the reading skill expected of students.

{ii} In a learner-centred instruction, students' inputs are resourceful and should not be disregarded. Thus, Bunia secondary school students are prime beneficiaries of this study which stimulated instructors to consider students' schemata in reading comprehension instruction. The study created confidence in students by encouraging them to use their prior knowledge of text structures in order to enhance their own ability to read and understand texts efficiently.

{iii} Language syllabus constructors in the DR Congo may use the findings of this study to renovate the content and structure of textbooks by considering text structure background knowledge in the reading comprehension process.

{iv} Finally, the findings of this study are also beneficial to prospective researchers. The relevance of background knowledge demonstrated in this study will motivate them to explore the significance of students' schemata in other areas of fundamental language skills, for example, in listening, speaking, grammar, composition, etc. According to Mukoroli (2011: 29), experience and background knowledge may play an important role in vocabulary instruction as well.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two gives theoretical review, conceptual framework, related literature and the gaps identified in the reviewed literature.

2.1 Theoretical review

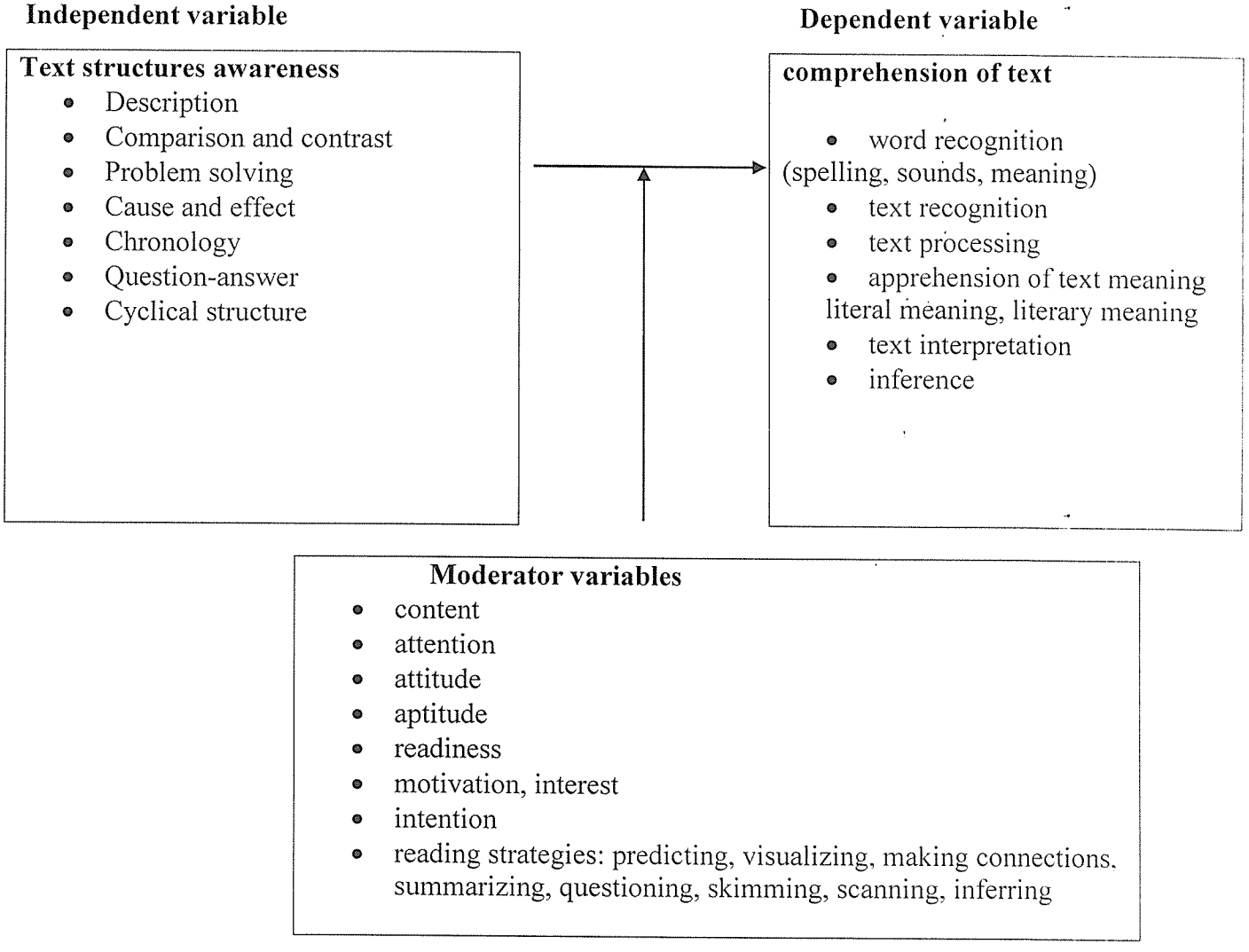
This study was based on Theory of Schema by Bartlett (1932). In fact, British Gestalt psychologist, Sir Frederic Bartlett is regarded as the first person who used the term schema. He thinks that the term "schema" means an active organization of past reaction, or of past experience, which must always be operating in any well-adopted organic response.

The concept of schema (plural: schemata) is used to understand the interaction of key factors affecting the comprehension process. Simply put, schema theory states that all knowledge is organized into units. Within these units of knowledge, or schemata, is stored information. A schema, then, is a generalized description or a conceptual system for understanding knowledge-how knowledge is represented and how it is used. According to this theory, schemata represent knowledge about concepts: objects and the relationships they have with other objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions, and sequences of actions. A simple example is to think of your schema for dog. Within that schema you most likely have knowledge about dogs in general (bark, four legs, teeth, hair, tails) and probably information about specific dogs, such as collies (long hair, large, Lassie) or springer spaniels (English, docked tails, liver and white or black and white, Millie). You may also think of dogs within the greater context of animals and other living things; that is, dogs breathe, need food, and reproduce. Your knowledge of dogs might also include the fact that they are mammals and thus are warm-blooded and bear their young as opposed to laying eggs. Depending upon your personal experience, the knowledge of a dog as a pet (domesticated and loyal) or as an animal to fear (likely to bite or attack) may be a part of your schema. And so it goes with the development of a schema. Each new experience incorporates more information into one's schema.

Schema theory is relevant for this study because efficient comprehension is a process that is achieved via a connection between the students' schemata and the text. It is not only the product

of a text, but it is also what the students bring to the text from their own experience. Understanding ensues from the interplay of the text and factors external to it. The study therefore posits that the interaction between the text and students' schemata leads to efficient comprehension. In fact, the information that students have stored in their schemata is likely to help them process and understand a new text that is presented to them. Whenever they read a text, they activate their background knowledge to verify whether or not something linked to the text is there.

2.2 Conceptual framework



The understanding of a text is conceptualized as an interactive process between the readers' background knowledge of text structure and the text, i.e. the link between prior knowledge of the

text structure and the text leads to efficient understanding when students are interested in the lesson, concentrate their attention and use appropriate strategies.

2.3 Related Literature

A considerable number of studies have demonstrated the relevance of schema or background knowledge in language teaching and learning in general and in reading comprehension in particular. Many researchers have proved that understanding a text is not exclusively dependent upon textual materials but also on elements beyond it. This consideration has led many studies to emphasize the interaction between the text and the reader's prior knowledge as the key to efficient understanding of a text. Therefore, the literature review of the present study explored the relevance of schema theory in reading comprehension, reading strategies and the formal structure of a prose text type.

2.3.1 Reading as a process

Reading is an interactive language skill which connects a reader to a writer via the written text. It is a two-way process that integrates information from the text-based model with information from prior knowledge using inferential processing. It enables a reader to apprehend writers' thoughts, opinions, stances, and so forth. Heidi (1998) stresses that reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose(s) for reading guide the reader's selection of texts.

Hülya (2012) claims that reading is a lifelong skill to be used both at school and throughout life. When we read something, the purpose is to try to understand what the intention is. When dealing with reading, we encounter two layers of reality: one that we can see and one that we cannot see. Therefore, the purpose of reading is to make the invisible layer, the underlying meaning, visible and clear. According to Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, &Wilkinson (1985), reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school and, indeed, throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfilment and job success inevitably will be lost. Teele (2004, p. 92) asserts that the goal of all readers should be to understand what they read. Research shows good readers are actively involved with the text, and they are aware of the processes they use to understand what they read.

The purpose for reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension. For example, a person who needs to know whether she can afford to eat at a particular restaurant needs to comprehend the pricing information provided on the menu, but does not need to recognize the name of every appetizer listed. A person reading poetry for enjoyment needs to recognize the words the poet uses and the ways they are put together, but does not need to identify main idea and supporting details. However, a person using a scientific article to support an opinion needs to know the vocabulary that is used, understand the facts and cause-effect sequences that are presented, and recognize ideas that are presented as hypotheses and givens (Heidi, 1998).

2.3.2 Schema theory and its relevance in education

It is clear that the source of the reader's background knowledge is the world. Axelrod (2011) maintains that the world is complex, and yet people are able to make some sense out of it. One of the most important tools that people use is a schema. Schema is a "pre-existing assumption about the way the world is organized." When new information becomes available, a person tries to fit the new information into the pattern which he has used in the past to interpret information about the same situation. If the new information does not fit very well, something has to give.

The relevance of schema theory in teaching and learning has been discussed widely. For instance, Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert& Goetz (1977, 1978) played an important role in introducing schema theory to the field of education. They explained the roles of schema theory as follows:

> Schema theory is based on the belief that every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world developed up to that point. Schemata provide a form of representation for complex knowledge. The construct, for the first time, offered a principled account of how old knowledge might influence the acquisition of new knowledge. Schema theory lays out a picture of how people organize the truly enormous amount of background knowledge which they accumulate about the world. Such knowledge is organized into mental units, called schemas. When people learn, when they build knowledge, they are either creating new schemas, or linking together pre-existing schemas in new ways. Schema theory states that, when students reconstruct information, they fit it into information that already exists in their minds. As they attempt to retrieve information from their long-term memory, the searches sometimes are not very exact and they do not always locate precisely what they want.

> When asked to retrieve information, students often fill in the gaps between their fragmented memories, sometimes not well organized and/or with incorrect information, with a variety of accuracies and inaccuracies. In the end, sound learning can go forward well or be misdirected, based on what a student has not organized or learned well previously.

Wiseman (2008) claims that the most important implication of schema theory in teaching is the role of prior knowledge in processing. When people learn, they are either creating new schemas or linking together pre-existing schemas in new ways. For students to effectively process information, their existing schemas related to the new information need to be activated. This can be done by using outlines, organized activities, advanced organizers, meaningful materials such as handouts, guides, asking specific questions, etc. This activation stimulates prior knowledge and, in turn, students are better able to process the new information and link to it.

In reading, Miller (2002, pp. 71-72) notes that readers:

- activate their prior knowledge before, during, and after reading;
- use schema to make connections between the text and their lives, between one text and another, and between the text and the world;
- distinguish between connections that are meaningful and relevant and those that are not;
- build, change, and revise their schema when they encounter new information in the text, engage in conversations with others, and gain personal experience; and
- use their schema to enhance understanding

None of the above studies discussed the relevance of background knowledge of text structure in reading comprehension.

2.3.3 The role of Background knowledge in reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is not a rigid process. The reader's background knowledge or schema plays a powerful role in understanding. Woolley (2011) maintains that reading comprehension is a flexible and ongoing cognitive and constructive process. It is a two-way process that integrates information from the text-based model with information from prior knowledge using inferential processing.

Background knowledge has a major impact on whether or not a reader can comprehend text. Reader's schema is organized knowledge of the world, which provides information for comprehending, remembering ideas, and learning (Anderson, 1994). The mental pictures kept or stored in the reader's memory are helpful in understanding textual materials. Parviz (2003) says that reading is an act of participation in a discourse between interlocutors. Reading efficiency cannot be measured against the amount of information contained in a text. This is incalculable since it depends on how much knowledge the reader brings to the text and how much he wishes to extract from it.

Teachers encourage schema building by helping students build background knowledge, access the background knowledge, and use it to bridge new learning (Rea & Mercuri, 2006). Thus, background knowledge must be built subject by subject.Instruction on background knowledge can significantly improve students' comprehension of relevant reading materials.

Anderson, Anderson, &Pichert, 1978 outline the importance of background knowledge as follows:

1. Provides scaffolding for understanding text.
2. Helps reader decide where to attend.
3. Allows the reader to make inferences.
4. Provides a guide to search memory.
5. Helps produce hypotheses about information that is missing.
6. Allows the reader to remember more.
7. Enhances speed of processing.

It is clear that background knowledge plays a crucial role in reading comprehension. The mental pictures associated with the story stored by the reader, for example, is irreversible in the understanding of a text.

2.3.4 Approaches to reading comprehension

In discussing approaches to reading, Parviz (2003) maintains that there are two main outlooks on reading. The first, a product oriented approach to reading, assumes meaning exists in the text itself, and it is text-based factors that text determine meaning. In this view pre-reading activities rely mostly on clarifying the meaning of difficult words or complex structures. Whereas, the second, process oriented approach to reading, meaning is obtained through a successful interaction between the reader and the text, and it is inside-the head factors that play an important role in comprehension. Of the two approaches, Parviz has clearly recommended process approach to

reading which he believed is conducive to efficient comprehension because it considers the reader's schema which is a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in the memory. It is a sort of framework, or plan, or script. Schemata are created through experience with people, objects, and events in the world. An example of how schema functions is equally provided by Parviz as follows: "when we encounter something repeatedly, such as a restaurant, we begin to generalize across our restaurant experiences to develop an abstracted, generic set of expectations about what we will encounter in a restaurant. This is useful, because if someone tells you a story about eating in a restaurant, they do not need to provide all the details about being seated, giving their order to the server, leaving a tip at the end, etc., because your schema for the restaurant experience can fill in these missing details".

Unlike Parviz et al, Crystal (1987) rationalizes bottom-up and top-down approaches in language teaching as follows "we operate with the concept of text comprehension all the time, often without realizing it. When we read and listen, it tends to be "top down"- that is, we see a text as a whole, and try to make sense of it, bit by bit. When we speak and write, it tends to be 'bottom-up'- that is, we produce and understand a bit at a time, and try to build up a coherent text from the pieces.

2.3.5 Reading comprehension strategies

The concept of comprehension has to do with meaning. To comprehend a text efficiently and develop reading skill, the reader has to use a number of strategies. Hülya (2012) summarizes the strategies for improving reading skills as follows:

(1) Predicting:

This strategy may help the reader set a purpose for their reading. It also allows for more student interaction, which increases student interest and improves their understanding of the text. Using the title, table of contents, pictures, and key words is one prediction strategy.

(2) Visualizing

Visualization requires the reader to construct an image of what is read. This image is stored in the reader's memory as a representation of the reader's interpretation of the text. Teachers can motivate students to visualize settings, characters, and actions in a story and ask them to make drawings or write about the image that come to their minds after visualizing the text.

(3) Making Connections

By making connections, the learners can activate their prior knowledge and connect the ideas in the text to their own experiences. Reading becomes meaningful when the reader connects the ideas in the text to their experiences and beliefs, and the things happening in the outer world. "Text-to-Text, Text-to-Self, Text-to-world" is a strategy that helps students make connections. Students can make text-to-self connections through drawing, making a chart, or writing.

(4) Summarizing

The process of summarization requires the reader to determine what is important when reading and to condense the information in the readers own words. During the summarizing process, the students will be able to distinguish the main ideas from the supporting ideas.

(5) Questioning

Readers can use the questioning before, during, and after reading. The questioning process requires readers to ask questions of themselves to construct meaning, enhance understanding, find answers, solve problems, find information, and discover new information. In this strategy, the students return to the text throughout the reading process to find the answers to the questions asked by the teacher before, during and after the reading.

(6) Inferring

Inferring refers to reading between the lines. Students need to use their own knowledge along with information from the text to draw their own conclusions. Through inferring students will be able to draw conclusions, make predictions, identify underlying themes, use information to create meaning from text, and use pictures to create meaning. Students can be given techniques to use illustrations, graphs, pictures, dates, related vocabulary and titles from the text to make inferences.

It is well known that background knowledge is constructed from experiences with people, things and events of the world stored in a person's memory. Wiseman (2008) compares long-term memory of students to a library of books or set of file folders. He maintains that the way students retrieve information is said to be similar to the process they use to locate and check out a book or find a folder. The process of retrieving information from long term memory, however, is not always precise. When a student searches through his or her long-term memory storehouse of information,

the student does not always find the book or folder desired, or might find the desired book or folder, but discover that some pages are not intact. This is often based on the completeness of the information and/or how the information was filed or stored in the first place.

Developing reading skill is therefore an inherent way of enhancing and consolidating linguistic competence. Barton et al (1999) encapsulate the main skills involved in higher level reading as follows:

1. Skimming-reading a text quickly to pick up the gist of it
2. Scanning-reading text quickly to find a specific idea or point
3. Identifying key words
4. Summarizing main ideas

They maintain that certain texts lend themselves more than others to advanced reading skills. Information texts often use visual signals to help readers find their way about. These signals might include:

1. Organization by alphabetical order
2. Headings and subheadings
3. Bold text, underlining, or italics to make key ideas stand out

The National Center for Language Resource (2004) further maintains that reader knowledge, skills, and strategies include

1. Linguistic competence: the ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences
2. Discourse competence: knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another
3. Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content
4. Strategic competence: the ability to use top-down strategies (as well as knowledge of the language

In addition, Yun (1998), quoted in the National Center for Language Resource (2004) outlines the strategies that can help students read more quickly and effectively as follows:

1. Previewing: reviewing titles, section headings, and photo captions to get a sense of the structure and content of a reading selection
2. Predicting: using knowledge of the subject matter to make predictions about content and vocabulary and check comprehension; using knowledge of the text type and purpose to make predictions about discourse structure; using knowledge about the author to make predictions about writing style, vocabulary, and content
3. Skimming and scanning: using a quick survey of the text to get the main idea, identify text structure, confirm or question predictions
4. Guessing from context: using prior knowledge of the subject and the ideas in the text as clues to the meanings of unknown words, instead of stopping to look them up
5. Paraphrasing: stopping at the end of a section to check comprehension by restating the information and ideas in the text

Yun further asserts that instructors can help students learn when and how to use reading strategies in several ways.

1. By modelling the strategies aloud, talking through the processes of previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, and paraphrasing. This shows students how the strategies work and how much they can know about a text before they begin to read word by word.
2. By allowing time in class for group and individual previewing and predicting activities as preparation for in-class or out-of-class reading. Allocating class time to these activities indicates their importance and value.
3. By using cloze (fill in the blank) exercises to review vocabulary items. This helps students learn to guess meaning from context.
4. By encouraging students to talk about what strategies they think will help them approach a reading assignment, and then talking after reading about what strategies they actually used. This helps students develop flexibility in their choice of strategies.

None of the above studies discussed how readers select reading strategies. This study assumes that the selection of strategies is dependent upon the readers, i.e., it is up to the reader to select the strategy that is suitable. Readers can also combine strategies during reading.

2.3.6 Awareness of text structures

Readers of all ages must be aware of text structures if they are to be most successful (Meyer, 2003). The structure or organization of the text is the arrangement of ideas and the relationships among the ideas (Armbruster, 2004). Readers who are unaware of the text structures are at a disadvantage because they do not approach reading with any type of reading plan (Meyer, Brandt, &Bluth, 1980). However, readers who are familiar with text structures expect the information to unfold in certain ways (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002).

A text structure comprises both the form of the text and its content. Both components are crucial in the understanding of a specific textual material. Taylor (1992) maintains that being able to identify the structure of a text can greatly increase students' comprehension of the material being read. Once the teacher has modelled the text structure, students can follow the organizing pattern to identify important events, concepts and ideas. Students should also be taught the signal words that alert them to text structure. Taylor further says "Students who are taught to identify the structure of expository and narrative text have been found to have better comprehension than students who have not received such instruction."

Students first learn to read narrative text structures, which are story-like structures that facilitate their learning to read. Consequently, students enter school having a sense of narrative structures as they appear in texts. Across the years of school, their awareness of text structures must increase as they progressively shift from reading a story line or casual text to reading for information (Lorch & Lorch, 1996). By the third grade, and obviously by the fourth, there is a noticeable shift to reading texts for information, information that is often dense and written in long passages (Gillet, Temple, & Crawford, 2004; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002).

Most expository texts are structured to facilitate the study process for prospective readers. These texts contain structural elements that help guide students through their reading. Authors of expository texts use these structures to arrange and connect ideas. Students who understand the

idea of text structure and how to analyze it are likely to learn more than students who lack this understanding (RAND Reading Study Group, 2002). The research literature in this field reveals that students' reading comprehension skills improve when they acquire knowledge of texts' structural development and use them properly.

Carrell (1985) argued that instruction on text structure indeed has a positive effect on the students' recall protocols. Meyer (1985) stated that knowledge of the rhetorical relationship of the ideas-main idea, major ideas, and supporting details-helps readers with their comprehension of the expository texts. Reading researchers have argued that knowledge of text organization or structure is an important factor for text comprehension.

Text features can help readers locate and organize information in the text. For example, headings help introduce students to specific bits of information. Presenting information in this manner helps students hold each bit of information in their short-term memory. Students then can process it or connect it to background knowledge and store it in their long-term memory. Without headings, information would be overwhelming, making it difficult to be processed effectively.

Structural elements in expository texts vary; therefore, it is important to introduce students to the components of various texts throughout the school year. It is also important to teach and model the use of these components properly at the beginning of the school year. The recognition and use of text organization are essential processes underlying comprehension and retention. As early as the third grade, students are expected to recognize expository text structures. Meyer (1985) classified these text structures as follows:

1. Description-The author describes a topic.
2. Sequence-The author uses numerical or chronological order to list items or events.
3. Compare/contrast-The author compares and contrasts two or more similar events, topics, or objects.
4. Cause/effect-The author delineates one or more causes and then describes the ensuing effects.
5. Problem/solution-The author poses a problem or question and then gives the answer.

The ability to identify and analyze these text structures in expository texts helps readers to comprehend the text more easily and retain it longer. To achieve better results, it is highly recommended to introduce and work on text structures in the order prescribed in what follows.

2.3.7 The Text Structures

Taylor (1992) summarises the common text structures as follow.

Compare-Contrast Structure

This type of text examines the similarities and differences between two or more people, events, concepts, ideas, etc.

Cause-Effect Structure

This structure presents the causal relationship between a specific event, idea, or concept and the events, ideas, or concept that follow.

Sequence Structure

This text structure gives readers a chronology of events or a list of steps in a procedure.

Problem-Solution Structure

This type of structure sets up a problem or problems, explains the solution, and then discusses the effects of the solution.

Descriptive Structure

This type of text structure features a detailed description of something to give the reader a mental picture.

Question-Answer Structure

This text structure starts by posing a question then goes on to answer that question.

Cyclical Structure

This structure starts with an event then progresses through a series until it is back to the beginning event.

This study is concerned with sequence structure which gives readers a chronology of events or a list of steps in a procedure.

2.3.8 The narrative structure

The elements of a narrative structure are outlined as follows:

1. Situation: setting (time and place), background/context

2. Conflict: tension, the problem in the narrative

3. Struggle: stems from the conflict, how the conflict is dealt with

4. Outcome: result of the struggle, the resolution

5. Meaning: your reflection on the event(s), lesson learned through this story.'

When writing a narrative, the following points have to be kept in mind among others:

Tense and Action: Generally, narratives can be written in the past tense, since the event has already taken place. However, sometimes, present tense can be used. A narrative chronicles an event, almost like scenes in a film.

Point of View: Narration often lends itself to first person point of view (I, me, mine, our). Third person point of view (he, she, they, etc.) is often acceptable as well.

Descriptive Detail: A narrative uses rich images, sensory description, and specific language, including strong, active verbs, to bring the narrative to life.

Dialogue: a narrative might incorporate dialogues between characters (BCCC Tutoring Center, 2008)

2.3.9 How to analyse a narrative structure

According to Visual Story Telling and Narrative Structure Guide (2011), a narrative structure is about two things: the content of a story and the form used to tell the story. Two common ways to describe these two parts of narrative structure are story and plot. Story refers to the raw materials of dramatic action as they might be described in chronological order. Plot refers to how the story is told — the form of storytelling, or the structure, that the story follows.

If we want to analyze narrative structure, we can use "who," "what," and "where" questions to look at the story or content of a movie. "How" and "when" questions are used to examine plot structure.

Conventionally, both story and plot are described in terms of how a character's life is disrupted by an event or change in his/her situation; this causes a series of conflicts that the character(s) must face, including the major conflict that is eventually resolved at the end of the film. "Conflict" in this model can take many forms, be it emotional, interpersonal, or even between the character and his/her physical environment.

To describe story in a film, we would need to answer the following questions:

- Where is the story set?
- What event starts the story?
- Who are the main characters?
- What conflict(s) do they face? What is at stake?
- What happens to the characters as they face this conflict?
- What is the outcome of this conflict?
- What is the ultimate impact on the characters?

To describe the plot structure of the movie, we would need to answer these questions:

- How and when is the major conflict in the story set up?
- How and when are the main characters introduced?
- How is the story moved along so that the characters must face the central conflict?
- How and when is the major conflict set up to propel the film to its conclusion?
- How and when does the film resolve most of the major conflicts set up at the outset?

In each case, story and plot are slightly different ways of analysing a movie. From the audience's perspective, story and plot refer to the different ways movie narratives construct meaning for spectators. Story is about trying to determine the key conflicts, main characters, setting and events. Plot is about how, and at what stages, the key conflicts are set up and resolved. What is interesting about most of the movies made in Hollywood is that, while the stories may change, the fundamental plot structure is virtually identical (www.inpoint.org).

According to Freytag (1863), a plot consists of exposition, complication, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution and denouement.

The focus of attention of this study is simply to study the content of a story and the form used to tell it.

2.3.10 How to teach expository text structure

According to Akhondi, Malayeri, and Samad (2011), the first and most important thing for a teacher is to be well informed about different text structures for expository texts, the signal words and phrases for each text structure, and the appropriate graphic organizer specific to each text structure.

Before preparing any instructional plan to start training students and embark on reading activities, all the procedures must be modelled. Meanwhile, the students watch the teacher focusing on the steps mentioned, from recognizing the signal words and phrases to applying the graphic organizers to each text. After practicing for the first few sessions and giving students opportunity to work on their background knowledge, Akhondi et al. (2011) give the following procedural recommendation:

(1) Introduce the text structures in order, starting with description and finishing with compare/ contrast. This order is followed in most textbook readings.
(2) Introduce and work on a single text structure in each lesson. Do not combine them. Work on one text structure for three or four sessions, and then proceed to the next one.
(3) Prepare short passages (about six to eight lines) for the text structure you are going to work on in that session. As the texts are short, you can work on at least four texts according to the time allocated for each session.
(4) Try to highlight and emphasize the signal words and phrases in each text and elaborate on a series of signal words for each text structure. Tell students that authors of informational texts use specific signal words and phrases for each rhetorical structure.
(5) After students are familiar with signal words and phrases, ask them to find these clues in structure of each text through signal words and phrases. Then, invite them to write some short paragraphs and use some of the signal words and phrases appropriate to each text structure.
(6) Working with graphic organizers is the next step after teaching signal words and phrases. For the first few sessions of working with graphic organizers, prepare for your students a

completed graphic organizer before they start working on the text. This will help them create a better image of the hierarchy of ideas and their interrelationships discussed in the passage. Graphic organizers help students list major ideas under the main idea of the text and put the supporting details under the related major idea. Having a graphic representation of the text's ideas helps readers comprehend and retain the content.

(7) Once students are comfortable with different kinds of graphic organizers, you can give them an incomplete graphic organizer after they have finished reading the passage. Let them complete it on their own.

(8) At this stage, the students would be able to work on a blank graphic organizer independently, elicit the ideas from the text, and demonstrate the hierarchy of the ideas in a graphic organizer. These activities may vary from partially blank graphic organizers to totally blank schematic representations. Variables like the text length and text difficulty will determine how much of the text may appear in this schematic diagram.

Conclusively, the literature examined has stressed the relevance of background knowledge in a reading process with a particular attention on text structure. It follows that a reading comprehension instruction should ultimately consider the pupils' schemata of the text structure and content to enhance their reading skill and ability to attain efficient understanding. The reviewed literature has also outlined the reading strategies to be used by a reader.

2.4 Gaps identified in the literature

The various interpretations of schema theory suggested by authors discuss the relevance of background knowledge in general. The discussions are not oriented towards practical applications of schema theory to specific contexts. The theories and models are suggested without practical orientations which would shed light on how schemata work. Therefore, practical applications of schema theory in specific contexts would materialize its efficiencies.

The other way in which the reviewed literature is defective is that external variables such as attention, attitude, motivation, etc. are not emphasized as factors that may affect students' performance in reading comprehension as well.

Considering the pinpointed gaps in the literature, the objective this study is poised to pursue is to translate theory into practice by testing schema theory in a specific context, Bunia secondary schools, whereby the effects of background knowledge of text structure on students were cross-checked via an experimental design with a keen attention being directed to the chronological structure of a narrative.

All the reading strategies outlined above were considered in the study of the sequential narrative. Students were encouraged to use previewing, reviewing of titles and headlines, predicting, skimming and scanning, guessing as well as paraphrasing strategies.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the research design, the target population, sampling strategy, sample size, data collection instruments, data quality control, validity, reliability, procedure, data analysis, ethical considerations, and limitations.

3.1 Research design

The present study used experimental design. Experiment is in fact a robust tool for primary data collection. According to Gary (2010: 2) experiments allow us to set up a direct comparison between the treatments of interest, to minimize any bias and errors in the comparison. Most importantly, we are in control of experiments, and having that control allows us to make stronger inferences about the nature of differences that we see in the experiment. Specifically, we may make inferences about causation.

Considering the above advantages of experiment and the need to measure students' competence in reading, primary data of this study was obtained via an intervention which was conducted in Bunia secondary schools. The researcher taught the chronological structure of narrative to a selected group of Senior Six students. This experiment was preceded by a pre-test wherein 380 S-6 students were tested to gauge their initial awareness of the narrative structure. Pre-testing was conducted in ten schools. Another test was carried out after intervention. Both the experimental and the control groups took it. It was presumed that intervention would have a positive effect on the students who participated in it. They were expected to perform in reading comprehension better than those who did not participate in the experiment. Secondary data were collected through questionnaire, review of set textbooks and observation tools.

3.2 Target population

The target population for this study was 7600 people encompassing 7540 Senior-6 students and 60 English teachers of Bunia secondary schools in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where English is taught and learnt as a foreign language. It is worth reminding that S-6 students were the key informants of the study since they were supposed to provide first-hand or primary data. They were particularly targeted on the ground of their proficiency level in English.

Questionnaires were distributed to teachers as part of secondary data gathering. They offered insights into the methodology used in teaching reading comprehension.

3.3 Sample Size

The researcher planned to use a total sample size encompassing 390 respondents in the following categories: 380 students and 10 teachers of English from 10 secondary schools. The students were tested and the teachers of English received questionnaires. Details of the study respondents and schools are presented in the table below.

3.3.1 Table 1: Respondents and Schools for study

S/N	School name	Students	Teachers	Total
01	Nyakasanza High School	41	1	42
02	Lycee Kigonze	50	1	51
03	Complexe scolaire de Bunia	21	1	22
04	Amani-Kabarole High School	40	1	41
05	C.S. Shalom	31	1	32
06	C.S. Aigle de Dieu	48	1	49
07	C.S. Monts Bleus	19	1	20
08	C.S. Agneau de Dieu	43	1	44
09	Institut Yambi-Yaya	42	1	43
10	Institut Bunyanga	45	1	46
	TOTAL	**380**	**10**	**390**

Source: primary data

The sample size of 380 students was arrived at by applying Slovin's formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

Where

n= sample size

N=known population size

e= level of significance (0.05)

$$n = \frac{7600}{1+7600(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{7600}{1+19}$$

n= 380

Criteria for school selection

The criteria taken into consideration in the selection of the secondary schools for study were qualification of teachers and the schools statuses. Thus, schools with qualified English teachers were preferred to those with unqualified ones. This criterion was taken into consideration because qualification has a direct impact on the linguistic competence of students. Indeed, students taught by qualified teachers are likely to perform better than those taught by unqualified ones. Moreover, the status of schools was also considered. This is why five (05) government sponsored/aided schools Kigonze, Nyakasanza, Yambi-Yaya, Bunyanga, C.S. Bunia and 05 private schools Aigle de Dieu, Agneau de Dieu, C.S Monts Bleus, Amani-Kabarole, and C.S. Shalom were identified for the study. As for intervention, schools with the worst performance in the pre-test were selected for intervention.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

The sample strategy selected for the present study was purposive sampling. This is a non-probabilistic sampling strategy whereby the researcher selects participants who have the required information according to the objectives of his/her study. According to Bernard 2002, Lewis & Sheppard 2006 quoted by Tongco (2007), the purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience.

In this study, Bunia secondary school teachers and students were selected because they have the required information. However, students were the key informants who were expected to provide

first-hand data. As indicated above, the study was basically concerned with Senior 6 students. This selection was based on the proficiency correlate. In the D R Congo, English is taught and learned as a foreign language. Therefore, students from S-1 to S-5 were not selected for the study because they have a low proficiency level in English. One teacher from each target school participated in the study.

3.5 Data collection Instruments

Data gathering is crucial in research, as the data is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework (Bernard, 2002). It then becomes imperative that selecting the manner of obtaining data and from whom the data will be acquired be done with sound judgment, especially since no amount of analysis can make up for improperly collected data (Bernard et al. 1986).
The present study's data were collected in Bunia secondary schools via the research tools below.

3.5.1 Testing

This was the primary data collection instrument. The purpose of the test was to gauge the overall students' awareness of the text structure, most specifically the pre-test was supposed to measure students' knowledge of the chronological organisation of narrative texts.

Pre-test took place in 10 secondary schools and lasted10 minutes; post-test was conducted in two schools. Only students of senior 6 classes participated for the reason evoked above.

Test questions covered text type, setting, characters and the chronology of events in the story.

The researcher distributed question sheets to the students in all the selected schools. They were asked to read a short narrative silently and answer questions about it. Thereafter the researcher collected the students' answer sheets for correction in order to assess their performance.

3.5.2 Intervention

Experimental teaching took place in two secondary schools which performed very poorly in the pre-test. Four S-6 classes in two secondary schools were considered for the post-test. Students of two S-6 classes were taught the structure of a chronological narrative in one session lasting 50 minutes. The other two S-6 classes did not participate in the experiment. Then both categories were submitted to a post-test. During the experiment the researcher used question-answer technique. The experimental teaching was conducted in eight (08) steps as follows:

1. Pre-reading: students were asked to list their activities of the previous day in chronological order. Brainstorming strategy was used to activate students' background knowledge.
2. Students were instructed to read a short chronological text composed by the researcher silently for five minutes.
3. The researcher asked students to describe the form of the text. He reinforced, adjusted and corrected students' answers. The text was identified as a short story written in prose. In addition, the chronological structure of the text was highlighted via signal words.
4. The researcher used a graphic organizer. He drew a timeline on the chalkboard to show the sequence of events starting from the earliest point in time to the most recent point in time. The graphic representation enabled students to understand how a chronological text is organised. The researcher explained to students that a chronological narrative has a beginning, middle and an end. The researcher drew pupils' attention on how the narrative begins, how the story progresses and how it ends. This was facilitated by signal words.
5. After the analysis of the text form, attention was turned to the characters and their roles in the text. Students were asked to identify the characters of the text and describe their role in the text. The main character was identified as well.
6. Later, the theme or the central idea of the story was discussed. Students were asked to reread the text and summarize it in their own words. The theme of the story was elicited during this time as well.
7. Then the researcher asked students to give the title of the story.
8. To conclude the experiment, students were submitted to an exercise whereby they were asked to read 4 sentences presented in scrambled way and unscramble or rearrange the sentences chronologically to reconstruct the story and give it a title.

3.5.3 Post-intervention test

Both the experimental group, who were taught, and the control group, who were not, were submitted to a post intervention test. A new narrative was presented to both groups. They were asked to answer a number of questions covering both the content and the form. The performances of the experimental group and the control one were compared and analysed to confirm the effect of the intervention on the experimental group. Rate of performance and counter-performance were analysed. It was presumed that the experimental group would perform better than the control group

because they were expected to use their background knowledge of a narrative structure to deal with the new narrative presented to them.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

Teachers from 10 secondary schools within Bunia received questionnaires about the approaches used in teaching reading comprehension. The questionnaire was supposed to reveal the approaches to reading comprehension the English teachers in Bunia secondary schools resort to. It shed light on whether or not pupils' background knowledge was considered. Teachers were given three (03) days to fill and return the questionnaires to the researcher who collected the questionnaires from the teachers himself.

3.5.5 Observation

10 secondary schools selected at random were visited by the researcher in Bunia secondary schools. Reading comprehension lessons were attended and the ways the lessons were taught were recorded for subsequent analysis.

3.5.6 Review of set textbooks

Text-books used to teach reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools were examined. The examination of these documents gave indications of the types of text taught to Bunia secondary school students.

3.6 Data quality control

The major data collection instrument of this study was testing. The researcher ensured that all the target students answered the test questions accurately. Students' answer sheets were be collected and marked. Omissions, incomplete responses were interpreted. Unanswered sheets were categorized. As for teachers' questionnaires, they were collected and all inconsistencies and anomalies were detected.

3.7 Validity

According to Kahinda-Mbaaga (2000:132), validity of an instrument is the degree to which it measures what it is intended to measure, and does so correctly, giving an example that if length is measured with a foot ruler that is valid measurement, while measuring length with a thermometer is an invalid measurement.

The valid instrument selected for this study was testing. It was mandatory in gauging pupils' competency and awareness of the test structure.

3.8 Reliability

Reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistence. A "reliable" instrument will give the same score even when used many/several times to measure the same variable, provided the variable has not changed for a given entity. Testing is a reliable instrument of measuring students' performance in reading comprehension since it can be used to check students' level of understanding under the same condition several times, and may produce the same result.

3.9 Procedure

After obtaining a letter of introduction from the University, the researcher visited the target secondary school institutions. Before contacting teachers and students, the researcher sought for permission from the relevant authorities to allow him carry out the study.

Students were tested and teachers received questionnaires to fill within three (03) days. Questionnaires were collected by the researcher later.

3.10 Data Analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (1990, p.111) quoted by Desmond (2010), "Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data. Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) defined data analysis as the ways in which the researcher moves from a description of what is the case to an explanation of why what is the case is the case.(p.295)

The Open University postulates that qualitative data analysis is a process that seeks to reduce and make sense of vast amounts of information, often from different sources, so that impressions that shed light on a research question can emerge. It is a process where you take descriptive information and offer an explanation or interpretation.

The data of this study was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. The approaches used in reading comprehension were examined and explained to check their conformity to process oriented

approach to reading. Particular attention was paid to the chronological structure of narrative and steps in the reading comprehension process. Elements likely to connect textual structure to comprehension were cross-checked from the start of reading lesson to its end.

3.11 Ethical consideration

The primary goal of this research was the promotion and the pursuit of knowledge and truth. In line with this, the researcher abode by codes and policies that outline ethical behaviour such as honesty, objectivity, respect for intellectual property, social responsibility, confidentiality, non-discrimination during data collection. Respondents' views and opinions were kept confidential and were strictly used for study purpose, nothing else. The researcher treated respondents equally and avoided biased judgement in the management of responses.

3.12 Limitations of the study

The following challenges were faced by the researcher during data collection

1. Some teachers were reluctant to receive the researcher for the attendance of their lessons. They presumed this would unveil their weaknesses in teaching.
2. The schools under study were not located in one place. This cost the researcher a lot of money to reach the different places.
3. Questionnaires were not returned the same date. Some teachers spent more than a week with it. This delayed the researcher.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses data collected from Bunia secondary schools and gives the study findings. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents the primary data gathered from 380 students from 10 secondary schools before, during and after intervention. The second one provides secondary data from Bunia secondary school teachers. These data were obtained via questionnaires, attendance of reading comprehension lessons and assessment of set reading text books used by teachers in Bunia secondary schools. The last part gives the study findings.

4.1 Primary data

Primary data collection was obtained basically via experimental paradigm. The overall process was three-fold: pre-test, intervention and post-test. This plan enabled the researcher to primarily measure the initial level of awareness of students with regard to narrative text structure, conduct experimental teaching and submit students to a post-test to verify the effects of intervention on the students.

4.1.1 Pre-test

Three hundred and eighty (380) students from 10 Bunia secondary schools were submitted to a pre-test. The testees were required to read a short narrative and answer 10 questions covering the narrative structure. The purpose of the test was to gauge the students' awareness of the chronological structure of a narrative. In all the 10 schools, students read the same text. The researcher invigilated the students during the test himself, sometimes with the assistance of teachers. It lasted for 40 minutes. At the end of the test, students' answer sheets were collected by the researcher for correction. The text in appendix II was selected for pre-test in all the 10 secondary schools.

Respondents' details

The respondents comprised students of senior 6 from mixed schools comprising young boys and girls aged between 17 and 22 years. All of them were learners of English as a foreign language.

Question details

The pre-test consisted of 10 questions which covered text-type, the narrative form, the narrative content and the setting (see appendix II).

The table below outlines the distribution of questions.

4.1.1.1 Table 2 Pre-test questions distribution

S/N	Text structure item	No. of question per item(stimuli)
01	Text-type	01
02	Text form	01
03	Setting	01
04	Characters	02
05	Chronology of events	02
07	Theme/central idea of the text	01
08	Text content	01
09	Text title identification	01
	TOTAL	**10**

Source: primary data

As indicated in table. 2, question distribution covered the elements of the independent variable such as the text type, the text form, the setting, the characters, the chronology of events, theme/central idea of the text, text content and text title which were used to measure the rate of comprehension of students (dependent variable). Each item was accorded at least one question in order for students to concentrate their attention on text form and content; some items were even reserved more than one question to emphasize the need for students to familiarize themselves with elements that are compulsory in the processing of a text structure.

Pre-test score is summarized in the following table. Names of schools have been coded for ethical reasons. Full names of schools and their corresponding letter codes are in Appendix VII.

4.1.1.2 Table 3 Pre-test score

S/N	School code	N° of participants	Succeeded	%	Failed	%
01	A	41	3	7.3	38	92.7
02	B	50	10	20	40	80
03	C	21	2	9.5	19	90.5
04	D	40	4	10	40	90
05	E	31	18	58	13	42
06	F	48	8	16.6	40	83.4
07	G	19	4	21	15	79
08	H	43	8	18.6	35	81.4
09	I	42	21	50	21	50
10	J	45	2	4.4	43	95.6
	TOTAL	**380**	**80**	**21.05 %**	**300**	**78.95%**

Source: primary data

In all 380students participated in the pre-test. 80 students (21.05%) succeeded in it against 300 students (78.95%). As can be noticed, the majority of students failed in the pre-test.

Poor performance in the pre-test was noticed in school B (20%), school (10%), school F (16.6%), school G (21%) and school H (18.6%).

The worst performance in the pre-test was recorded in three secondary schools: A (7.3%), C (9.5%) and J (4.4%).

Good performance was noted in school I whereby 21 students out of 42 (50%) succeeded in the pre-test.

The best school in the pre-test was school E whereby 18 students out of 31(58%) succeeded against 13(42%).

The student with the highest marks (7/10) was in School I. The students with the lowest marks (1/10) were recorded at school G.

An analysis of the ways students answered questions unfolds as follows. 181 students (47.6%) responded to all the pre-test questions. 199students (52.4%) left at least one question unanswered. This means that they did not know the answers to the questions. Clearly a significant number of students were not aware of the narrative text structure.

Questions n°1 was about the text type. It asked students to select the correct text type from a list. 334 students (87.9%) ticked the correct answer. This means at least the majority of students were aware of the text type because only 46 students out of 380 (12.1%) failed in this question. It was noticed that a great number of students succeeded in this question easily simply because it was a multiple choice question. Students must have answered the question haphazardly.

Questions n°2 which requested students to describe the form of the text was not answered by 116students (30.6%). Those who attempted question n°2 answered that the story was in affirmative and negative forms. These students were influenced by their prior knowledge of grammar. They confused the text form with the sentence form. Only 11students (2.9%) answered that the text was a narrative, 4 students (1.2%) noticed that all the events of the story happened in the past. This was signaled by the verbs which were all in the simple past. None of the students was able to identify the text as a short story told in the third person point of view with events arranged in chronological order or time order.

Question n°3 was on the story setting. It was answered correctly by 197 students (51.9%). Students were able to notice that the story happened at location which was not mentioned in the story. However, from the facts of the story students assumed that the story could have taken place in a city. Students also identified the time of the story which was in the morning hours.

Question n°4 which asked students to select the exact number of characters in the text was equally answered correctly by the majority of students. They were able to give the number of characters, but were unable to identify them. They only identified the main character because she appeared several times in the story, but failed to explain her roles. It was remarked that students selected the correct answer by chance because they were not able to answer the sub-question which required them to identify or name the characters. 281(74.1 %) students failed to identify the characters.

It was observed that multiple choice questions n°1, n°2, and n°4 were answered by chance because students failed to answer sub-questions related to them.

Questions n°6 and n°7 were about the chronological arrangement of the story events. These questions were quite clear because they asked students to name the event at the beginning of the story, the one in the middle of it, and the event that ends the story. However, these questions were not well understood by some of students. Only the first event of the story was identified easily by 358 students (94.2%) because they were attentive to the signal word. The first significant event of the story was clearly introduced in the text by the word 'first'. The identification of event in the middle of the story was particularly difficult for students because there was no discourse marker in the middle of the story. 261 students (68.6%) failed in this sub-question.51 students (13.5 %) gave correct answer. It was noticed that the correct answers to questionsn°6 and n°7 were facilitated by the discourse markers first, then, as, etc. The students who did not pay attention to discourse markers failed in the questions.

Students' answers to pre-test question were also characterized by incompleteness. Most of the students' answers were incomplete. The text contained signal words such as first, then, when, etc. However, students were not attentive to them. This implies that if students had been taught text structures and signal words, they would have performed very well in reading comprehension.

Question n°8 was about misfortunes in the life of the main character. Students were asked to identify the mishaps in the life of Linda. 191(50.2%) students answered this question, but did not give complete answer.

Questions n°9 which asked students to give the main idea of the story and n°10 which asked students to provide a title to the story were answered in similar ways. The majority of students gave the same answer to both questions. Questions n°9 was about the story summary. Students were expected to answer it in full sentences, but they answered it in phrases. Questions n°10 asked students to give a title of the story. 56 students did not answer it. They were unable to derive the title from the text.

Table 3is therefore indicative of the rate of text structure awareness of students. Pre-test score revealed that students were unaware of text structure. This sample reflects the situation common to all the secondary schools within Bunia town. The mean of the pre-test score shows that students performed poorly in the pre-test. In eight secondary schools out of 10(80%) the majority of students failed in the pre-test. The schools were classified into four (04) categories of performance: very poor performance, poor performance, good performance and best performance. Poor

performance denotes schools which scored between 10% and 30% and very poor performance refers to schools which performed under 10%. Good performance denotes schools whereby at least 50% of students succeeded. The best performance refers to schools where the majority of students succeeded in the pre-test. The schools with poor performance comprise schools B, D, F and G; very poor performance of students was noticed in three secondary schools, A, C and I; good performance in the pre-test was scored by school I. The best school in terms of performance was school E.

It was noticed that in general students performed fairly satisfactorily in questions related to the text type. In all the schools, students identified the text as story. Moreover, students also felt comfortable with questions about chronology of events. Chronology signals words had positive impacts on students. They were able to identify the first and last events of the text thanks to chronology indicators such as first and last. Students who responded to all the questions did not answer most of them correctly.

In conclusion, pre-test measured students' awareness of the chronological structure. It suggested that they had a poor knowledge of it. The chronological structure of a narrative was absent from the schemata of the majority of students; this is why they were unable to connect their past experience to the text. Consequently, the text processing and understanding was weak and slow.

4.1.2 Intervention

Experimental teaching was conducted in schools A and J which performed in the pre-test worst of all the schools. They scored 4.4% and 7.3% respectively. De facto these two schools formed the experimental group. It was anticipated that intervention would have a positive effect on them.

Intervention took place in School J from 8:50 to 9:40 on October 13th, 2017 and in school A, it happened from 8:15-09:00 on October 14th, 2017.

4.1.1.3 Table 4 Schools for intervention

S/N	School code	N° of participants in the intervention
01	School A	41
02	School J	51
	TOTAL	**92**

Source: primary data

As aforementioned, the experimental group was selected on the basis of their very poor performance in the pre-test. The researcher also conformed to the principle of purposive sampling which endorses the deliberate choice of informants due to the qualities they possess. This non-random technique does not need underlying theories or a set number of informants. The researcher selected informants who were likely to provide him with the information he needed. Hence, two S-6 classes in the two schools were selected for the experiment.

Intervention procedure

A text organized in chronological order was constructed by the researcher. It was entitled "My Thursday".

Pre-reading activities

First of all, the researcher greeted students, introduced himself and indicated the purpose of his encounter with them. Students were requested to keep silent and follow the researcher attentively. Students were asked to list the things they did on the previous day in chronological order from the time they woke up to the time they went to bed. Students brainstormed and started telling the class their activities of the previous day in chronological order. During brainstorming, students' background knowledge of their past experience was activated. There was a talk session during which students were given the floor to talk freely about what they did. A great number of students were able to say what they did. The questions in appendix 4 were asked by the researcher to enable students to arrange their activities in chronological order. The questions gave students clues about chronological arrangement. During the listing of their personal activities, it was noticed that students used discourse markers such as when, after, before and so forth. Pre-reading lasted ten minutes.

Lesson proper

At first, the researcher distributed the text entitled *My Thursday* to students and asked them to read it silently for five minutes (see appendix III). This reading aimed at enabling students to be acquainted with features of chronological narratives and familiarize themselves with the overall clues of sequential organization of a narrative. The text was without title. The researcher removed it purposely so that students could infer it after reading.

{1} Text structure description

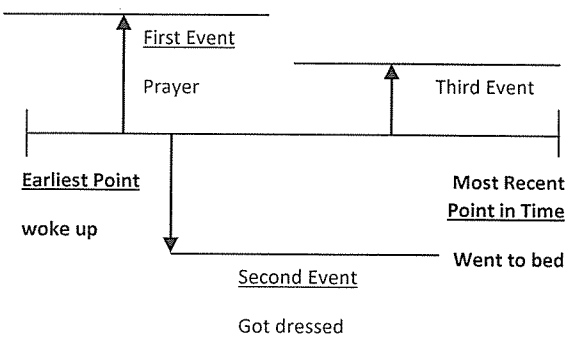
The researcher asked students to analyze the text structure and describe it beginning with the form and then its content.

Text form

After reading, students were asked to describe the text form. The following aspects of the text form were discussed.

1. Text type: students were asked to identify the type of the presented text. The researcher used text type recognition technique to facilitate its discrimination from other types. Initially students were unable to recognize the text type, but with the assistance of the researcher students managed to describe the text form. Students identified the text type as a short story written in prose form and consisted of only one paragraph. The researcher reinforced the correct answer and asked pupils to say why it was a narrative. Students gave various responses in which elements of the answer were detected. Thereafter, the researcher expounded on students' answers to further explain what a narrative is. Students were instructed that a text structure is about two things, the content of the story and the form in which the story is told.
2. Point of view: the story was told in the first person point of view.
3. All the verbs were in the simple past form because the story events happened in the past.
4. Events of the story were arranged in chronological order. The signal words used to indicate chronological order throughout the text are after, then, before, once, when, later and finally. The researcher used the following graphic organizer to illustrate the chronology of events in the story.

The researcher moved on to explain the notion of chronological structure via exemplification. Signals such as first, second, then, etc. were highlighted with colorful pieces of chalk.



{2} Content of the text

After the discussion of the text form, attention was turned to the content of the text. Firstly, setting of the story was tackled. The researcher asked students to say where and when the story took place. Students discovered that the story setting moved from home to school on a given Thursday. Secondly, the characters of the story were identified and the main character was recognized. The researcher asked students to justify their choices. Students maintained that the main character was the major player on whom all the actions of the story were built. The role of each character was discussed as well. Thirdly, the researcher asked students to summarize the story in two sentences. They gave the main idea of the story in their own words. Lastly, students were assigned to give a title to the story and rationalize their stance.

Reinforcement activity

To verify students' understanding of the chronological organization of a narrative, the researcher submitted students to a comprehension check activity, an exercise whereby they were given a short narrative composed of 4 sentences presented in a scrambled way. Students were asked to unscramble the sentences to reconstruct the story by rearranging them in chronological order. The sentences contained signal words such as after, after that, when, etc. Students were assigned three tasks: rearrange the sentences to reconstruct the story, summarize it in 2 sentences and give the story a title. These tasks were supposed to be done in 10 minutes. The researcher collected students' answer sheets and the exercise was corrected thereafter. During this exercise students' background knowledge of a chronological narrative was immediately activated. It was time for

students to access their schemata in order to search information about a chronological narrative already stored in their mind following the researcher's presentation.

Scrambled sentences

The scrambled sentences were as follows.

(1) After taking the lid off of the jars, I spread the peanut butter on one side of the bread and the jelly on the other, and then I put the two pieces of bread together.

(2) After that, I enjoyed it while watching "Cops" on the TV.

(3) I swear, that was the best peanut butter and jelly sandwich I ever ate.

(4) When I got home from school after a long boring day, I took out the peanut butter, jelly, and bread.

Reconstructed story

The correct reconstructed chronological order of the story assigned to students is in appendix IV. This exercise was instructive. It facilitated the understanding of the chronological structure of a text (narrative) by students and consolidated the mastery of chronological indicators (discourse markers). This was evidenced in the performance of students in the post-test whereby students identified chronology signal words easily. Discourse markers are useful to indicate that a chronological text has a beginning, middle and an end.

The following remarks were made from the above exercise.

It was easy for students to understand the story because they categorized the events of the narrative in the order in which they occurred. They now knew how the story would unfold, how it would continue and end. In other words, students succeeded in arranging events in order of occurrence, i.e. what came first, the event in the middle, and what would end the story because they had the mental picture of such a text structure.

The above exercise aimed at checking their overall understanding of the chronological structure of a narrative. It enhanced the students' capability in text processing. Moreover, in this exercise, background knowledge was deemed to mediate between students' schemata and the text. The representation of the text structure was activated in the mind of students and that facilitated its understanding. This was noticed in the way students reacted when the researcher asked them to

report the result of the exercise. 80% of students raised their fingers and were eager to respond to researcher's questions.

It was concluded that students were likely to process the narrative structure starting from the form in which the story was told. In the exercise, it was noticed that the students first considered signals such as discourse markers which were the indicators of the succession of events. Then they examined verb tenses. They noticed that the verbs in the narrative were in the simple past. The exercise also revealed that students find the form of the story easier to process than the content. Lexical cohesion was also scrutinized as some lexemes were used to connect events in the sequence.

After formal structure analysis, the students moved to the content of the story. The aspect that was first tackled was the identification and description of the characters and their role in the story, the specification of the setting, i.e. where and when the story took place. Then students' attention moved to the events taking place in the narrative and how events affected the life characters either positively or negatively. In this particular short story, the students were able to discuss the characters' struggle to survive and how they overcame challenges.

Significant numbers of students succeeded in reconstructing the story. This is the evidence that they definitely understood the chronological structure of a narrative. This exercise was facilitated by the activation of their prior knowledge of the text structure. The representation of the narrative text structure in the mind of students was, of course, not the same. It was noticed that narrative text activation system was divergent. They were dependent on mediator variables such as attention, concentration, attitude, motivation to read, interest in the text topic, etc. The strategies used by students to approach the text also varied. Most of them opted for brainstorming. During this session, they consulted their schemata of the past experience, unscrambled the sentences and reconstructed the narrative.

4.1.3 Post-test

Post-test was conducted a week after intervention. This time lapse was left to check whether or not students would remember what they were taught a week earlier. The researcher subjected both the experimental group (55 students) and the control group (56 students) to a post-intervention test. Post-testees were distributed as follows.

4.1.3.1 Table 5: Experimental group

S/N	School name	N° of participants in the intervention
01	Bunyanga secondary school	19
02	Nyakasanza secondary school	36
	TOTAL	**55**

Source: primary data

Control group

Control group consisted of the following two schools whose students did not take part in the pre-test.

4.1.3.2 Table 6: Control group

S/N	School name	N° of participants
01	Bankoko High School	19
02	IDAP High School	37
	TOTAL	**56**

Source: primary data

Pre-reading

Before conducting post-test, the researcher checked students' background knowledge of the chronological text following intervention which took place earlier. Students were asked to tell some short stories of their own in chronological order by using appropriate chronology signals (linkers). It was noticed that this pre-reading task was easy for students who participated in the experiment because they had chronological structure in their schemata. Therefore, they used their prior knowledge of it to organize their stories chronologically. They used chronology signals such as first, next, then, when, after, as, later, finally, etc. Conversely, students who did not participate in the experimental teaching were unaware of the chronological arrangement of a narrative. They told some stories in which features of chronological organization were absent. Moreover, they did not use linkers in their stories.

Post-test proper

Post-test unfolded as follows. After pre-reading session, the researcher submitted students to a test. In fact, two narratives were presented to students (see appendix V). Each narrative was followed by a number of questions. Participants were asked to select the one that was organized chronologically and answer the questions that follow. The researcher measured both response time and response accuracy. The distribution of post-test questions was as follows.

4.1.3.3 Table 7: Post-test question distribution

S/N	Text structure item	No. of question per item(stimuli)
01	Chronological text recognition	01
02	Setting	01
03	Characters	02
04	Chronology signals(linkers)	01
05	Chronology of events	02
07	Theme/central idea of the text	01
08	Text content	01
09	Text title identification	01
	TOTAL	**10**

Source: primary source

Post-test result

A total of 111 students participated in the post-test, 55 in the experimental category and 56 in the control group. The researcher corrected and marked their answer sheets. The following observations were made:

Experimental group students completed post-test before control group ones. They did the post-test faster than control group. This consideration led the researcher to the conclusion that pupils without prior knowledge of the text structure are likely to be slow in reading and understanding a text.

The result of the post-test is reflected in the table below.

4.1.3.4 Table 8: Post-test result

Category	No. of participants	Succeeded	%	Failed	%
Experimental group	55	37	67.2	18	32.8
Control group	56	26	46.4	3053.6	

Source: primary data

As indicated in table 8, post-test shows that intervention had positive impacts on students of the experimental group. Indeed, they performed better than those of the control group. Experimental group scored 67.2 % (37 students out of 55 succeeded) while control group scored 46.4 %(26 students out of 56 succeeded). This is evidence that intervention increased the rate of understanding of students and raised their awareness of chronological structure of a text, signal words, content of a text, and summarizing techniques.

In addition, the responses of the control group were characterized by inaccuracy and inconsistencies. It was remarked that the control group students were not able to identify the chronological order of events. This is because they did not have the signals in their schemata. They also failed to describe the roles of characters.

The table below compares the performance of the two groups in different categories

4.1.3.5 Table 9: Comparison of performances per categories

Category	Experimental Group				Control Group			
	Succeeded	%	Failed	%	Succeeded	%	Failed	%
Selection of chronological story	55	100	00	00	19	33.9	37	66.1
Signals	37	67.3	18	32.7	17	19.2	39	80.8
Setting	15	27.2	40	72.3	8	14.3	48	85.7
Characters	44	80	11	20	44	76.9	12	23.1
Chronology of events	40	72.7	15	27.3	35	62.5	21	37.5
Plot Summary	29	52.7	26	47.3	18	42.3	38	57.7
Theme	20	36.4	35	63.6	21	37.5	35	62.5
Text title identification	37	67.3	18	32.7	2	35.7	36	64.3

Source: primary data

This table compares the performance of the experimental group and the control group in different categories of chronological structure of a narrative. In general, students of the experimental group performed better than those of the control group in most categories. Control group performed well in two categories, the identification of characters and chronology of events. Control group students succeeded in identifying the characters easily because characters were named. As for the chronology of events, their time order was facilitated by chronology signals such as before, when, after, as and so forth. Moreover, it was noticed that control group had problem understanding certain questions. For example, question n°1 which asked students to describe the story form was not understood by 39 students out of 56(80. 8%).Only 17 students (19.2%) answered it correctly. The failure of the majority of students in the control group means they simply did not know the signals.

Question n°2 covering the setting was also difficult to control group. 85.7 % of students failed to identify the story setting. Only 14.3% recognized the setting, but still the question was answered incompletely, i.e., students identified where the story took place, but failed to say when. Other areas where control group performed poorly were plot summary and the story theme. In plot summary, 47.3% of control group students succeeded against 52.7% in the experimental group. Students were asked to summarize the plot in 4 sentences. Most students of the control group were not able to summarize the story even in a full sentence. As for the story theme, success represents 35% in control group and 63.6% in the experimental group.

Text selection score shows that 55 students of the experimental group (100%) selected the correct text. These students answered this question easily because of the presence of signal words (linkers) such as before, when, later, after, then, in the beginning, etc. in text n°2. Inversely, from the control group 19 students out of 56(33.9%) selected the right text. It was remarked that students of the control group selected the correct answer by chance because they were unable to answer the question about linkers. In the experimental group, all the students who selected the right text also performed well in the question which asked them to identify chronology linkers. This is further evidence of the positive impact the intervention had on the experimental group. They simply consulted their schemata to find linkers of chronological narrative and answered the question correctly. Students of the control group did not have chronology linkers in their schemata. This is why they failed in that question.

Moreover, the experimental group also performed well in text title identification. Indeed, 37 students (67.3%) managed to assign the correct title to the text. In the control group, only 20 students out of 56(35.7%) answered the question correctly.

Conclusively, the marks scored by the experimental group in different categories clearly show that intervention had positive effects on them. Considering the performance of the experimental group alone, the following progress was noticed between pre-test and post-test.

4.1.3.6 Table 10: Success rate before and after intervention

	School code	Pre-test	Post-test
01	J	4.4%	65.2%
02	A	7.9%	68.75%
	Mean	**6.2%**	**67.2%**

Source: primary data

Table 9 clearly indicates that intervention had a positive impact on students. In these secondary schools only 6.2 % of students succeeded in the pre-test. Most students failed in it. However, after intervention success rate stood at 67.2 %. This progress indicates that intervention increased comprehension rate of students and enhanced their awareness of the chronological structure of a narrative.

4.2 Secondary data

Secondary data were obtained via questionnaires to Bunia teachers of English, attendance of reading comprehension lessons in Senior-6 Classes and textual review of text books used by Bunia secondary school teachers in teaching reading comprehension.

4.2.1 Questionnaire results

Ten (10) questionnaires were distributed to squarely the same number of Bunia secondary school teachers of senior six classes. Each questionnaire item contained nine (09) questions covering the approach used by teachers, the text-books utilized, the text type taught, pre-reading activities and background knowledge as shown in the table below.

4.1.3.7 Table 11: Questions distribution

S/N	Materials covered by question	No. of question per item
01	Approach	01
02	Text books	01
03	Text type	02
04	Text structure in general	01
05	Chronological structure	01
06	Pre-reading activities	01
07	Background knowledge	02
	TOTAL	**09**

Source: primary data

The return rate of the questionnaires unfolds as follows. As indicated above, 10 questionnaires were distributed out to Bunia secondary school teachers. All the 10 questionnaires (100%) were returned. All the 09 questions were answered as well. Teachers' responses to the questions are presented, analyzed and interpreted below question by question. The questionnaire is reiterated in appendix VI.

Question n°1 asked teachers how they teach reading comprehension. This question was answered in same way by all teachers. Indeed, the overall responses indicate that all Bunia secondary school teachers use a product-oriented approach and top-down approach to reading. The former considers comprehension a product of the text, that is meaning exists in the text itself and the latter sees a text as a whole, and try to make sense of it, bit by bit. All the teachers (100%) maintained that they use silent reading plus question strategy, i.e., at the start of reading, students are asked to open their textbooks on a specific page. Then they are instructed to read the text silently meanwhile questions are written on the chalkboard. If the text is long, it is divided into parts. Students first read the first part silently for 5 minutes and then answer the questions about it. After all questions on the first part are answered, the students read the second part of the text. The same procedure is applied here. Three (03) teachers (30%) stipulated that apart from silent reading plus questions, they sometimes use listening comprehension strategy wherein teacher reads the text out loud. Students listen carefully and answer question afterwards. All the teachers stated that they conclude

reading comprehension lesson by either asking students to tell what the text is about in their own words or by instructing students to write the summary of the text.

Clearly, questionnaire revealed that Bunia teachers of English do not use a process-oriented approach to reading; they consider understanding the product of the text.

Question n°2 enquired about pre-reading activities Bunia secondary school teachers engage students in before reading proper. 80% of teachers stated that during pre-reading activities they submit students to exercises on previously taught lessons including vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. 20% of teachers declared that in some textbooks they use, texts are preceded by pictures whereby characters and setting are depicted. This category of teachers maintained that they ask students questions on the pictures because they give a visual representation of what is going on in the text.

As can be noticed, teachers' responses reflect that pre-reading activities consist of revision of previously taught materials, basically grammar and vocabulary. Students' prior knowledge is not considered.

Question n°3 was about the text type taught. The response to this question revealed that narratives or short stories are the text type taught by all the teachers. The reason for this preference is that all the text books used by teachers contain stories. Four teachers (40%) added that apart from narratives, they teach texts associated with technical English. 10% of teachers answered that they teach general texts, social texts, political texts, scientific texts and business texts.

Question n°4 was concerned with text structure. Teachers were asked whether or not they teach text structure. Seven (07) teachers (80%) responded that they do not teach text structure in reading comprehension. Instead, they teach them in composition (writing). They were convinced that the paragraph structures taught in composition lesson would equally help students in reading comprehension. 10 % of the teachers upheld that they just teach cause and effect structure. According to them, this structure helps students identify the cause of events and delineate their effects on the characters and situations. One teacher (10%) was confused. He did not have a clear idea about what was meant by text structure. He understood it to mean the paragraph organization of text. He linked it with mechanics of writing.

Question n°5 was about the students' awareness of the chronological organization of a text.50% of teachers answered straight away that students are not aware of chronological structure because they did not teach it to them. 40% of teachers maintained that students are aware of chronological structure. However, this category did not specify whether or not chronological structure was taught to students. 10% did not answer this question.

Question n°6 was about narratives. It asked teachers whether or not they teach narratives.

Nine teachers (90%) responded that they teach narratives. One teacher (10%) stated that he teaches it rarely.

Question n°7 inquired about text books used by Bunia teachers of English. Four teachers (40%) stated that they select texts from the book *English for Africa* exclusively; six teachers (60%) said that they use *English for Africa* plus other textbooks such as *Go for English, Cartledge, English Aid 6, Commercial stream, Mastering English* and *Practical guide*. They added that they sometimes select texts from newspapers.

Question n°8 was about the importance of students' prior knowledge in a reading comprehension lesson. Three teachers (30%) wrote that prior knowledge helps students understand a text and answer all the text questions accurately and successfully. One teacher (10%) declared that prior knowledge enables students to understand the text and its structure. One other teacher (10%) stated that prior knowledge makes students understand a text faster. According to two (02) teachers (20%), background knowledge enables students to bring their own experience to the text. One teacher said that background knowledge enhances students' understanding of a text.

The last question was about students' background knowledge. Teachers were asked to clarify whether or not they consider what students already know before reading a text. All the teachers (100%) answered that they consider what their students already know before reading a new text. However, teachers did not explain how they do it practically. The question was answered just briefly, "Yes, I do". It appears that many teachers misrepresented the scope of this question. They thought prior knowledge had to do with previous knowledge of vocabulary and grammar points taught in class before reading comprehension lesson.

The above responses clearly confirm that for teachers, students' prior knowledge is restricted to vocabulary and grammar items studied in previous classes. Students' experience outside the classroom setting is disregarded.

4.2.2 Lesson attendance outcomes

Lesson attendance enabled the researcher to see with naked eyes what was going on during reading comprehension lessons in Bunia secondary schools. The researcher visited ten secondary schools within Bunia and attended 10 reading comprehension lessons in S-6 classes. In each school, only one reading comprehension lesson was attended. He sat at the bottom of the class and took notes of how the lessons were taught, teachers' actions and students' reactions during the lessons. The attention of the researcher was driven to the approach. The visited classes had between 19 to 60 students. In six secondary schools reading comprehension lasted 50 minutes and in the other four schools, the lessons lasted 45 minutes. It is worth mentioning that lesson attendance took place before the experiment. Pre-test happened in the same schools whereby lessons were attended. Table 3 contains details of the visited schools.

Lesson attendance revealed that pre-reading was essentially based on the revision of previously taught vocabulary items and grammar points. At the start of the reading comprehension lesson, 100% of teachers asked students to make sentences with either some vocabulary items or grammar points. During all the reading comprehension lessons, the researcher observed that questions about the students' background knowledge were not asked by teachers, i.e., students were not given opportunity to connect their prior knowledge to the text. As in no stage of the lesson reference was made to students' background knowledge, all attention was focused on the text. That is, all the questions that teachers asked students were text-based. It was also noticed that the disregard of students' prior knowledge had a negative impact on the students' rate of understanding and response latency. Since the students' prior knowledge was not considered, it was hard for them to answer certain questions of the text accurately and as fast as possible. Their answers were characterized by some incompleteness and omissions. Moreover, it was also difficult for them to summarize the read text.

The researcher also observed that reading comprehension was based essentially on silent reading plus questions and in some case listening comprehension followed by questions answering

sessions. All the attended lessons were concluded with the summary of the text that was done orally or in writing.

Lesson attendances therefore suggest that students' prior knowledge and inputs are not taken into consideration during reading comprehension instruction in Bunia secondary schools. Reading is based solely on the text that is physically available to students. The invisible component that is in the minds of students to which text should be linked is disregarded. Consequently, when a new text is introduced students have a very narrow picture of it and are unable to grasp its content and form. Thus the problem is two-fold. Firstly, the background knowledge of students is not elicited. Secondly, the approach used in reading comprehension does not accommodate students' prior knowledge of text structure. The empirical indicator of the existence of the problem is poor performance in reading or low rate in understanding of the text.

Hence, in order to enhance students' reading skill, it is crucial to consider students' schemata in reading comprehension instruction. According to Diana (2008), the listener or the reader taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. This principle was not applied. In all the attended lessons no reference was made to text structure. All the questions were about the characters and their roles in the text.

4.2.3 Text-books used in Bunia secondary schools

Text-books used to teach reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools were examined by the researcher. This examination unveiled that texts for reading comprehension instruction are selected from the following textbooks endorsed by Congolese ministry of education.

{1} English for Africa, Pupils' book

{2} English Aid 6,

{3} Commercial stream

{4} Cartledge, Newspapers

{5} Go for English Vol. 1, 2, 3 & 4

{6} Mastering English one, Two, Three & Four

These textbooks contain stories and tales from African countries such as Nigerian, Ghana, Sierra Leone and so forth. However, most of the stories are related to the cultures of the Congolese students as well. It was noticed that the book *English for Africa* is the most used because the other books are not available to all teachers. *English for Africa* was conceived and established by the Congolese Ministry of Education. It is the oldest textbook that has been used since the 1980s.
In all the above-mentioned books, each text is followed by comprehension questions, grammar points to be taught, and exercises. In *Go for English*, vocabulary items to be taught are suggested as well.

The examination of textbooks has also revealed that pre-reading activities are not planned in *English for Africa*. Conversely, in the textbooks *Go for English* and *Mastering English*, a short pre-reading activity is planned at the top of each new text to enable teachers to usher students in the new text. The pre-reading section consists of a set of questions not directly related to the text content, but intended to warm-up or check the general knowledge of the students before the new text is introduced. The planned pre-reading section is disregarded by most teachers. This was noticed during the attendance of lessons by the researcher. Therefore, textbooks do not pose problem. It is the ways of teaching reading comprehension which cause problem. Apart from the above discussed textbooks, teachers of English in technical sections select texts from other books.

4.3 Findings

As indicated earlier, this research was conducted basically in the field where the researcher got into face-to-face contact with the informants with the aim of obtaining first-hand data. The findings to be presented here encompass the correlates that have an impact on students' performance in reading comprehension. These factors include the results of the test to which Bunia secondary school students were submitted, the outcome of the survey conducted in 10 Bunia secondary schools whereby the researcher attended reading comprehension lessons, the interview responses and the assessment of the set text-books used by teachers in Bunia secondary schools. The interplay of these elements affects reading comprehension in one or another way. Hence the findings resulting from the study are as follows.

4.3.1 What is the students' level of awareness of text structures in Bunia secondary schools?

The study has found that the level of students' awareness of text structures was very low before intervention. This was revealed by pre-test score which indicated that students performed poorly in reading comprehension. Only (21.05%) of students succeeded in the pre-test against 78.95%. This is clear evidence that students had no background knowledge of text structures.

The poor performance of students can be explained by the following factor. Text structures are from reading comprehension curriculum. In other words, text structures are absent from the long range plans of Bunia secondary school teachers. Simply put, text structures are not taught to students of Bunia secondary schools. This was revealed in the questionnaire whereby teachers stated that they do not teach the text structure because they are squeezed by time.

It is worth mentioning that prior knowledge of text structure helps students process and understand a new text easily. Moreover, a text structure helps students concentrate on the main parts of a story so as to sort out what is most important to focus on as they read. This enables students to identify the setting, main character, problem, and outcome. For instance, during post-test it was observed that students processed and understood the sequence of events of the new narrative based on their prior knowledge of chronology linkers.

4.3.2 What are the effects of background knowledge of text structures on reading comprehension of students in Bunia secondary schools?

This study has found that prior knowledge of chronological text structure had the following positive effects on reading comprehension of students.

1. **increases reading and understanding rate**

Prior knowledge of chronological structure increases the rate of reading and understanding of students. Indeed, this study has found that prior knowledge of chronological structure accelerates reading and comprehension speed of students as they already have background information about the structure of the text they are supposed to read. In other words, students with prior knowledge of text structureapproach a new text with a plan and a clear picture of the overall organization of a chronological text so that when they are asked to read the text, they readily link it to what they already know. This finding has been corroborated by Meyer et al (1980) who strongly maintain

that readers who are aware of the text structures are at advantage because they do approach reading with reading plan.

The linkage of the information stored in the students' schemata to the text contributes to quick and easy processing of new text. On the whole this definitely increases students' understanding speed because they select only those items of the text that are crucial for understanding and categorize events accurately. Therefore, they do not need to concentrate on everything. For example, during the post-test conducted in Bunia secondary schools, it was observed that students of the experimental group used their prior knowledge of chronology linkers to understand time order of events of the story that was presented to them.

2. enhances students' reading fluency

Prior knowledge of text structure increases the reading fluency of students and reduces response time, i.e. prior knowledge of text structure enhances students' ability to read text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little attention to the mechanics of reading such as decoding" (Meyer, 1999, p. 284), and the ability to combine information from various sources while reading under fairly intense time constraints (Grabe, 2010, p. 72). Reading fluency comprises three primary components: automaticity in word recognition, accuracy in decoding, and rapid reading rates (Kuhn &Stal, 2003, Grabe, 2009).Reading fluency also depends on maintaining a good reading speed for long periods of time and on generalising across texts (Hudson, Lane, & Pullen, 2005).The positive effect of prior knowledge of chronological structure on students' reading fluency was attested by the test conducted in Bunia secondary schools whereby students with background knowledge of the chronological text structure performed better than those without prior knowledge of text structure. Indeed, members of the experimental group read the text and responded to comprehension questions much easier and faster than control group ones. They activated their background knowledge to find information necessary to process the text they were confronted with. The experiment thus showed that prior knowledge of text structure has a positive impact on students' response time as well. Pre-test and post-test results indicated that slow processing of text was a characteristic of poor readers since they lack prior knowledge of the text structure. The fact that students already have a specific text structure in their schemata indeed has a positive effect in terms of enhancing their capability to process a text. Such students comprehend the text faster than those without prior knowledge of text structure because they are able to consult their schemata

whereby they find elements linked to the text. Hence, they do not need to concentrate on every aspect of the text since they already have pre-requisites. Only those elements that are very fundamental for the text comprehension will be processed. Prior knowledge of the text structure is thus beneficial to students and teachers in terms of text comprehension time.

3. Prior knowledge, response accuracy enhancer

Prior knowledge of chronological structure enhances response accuracy. Anna C-S Chang (2013) says accuracy in decoding words or texts is an essential component in reading fluency. Without accuracy in decoding words and text, comprehension is likely to become degraded. These two processes must occur at a reasonable speed throughout an extended text. On the whole, a high level of reading comprehension is not possible without automatic and accurate word recognition of a large amount of vocabulary at a rapid rate.

Indeed, this study found that in reading comprehension, response accuracy is correlated with what students know prior to reading a text. For instance, by looking at the text title students are likely to guess parts of the answers to comprehension questions before reading the text. Post-test showed clearly that students with background knowledge answer questions accurately, i.e. with precision. When experimental students were asked to give the chronology of story events, they responded to this question accurately based on their prior knowledge of chronology linkers. However, students without prior knowledge of chronology did not perform well in this question.

4. allows students to follow event sequences in a text

Background knowledge enables students to track event sequences in story thanks to signal words (linkers). Taylor (1992) said that signal words alert students to text structure. In fact, prior knowledge of the narrative structure enables students to follow event sequences in any new narrative they read and aids them to monitor the trajectory of the story. Additionally, tracking down event sequences also help students identify key players (characters) of the story, the setting and understand occurrences that affect characters' lives. This will in turn enable students to summarize the narrative by arranging events in order of occurrence. During the experiment conducted in Bunia secondary schools, students were asked to list story events chronologically and summarize it. They managed to arrange the story events successfully in time order and gave the summary. This was an indication that prior knowledge of chronological structure had a positive

impact on them. In addition, time order structure may also help students develop a linear representation of events in a story. This will ipso facto enhance their logical reasoning skill and make them become good story tellers able to read a story and report how it begins, how it evolves and how it ends.

5. develops students' textual assessment skill

Prior knowledge of the chronological text structure helps students develop textual assessment skill. From their prior knowledge of chronological structure, students can read and evaluate a story in order to determine whether or not the succession of story events is logical or illogical. This will improve students' ability to scrutinize the text to discover what is right or wrong in the actions of the characters and check whether or not the story is accurate. As students assess the text, they are likely to answer certain questions about the setting, characters, theme, etc. ahead of time. Therefore, before students start reading a text, they already have some expectations about the chronological story and if the story they read does not match their expectations, students can be able to detect what is wrong in it.

6. Reinforces prediction ability of students

Background knowledge of chronological structure enhances prediction ability of students. It enables them to make predictions from a few elements at hands. For instance, from the story title, pictures, and key words students are likely to predict what the text is all about and how the story unfolds. They are likely to guess what may occur at the beginning of the text, in the middle and what might happen at the end of it. Students approach the new text with some ideas about the setting, the characters and the theme of the story. Therefore, background knowledge of the text structure is a powerful prediction tool used by students to guess and anticipate story happenings. This finding has been validated by Anina Robb (2003) who maintains that students make prediction on the basis of what they already know before, i.e. they use what they know about the text and their prior knowledge to figure out what will happen in the next story or what characters might do (p.21). Successful readers lessen the amount of attention effort by constantly using what they already know to make inferences and to predict what they do not yet know (Collins et al. 1980; Goodman 1996). Comprehension is, therefore, more effective when readers use what they already know about the text theme.

From this claim it is understood that students use information stored before to make prediction about the text. Thus when they encounter new ideas, they are already prepared and keen to compare their predictions with what is in the text instead of being turned off by unexpected information or turns of events.

7. Increases connection ability of students

Prior knowledge helps students make connection. Students with background knowledge of text structure are able to make a link between their past experience and the text. Thus they may connect the ideas in the text to their own experiences, to texts they read previously and to the world. Laura (2004) maintains that when students begin to read a text, they access their schemata. This enables them to make text-to-text connections for a particular story structure, which will help them more easily make meaning. The good performance scored by the experimental group in post-test in Bunia secondary schools can be explained by the students' ability to connect the information stored in their schemata to the text. According to Teaching Reading Comprehension (p.260) each schema is connected to other related schemas, forming a vast, interconnected network of knowledge and experiences. The size and content of an individual's schemas are influenced by personal experiences, both direct and vicarious.

8. develops students' discernment skill

Prior knowledge enhances students' discernment ability. Indeed, prior knowledge of the text structure enables students to distinguish significant elements of the text from peripheral ones. This helps students pay little attention to non-essential items of the text. This, in turn, spares them from concentrating on every aspect of the text since key elements are already identified. In the intervention conducted in Bunia secondary schools, students with prior knowledge of the chronological structure answered questions accurately because they were able to discern important elements of the text from marginal items of the text. When asked to give the main theme/central idea of the story, students were able to discriminate the major theme from the minor ones. It was found that information from background knowledge fed the analysis or the processing a new narrative. The awareness of the structure of the narrative is therefore fundamental to the comprehension of a narrative. This finding has been corroborated by Taylor (1992) who maintains that text structure enables students to follow the organizing pattern to identify important events, concepts and ideas.

Once students are able to discern important items of the text from less important ones, they can concentrate on the unknown. In fact, this is another important advantage of background knowledge of text structure; it helps students not to waste much time on already known information, but focus on the unknown one. By concentrating on relevant elements of the text, they save time. This was also shown by the intervention conducted in Bunia secondary schools. Students were asked to read a narrative entitled "Babe's rise" in which the main character was Babe. Since students had already prior knowledge of chronology signals, verb tense, and point of view from their past experience. a description of the text form was unnecessary. Instead, students concentrated on the text content right away in order to find out what it was about rather than what it was like. It was noticed hat experimental students were biased towards new items of the text and ignored already known elements.

4.3.3 What are the approaches used in teaching reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools?

The study found that teachers of Bunia secondary schools combine product-oriented approach and top-down approach wherein pre-reading activities are based on the review of previously studied vocabulary items and grammar points. The structure of reading comprehension lesson in Bunia secondary schools is summarized in the stages below.

1. *Pre-reading*: review of vocabulary and grammar points
2. *Silent reading:* Students are instructed to read the text silently.
3. *Questions-Answers:* Students answer questions about the text after silent reading
4. *Reinforcement:* Students' responses are adjusted and reinforced by the teacher
5. *Summary:* Students summarize the text.

The following strategies are used by Bunia secondary school teachers:

{1} Silent reading plus questions

{2} Silent reading plus True/False questions

{3} Questions plus silent reading

As indicated above, during pre-reading students are simply asked to construct some correct sentences with previously taught words or specific grammar points. Some teachers omit pre-reading activities in reading comprehension lesson. They start reading comprehension lesson with the reading of the text directly. Furthermore, students' background knowledge is not considered

before the reading of the text. In general students are merely required to read the presented text silently for a period of time varying from five to ten minutes. Thereafter they respond to questions.

Therefore, in all the 10 reading comprehension lessons attended in Bunia secondary schools no reference was made to students' background knowledge during pre-reading activities. All the teachers failed to link students' schemata to the text. Anderson et al (1977, 1978) confirms this finding by clarifying that every act of comprehension involves one's knowledge developed up to that point. When students read a new text, they first attempt to retrieve information from their long-term memory to fill in the gaps. Prior knowledge thus helps students process and understand new information. In addition, according to Miller (2002), readers activate their prior knowledge before, during, and after reading. To conclude, Parvis (2003) clearly shows that product-oriented approach is not appropriate for students' reading skill development; it leads to poor comprehension because it considers understanding the product of the text. He suggests a process-oriented approach to reading.

4.3.4 How should text structures be incorporated in reading comprehension curriculum?

It is important to raise students' awareness of how information within a text is organized. Students have to be alert of common text structures including compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution, sequence/order, and description and their distinctive features. This will help them follow the story line.

The study found that the best way of incorporating text structures in reading curriculum is to consider them one by one starting with the most basic ones. In other words, teachers have to teach one structure at a time via typical text that illustrates it. Presenting the structure in this way will enable students to identify the distinctive features of each structure and avoid confusion. For all the structures, signal words (discourse markers) for specific structures must be highlighted. Students should be helped to identify, for example:

(1) words that describe setting
(2) words that describe characters
(3) words starting important events in a text
(4) words describing a problem
(5) words introducing other events in a text
(6) words describing the outcome of the story

Emphasis on the above-mentioned indicators will certainly enhance students' understanding of a text. Moreover, graphic organizers can be used to help students have a picture of a text structure. Whenever a new text is introduced, students have to be asked to describe its structure.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter starts with the presentation of the findings of the study, and then moves on to discuss the recommendations. It ends with a conclusion to the study.

The researcher set out to verify the effects of background knowledge of text structure on the understanding of a new text via an experimental design. This is why an intervention was conducted in Bunia secondary schools. It revealed the causes of students' poor performance in reading comprehension. Primary data obtained via intervention was reinforced by secondary data obtained from questionnaire distributed to teachers of English in Bunia secondary schools.

5.1 Discussion of the findings

These study findings are indicators of a problem that requires solution framework. Indeed, there is a gap in reading comprehension instruction in terms of approaches to reading and the content of reading. Therefore, reading comprehension instruction in Bunia secondary schools need reshuffle. It must integrate all the components of reading for students to become effective readers. There is therefore need for students to become fluent readers with increased rate of understanding. For this to happen, stakeholders (teachers, government and students) must implement the study recommendations below. The findings therefore have the following implications for the improvement of reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools: process-oriented approach to reading to be promoted, textbook structure to be revisited, reform of teaching approaches, emphasis on pre-reading activities, incorporation of text structures in reading, learner-centred instruction which considers the learner's prior knowledge before reading to be enhanced, students to actively participate in reading. In fact, reading comprehension is the ability to read text, process it, and understand its meaning. A student's ability to comprehend text is influenced by factors external to text such as reader's background knowledge, the approaches used to teach reading comprehension and so forth.

Moreover, reading comprehension is correlated with the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written, and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. It is a creative, multifaceted process. Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. It is also determined

by an individual's cognitive development, which is the construction of thought processes. Some people learn through education or instruction and others through direct experiences. The awareness of text structures reinforces the reading skill of students. As mentioned earlier text structure is about the way information is organised within a text. Text structure specification enables students to better understand the trajectory of the text since students approach it with rich background knowledge of various aspects of the text structure such signals (linkers), specific words recognition and so forth.

5.2 Recommendations

This study was intended to fill in the gaps in reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools by rationalizing the reader's background knowledge of the formal structure of the narrative. It demonstrated that prior knowledge of the structure is indeed an asset in the understanding of a text. The aspect of the text structure that this study concentrated on was the chronological organization of narratives. Students' competence in this area was be gauged with the aim of enhancing their proficiency level in comprehending chronological narratives.

This research has addressed the problem of background knowledge as an essential component of reading comprehension of sequential narratives. This study has also raised the problem of the approach used in teaching reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools. The study therefore makes the following recommendations.

5.2.1 To teachers of English in Bunia secondary schools:

{1} Teachers of English of Bunia secondary schools are key players in the transformation of students. They should help students develop their reading comprehension skill. To reach this goal, it is highly recommended that they use a process-oriented approach to reading because reading is an interactive process that goes between the readers' prior knowledge and the text. This entails that teachers should start reading comprehension lesson with pre-reading activities whereby students' background knowledge of text structure is considered before they read a text and answer questions. That is to say, they need to work towards making students become effective readers who are able to link their background knowledge to the text. Students need to activate their prior knowledge of the text structure to process the text from its title because the text title already tells students something about its content even when they have not read it yet. If this opportunity is

given to them, students' rate of understanding texts will be increased. Therefore, background knowledge is a powerful tool that enhances comprehension and renders reading instruction vivid and profitable for students. Moreover, it boosts confidence of students. It follows that every reading instruction should start by a discussion session whereby students' background knowledge is elicited. The teacher should help students through questions-answers session to relate what they already know to the new narrative to be read which will enable pupils to link their previous knowledge to the presented narrative. If this is done, students will surely understand the text efficiently and retain its key structures in their long term memory for subsequent utilization.

{2} Teachers of English should incorporate text structures in reading comprehension instruction. In fact, to enhance students' rate of understanding and increase their speed of reading, teachers should teach text structures such as comparison and contrast, problem solving, sequence, chronology, cause and effect, etc. Students will keep this information about the text structures in their mind and use it later on to process and understand other texts. Whenever they are confronted with a new text they will most likely consult their schemata to obtain text structure clues. Therefore, the awareness of text structure will stimulate, develop and sustain students' reading skill.

{3} select texts of different structures so that students can be acquainted with the different text structures.

5.2.2 To students

Students should develop their reading skill through various means, for example via reading textual materials, observing what goes on around them, listening to stories, watching films, etc. Importantly, they should do their best to develop their reading skill by reading different text types. Extensive reading may help them construct their background knowledge. To become effective readers, it is recommended that students also do the following:

1. should read intensively and extensively. Reading habit enhances the understanding of new texts, nurtures and enriches students' schemata.

2. should be interested in reading texts from different sources: short stories books, novels, magazines, newspaper articles, etc. Good readers are those who are able to enrich their schemata.

3. read different types of texts to increase their awareness of text type.

4. exercise themselves by taking notes and writing the summary of read text and be interested in listening stories, watching documentary films, etc. because this can enhance their background knowledge. A student without reading experience is not likely to understand a new text easily. Reading experience equips students with elements that may facilitate understanding texts they are encounter.

5.2.3 To the government of the D R Congo

D R Congo ministry of secondary education should provide teachers with renovated textbooks that accommodate pre-reading activities and integrate students' background knowledge. This entails the reform of the text book content whereby some background questions are asked before a text is introduced. Incorporating pre-reading activities in the book structure will enable teachers of English in Bunia secondary schools to consider students' prior knowledge. Moreover, the government should equip teachers with appropriate textbooks for texts selection, plan questions on students' background knowledge of text structures in those books, provide teachers with textbooks containing texts with different text structures, plan seasonal trainings on teaching of reading comprehension, and suggest and support process oriented approach by providing teachers with teachers' guides whereby reading comprehension steps are outlined.

5.3 Areas for further research

The study recommends the following areas for further studies:

1. Vocabulary development before reading comprehension including decoding and word studies: this area is important because text understanding is dependent upon individual word recognition. This presupposes that words are understood before text is comprehended. Therefore, comprehenders need to approach text with rich background knowledge of words.

2. Phonemic awareness and the teaching of phonics

3. Reading comprehension approaches: they affect reading comprehension of students in one or another way. Good approaches lead to efficient understanding of a text.

4. Cognitive factors affecting efficient understanding

Some cognitive factors are likely to prompt or inhibit understanding

5. The explicit teaching of reading comprehension strategies: there is need to emphasize reading strategies for students to become effective readers.

6. The development of students' reading fluency by reading and rereading familiar and unfamiliar texts

7. Meaningful writing exercises because reading is correlated with writing

8. Reading materials selection

5.4 Conclusions

This study was concerned with the background knowledge of text structure and students' reading comprehension in Bunia secondary schools. The study circumscribed the chronological structure of a narrative.

The study identified major causes of students' poor performance in reading comprehension. It is worth reminding that efficient comprehension is the conjunction of a number of factors. In other words, understanding a text efficiently implies the interplay of textual materials and elements from the readers. It is postulated that understanding is dichotomous. It encompasses the combination of the visual material that is the text and the invisible materials that are in the mind of the reader. The omission of one of these components has a direct impact on the students' comprehension of text. If a student is exposed to the text only, he/she will understand it partially.

Therefore, the hypothesis posited in the introductory part of this report has been confirmed. In fact, there are positive effects of the background knowledge of the text structure on the reading comprehension of students. Particularly, the prior knowledge of the chronological narrative structure has positive impacts on students' understanding of such a text.

The above consideration impels teachers to consider pupils background knowledge of the text structure in teaching reading comprehension. In particular, this study has highlighted the positive effects of the prior knowledge of the chronological structure of a narrative on the students. Teachers need to capitalize on these positive effects in order to train successful readers. This entails a renovation of the approaches used to teach reading comprehension.

The study suggests a process oriented approach to reading because it views understanding as an interactive process that goes on between the student's prior knowledge and the text. This study has

shown that the awareness of the text structure enables pupils to understand the text efficiently and faster. This in turn enables the teacher to save time because effective readers are able to identify the major ideas of the text and put the supporting details under the related major ideas. They equally work out the graphic representation of the text's ideas in their minds which help them comprehend and retain the content. All this is facilitated by the students' background knowledge. Conversely, students without prior of the text structure are poor readers who concentrate on every item of the text and thereby waste time on irrelevant materials of the text. Poor readers are unable to create a better image of the hierarchy of ideas and interrelationships in the text. Fisher and Frey (2012:2) maintain that how much a reader already knows about the subject is probably the best predictor of reading comprehension. When readers engage with a text for which they have limited background knowledge, the text is much more difficult to understand than one for which they have ample background knowledge...Research indicates that children continue to spin their wheels when they don't have the background knowledge required to understand much of what they are reading.

Another positive effect of prior knowledge of the text structure that teachers of English in Bunia secondary have to consider is that it develops mental processing skill in terms of discernment capability, enhances attention concentration and improves item discrimination aptitude. It was demonstrated that pupils engaged in reading do not need to concentrate on every item of the text. Students with prior knowledge of the text structure are likely to concentrate their attention on relevant items, i.e., those that are crucial for its understanding. This means they will process only those items that are vital and discard irrelevant or unnecessary information. Teachers have to consider this advantage in teaching reading comprehension. All new text must be introduced with a teacher-student interaction session during which students' background knowledge is elicited. This elicitation is beneficial for students since it enables them to apprehend the overall picture of the story. During this stage of the lesson the teacher creates a connection between the pupils' prior knowledge of the narrative structure or schemata and the context of the new narrative of the reading comprehension lesson.

The experiment also showed that for students without prior knowledge of the text structure reading and response time takes significantly longer and comprehension is low. This was noticed during the post-test. It was found that students of the control group took a long time to respond to the

comprehension questions on the narrative that they were required to read. This is probably because they were not aware of the structure of the narrative before reading. Moreover, they gave incomplete answers to the questions. This clearly indicates that their performance was poor. However, students who received the experimental teaching performed well in general. Intervention had a positive effect on them. It enabled them to store the information about the sequential narrative in their mental system which helped them when they were faced with a new narrative.

Therefore, the background knowledge of the text structure is instrumental to students in terms of processing new texts they may be exposed to. In fact, whenever they are presented with a new text to read, the students consult their background knowledge in order to obtain necessary information that may help them comprehend the text. This information is not necessarily complete. Sometimes students just retrieve bits or only parts of information in their background knowledge. On the whole, whatever the quantity and the quality of background information, it is helpful because students can use it to facilitate the comprehension of the text. Consequently, as the students read the text they build up a connection between their invisible schemata and the visible textual material that they are supposed to read. This link is not possible for students without prior knowledge of the text structure.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
INTRODUCTION LETTER

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
EXPLORING THE HEIGHTS

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College Of Education, Open and Distance e-Learning

Office of the Principal

28th May, 2017

To.....
.....
.....

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY IN YOUR ORGANIZATION

With reference to the above subject, this is to certify that **Mr. CWINYA'AY UNEGA** Reg. No. **1162-07086-05068** is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing a Masters of Arts in English.
He is currently conducting a field research entitled, **"Background Knowledge of Text Structure of Students and Reading Comprehension in Bunia, Ituri Province, D R Congo".**

This area has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to his research project. The purpose of this letter therefore is to request you to avail him with the pertinent information as regards to his study.

Any data shared with him will be used for academic purposes only and shall be kept with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Dr. Tindi Seje
Ag- Principal –CEODL
tundiseje@yahoo.com
+256752553123

APPENDIX II.
PRE-TEST

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow

It seemed like an ordinary day when she got up that morning, but Lynda was about to embark on the worst day of her life. First, she fell in the bathtub because her mother forgot to rinse out the bath oil. Then she spilled orange juice on the outfit she had spent hours putting together for school pictures. When she changed, she messed up the French braid her mother had put in her hair. As she walked out the door, she dropped all of her school books and her math homework flew away. Once she made it to the car she thought everything would be all right. She was wrong; her father didn't look before he backed out of the driveway and ran into the neighbors' truck. Lynda's side of the car was damaged the most, and she ended up with a broken arm. That night, she cried herself to sleep.

6. Tick or underline the correct answer.
   The above text is: a. a story; b. a poem; c. a prayer; d. a dialogue; e. a riddle
2. Describe the form of the text.
3. Where and when is the story taking place?
4. Select the correct answer from the list and identify the characters.
   There are.....characters in this text.
   a. One b. Two c. Three d. Four e. Five
5. Who is the main character of the story? Why?
6. What is the first event in the story? What is the one that ends it?
7. What event occurs in the middle of the story?
8. Why was it the worst day of Linda's life?
9. What is the main idea of the story?
10. Provide a title to the text.

APPENDIX III.
PRE-READING QUESTIONS

-What day of the week was it yesterday?

-what time did you wake up?

-What is the first thing you did when you got up?

-What did you do next?

-What did you do at midday?

-What did you do in the afternoon?

-How did you conclude your day?

APPENDIX IV.
TEXTS FOR INTERVENTION

1. My Thursday was a busy day. I woke up at half past six. After getting up from my bed, I prayed, got dressed and greeted my mother, father, brothers and sisters. Then I went to bathroom to take a shower. Before going to school, I had a cup of tea. Once at school I attended classes from half past seven up to twelve fifty. During break time I discussed various topics with my friends. When they blew the last whistle to signal the end of the classes, I went home together with my friends. I had a two-hour recreation before reviewing my lessons and doing my homework. Later I went to play football until the evening. Finally, I went to bed around half past eight p.m.

2. When I got home from school after a long boring day, I took out the peanut butter, jelly, and bread. After taking the lid off of the jars, I spread the peanut butter on one side of the bread and the jelly on the other, and then I put the two pieces of bread together. After that, I enjoyed it while watching "Cops" on the TV. I swear, that was the best peanut butter and jelly sandwich I ever ate.

APPENDIX V.
POST-TEST TEXTS AND QUESTIONS

Read the texts below silently. Select the one that is told in chronological order and answer the questions that follow.

Text one

Volcanoes are a feared and destructive force for good reason. A volcano is like a pressure valve for the inner earth, but they can also be very beautiful. One part of the volcano that people rarely see is the magma chamber. The magma chamber is way beneath the Earth's bed rock. It is tremendously hot. Running from the magma chamber to the crater of the volcano is the conduit. The conduit connects the magma chamber to the outer world. At the top of the volcano is the crater. This is where the magma exits. Volcanoes are a beautiful yet dangerous natural phenomenon.

1. Why are volcanoes feared?
2. What is magma chamber?
3. Where is the crater?
4. What is the role of conduit?
5. Where is it?
6. Why are volcanoes dangerous?
7. What is a volcano compared to?
8. What is the central idea of the text?
9. What is the title of the text?

Text two

Babe was born into a big, poor, family in 1895. Before he turned five, he didn't attend school, he stole apples at a fruit stand, he chewed tobacco, and he snitched drinks of whiskey from his father's bar. His friends and Bade even played in the street, and when a car arrived, they chucked eggs at the car. As a kid, Babe once stole a dollar from his dad to buy ice cream for all his friends. His angry father spanked him when he returned home, but he didn't learn his lesson and repeated it.

When Babe turned five, his father brought him to a school for bad kids and kept him there, which sounds bad, but it was the best thing for Babe. Bade started school at St. Mary's studying math, science, and LA. One day he ran outside for recess and he noticed a teacher slamming a ball for the students. Later, he joined the St. Mary's baseball club. Because he performed so well at the tryouts, when he was eight, he played for the twelve-year-old team. He pitched and caught.

After he finished St. Mary's, he joined the Baltimore Orioles, a minor league team. Then the team lost money, so Babe was sold to the Red Sox, a major team, and played pitcher. Eventually, Babe was traded to the Yankees. Later, the Red Sox didn't win a series, so they blamed it on Babe Ruth and called this curse "The Curse of the Bambino." Babe arrived at the Yankees with a $ 20,000 salary for a year and he played outfield instead of pitcher. In the beginning, with the Yankees, he struggled with a lot strikeouts in two months and broke a bone. Suddenly, he was slamming home runs and earning a lot of hits. In the end of the season, the Yankees qualified for the playoffs and then went to the World Series, though they lost to the New York Giants. He performed very badly, so after the World Series he promised the mayor of the New York that he would hit better next season. And he did.

Today's he's ranked number three in hitting homeruns. He hit 714 homeruns in a career of 20-30 years.

1. Identify the words that indicate time order in the text.
2. When and where is the story taking place?
3. Identify the characters of the story.
4. Who is the main character? Why?
5. What did Babe do before the age of 5?
6. What happened to Babe after he was 5?
7. At what age did Babe play for the twelve-year-old team? Why?
8. What teams did Babe play for after St. Mary's Baseball club?
9. What is the central idea/theme of the story? Summarize it in 4 sentences.
10. What is the title to the story?

APPENDIX VI
QUESTIONNAIRES TO TEACHERS

Dear respondent, thank you for volunteering to respond to this survey about "*Enhancing reading comprehension through text structure background knowledge Bunia Secondary schools, Ituri Province, D R Congo.*" Although you may not personally benefit, this study is important to science/society because students will be able to enhance their reading comprehension skill by using their background knowledge of the text structure. We guarantee you that your responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. I am a graduate student at Kampala International University, pursuing my Master's Degree in English Language. This study aims at discussing the effects of background knowledge of text structure on students' reading comprehension efficiency.

Please answer the following questions.

Part I: Background information

(a) Age..... (b) Gender ..... (c) Occupation/Designation .....

Part II: Academic information

1. How do you teach reading comprehension?
2. What pre-reading activities do you engage students in before reading a text?
3. What text types do you teach?
4. Do you teach text structures? Which ones?
5. Are your students aware of the chronological organization of a text?
6. Do you teach narratives?
7. What text books do you select texts for your reading comprehension lesson from?
8. What is the importance of students' prior knowledge in a reading comprehension lesson?
9. Do you consider what your students already know before they read a text during reading comprehension lesson?

APPENDIX VII

School codes

Serial #	School names	codes
1	Nyakasanza High School	A
2	Lycee Kigonze	B
3	Complexe scolaire de Bunia	C
4	Kabarole High School	D
5	C.S. Shalom	E
6	C.S. Aigle de Dieu	F
7	C.S. Monts Bleus	G
8	C.S. Agneau de Dieu	H
9	Institut Yambi-Yaya	I
10	Institut Bunyanga	J

