



## Factors Influencing the Development of English Language Listening and Reading Skills of Public Primary School Pupils: A Case Study of Temeke Municipality, Tanzania

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### Abstract:

Because many of the courses taught and class assignments assigned need reading comprehension, successful students in school are those who acquire an interest in listening and reading. The purpose of the study was to determine factors influencing the development of English Language Listening and Reading skills among public primary schools in Temeke Municipality in Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Two objectives were employed to guide the study, namely, to investigate the availability of teaching resources for reading and listening skills in English and to identify other factors affecting pupils' attainment of listening and reading skills in English. The study employed a mixed-methods design and a convergent parallel design. Five hundred and fifty (550) participants, including head teachers, teachers and pupils, were sampled through probability and nonprobability sampling techniques. Interview guides, questionnaires and classroom observation guides were used as tools for data collection. The results revealed that the majority of teachers in public primary schools lacked adequate command of the methods, strategies, and stages for teaching reading skills. Other factors that influenced the teaching of reading skills in public primary schools and thus the acquisition of reading skills included an insufficient number of qualified teachers, overcrowding of pupils in one class, a lack of textbooks, supplementary books, and other reading materials, pupil truancy, regular curriculum changes without proper teacher training on the changes, and a failure of pupils to attend preprimary school education. As a result of these deficiencies, it was discovered that the capacity to teach reading skills in public primary schools varied from one school to the next as well as among teachers within the same schools. The study recommended that short courses on teaching methodology should be held in teachers' resource centers to train teachers on the methods, tactics, and procedures involved in teaching reading skills.

Keywords: Development of English language, listening and reading skills, primary school pupils, Tanzania

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How to Cite :

### Introduction

People communicate daily because there is a language that facilitates communication. The use of discourse proves to be a valuable pedagogical technique in both native and second language educational settings. Regardless of the situation, the communication tactics employed often remain consistent, and implicit teaching

holds similar significance in all language acquisition contexts. In an educational environment, it is most effective to utilize it as a supplementary tool to reinforce explicit instruction.

Numerous studies, for example, Kim, 2015b; Kim, Wagner, & Lopez, 2012; Kim & Wagner, 2015, have demonstrated that linguistic abundance within an early childhood setting not only enhances linguistic proficiency throughout childhood but also yields a lasting impact since language skills persist above the average level throughout an individual's lifespan.

In the school curriculum, English language is taught as a lesson beginning in grade three, but the level of instruction is quite basic. Poor proficiency in the English language seems to be a barrier to learning not only among pupils in third-world countries but also among pupils in developed and developing countries such as China, India, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore (Arsad et al, 2014). It has also been indicated that sometimes it is the case that both teachers and pupils in some nonnative English speaking countries lack English language proficiency. The situation, therefore, causes a barrier to effective interaction during the teaching and learning process and ultimately affects pupils'

There have been many differences of opinion over the years about the role of pronunciation in language teaching and about how best to teach it. In Tanzania, the English language is regarded as an official and a medium of instruction in primary and university education. At lower levels of public preprimary and primary schools, the language of instruction is English, which is not only the national language but also the language of the majority in the community. and English, with the exception of a few schools that are private and registered as English medium schools and international schools, which basically take English as a compulsory subject.

English language has four main language skills that develop in order: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The new English syllabus states that teaching and learning English language focuses on three main competences, comprehension, communication, and vocabulary development, intended to lead to the achievement of the five objectives outlined in the Tanzania Institute of Education syllabus (T.I. E, 2016).

A number of studies, such as Chacha and Zhong (2013), Rugemalira (2005), Elibariki 2017 and Anyienda (2015), revealed that there are challenges facing teaching and learning the English language in public primary schools in Tanzania and thus continue to be a reason for poor academic performance when these pupils shift to the primary school stage. According to USAID (2019), reading skills among pupils are still low; only 5.4 percent of pupils are not able to read comprehensively and write in English because there are no adequate materials in their classrooms for learning, and the English language is a compulsory subject. Moreover, 89 percent of pupils attend

school in classrooms that do not have any supplementary reading materials that they can read and write during school hours.

Listening skills in Tanzania are not taught separately from the skills of speaking, writing and reading but are taught as English language. This entails selecting a piece of writing that can enable the learners to identify four aspects of language skills. Listening and reading are among those skills. The overall aim of these goals is for the learner to develop listening and reading that is easy to understand, serves the learner's individual needs, and allows a positive image of himself as a speaker of a foreign language. The learner needs to develop awareness and monitoring skills that pave the way for learning opportunities outside the classroom environment. Oral language skills such as vocabulary and listening are critical to reading, and their importance increases as children develop reading skills (Foorman, Koon, Petscher, Mitchell, & Truckenmiller, 2015; Kim, 2015b; Kim, Wagner, & Lopez, 2012; Kim & Wagner, 2015).

Despite its recognized importance, efforts to develop listening and reading skills have not been clear, which is most difficult for teachers to contrast and guide or enable pupils to attain listening and reading skills that contribute to word reading problems. (see Adams, 1990; Bowey, 2005; National Early Literacy Panel Report, 2008). According to the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), 2014, the current Listening, speaking, writing and reading are all integral skills that are inseparable and should be given equal attention. However, over the years, much attention has been given to testing speaking and writing, whereas listening and reading remain neglected skills for this gap to be bridged.

The poor performance in English in Temeke district and the type of grade seven leavers who join ordinary primary schools have raised much concern for society as a whole. Many of them can hardly construct a correct grammatical English sentence, as proved during the first day at school, to make a self-introduction. Although the English language is very important for pupils' education development, many pupils perceive English as the most difficult subject to learn. Listening and reading in English is considered something very difficult to acquire. This becomes the origin of poor performance in English subjects, which requires English language skills to learn it.

Based on the above arguments, proper attention needs to be given to factors affecting the acquisition of listening and reading skills in English among learners of public primary schools. The essence of this study was to investigate the various factors influencing pupils' development of listening and reading skills in the English language. Specifically, two objectives were employed to guide the study, namely, to investigate the availability of teaching resources for reading and listening skills in English and to identify other factors affecting pupils' attainment of listening and reading skills in English.

## Literature Review

Language acquisition issues are frequently caused by the improper and inadequate implementation of learning strategies (Pammu, Amir, & Maasum, 2014). Receptive and productive skills have a complicated relationship in which one cannot function without the other and the emphasis of one aspect of a skill has a significant impact on the other. In other words, while an emphasis on reading skills can help pupils develop their writing abilities, if the entire learning process focuses on just one set of skills, in this case, the receptive skill of reading, pupils will be able to read and listen but not speak or write properly (Tavakoli, 2014).

Baker and Brown (2018) propose a number of approaches in their research to boost receptive skills and produce efficient comprehension. Decoding abilities, for example, can assist pupils with their reading difficulties. They propose that reading be introduced early, with the teacher, for example, describing the letters by their sounds. Wang (2016) argues that pupils absorb the text through its individual pieces, such as words, or as a set of words in a larger context while reading. In other words, teachers help pupils read by connecting each word to its meaning or by supplying meaning to a larger structure such as a sentence.

One empirical study suggests that there is a threshold level of listening and reading in English such that if a given nonnative reader falls below this level, no matter how good his or her control of English grammar and vocabulary might be, he or she will not be able to communicate orally with native speakers of English (CelceMurcia and Goodwin 1991). Gilbert (1984) states that the skills of listening comprehension and reading are interdependent: "If they cannot hear English well, they are cut off from the language if they cannot be understood easily, they are cut off from conversation with native speakers." Noote boom (1983) also has suggested that speech production is affected by speech perception; the hearer has become an important factor in communication discourse.

According to PISA, the average reading achievement in 27 European countries was lower than the EU 27 reading achievement benchmark (15%). In 2009, 19.6% of pupils in the EU 27 were low achievers in reading (i.e., one in every five 15-year-olds in the EU 27 had trouble reading, making it difficult to use reading as a tool for learning). The studies also found that most pupils in the fourth year of formal schooling in Belgium (French Community), France, Slovenia, Iceland, and Norway have low performance. The average results in these countries were lower than the EU-27 average (15%).

PIRLS, on the other hand, conducted research on reading achievement for grade IV in 16 European Union nations, and the data revealed that 20% of the pupils in the countries were unable to detect plots at the literal level or identify information expressly expressed (op. cit.). According to EACEA (2011), approximately 40% of pupils aged 15 in these nations did not achieve level 2 reading competency (EACEA,

2011). Meanwhile, 30% or more of pupils in Belgium, Romania, and Norway have reading challenges (EACEA, 2011). Furthermore, the proportions of pupils with major reading difficulties were much greater in Belgium (French community), Spain, Poland, the United Kingdom, Iceland, and Norway (ibid) than in the EU average (15%). an EACEA (2011) (ibid).

Meanwhile, the National Inquiry on Literacy in Australia conducted a reading study in 2005, which revealed that among the successful schools visited during the inquiry, a systematic method of instruction was an essential foundation for reading instruction (National Inquiry on Literacy in Australia, 2005). That is, the study found that toddlers could not read texts accurately, fluently, or comprehend without the use of synthetic approaches (the combined effect of alphabetic education (bottom-up) and full word instruction (top-down)). Similar findings were found in the United Kingdom, Canada's private primary schools, and the United States of America.

In the USA, Brevik (2019) investigated the implementation of reading comprehension instruction and strategy use in English as a second language (L2) classrooms. The study analysed 60 video-recorded L2 lessons in seven lower secondary schools in Norway over two school years. The study found that teachers engaged students in reading comprehension instruction of narrative and expository texts and provided guided strategy practice based on student needs, promoting successful reading comprehension instruction and the development of critical literacy and metadiscursive awareness. The study's implications highlight the effectiveness of incorporating reading comprehension strategies and authentic L2 texts to enhance students' reading skills. However, the study's context in Norwegian secondary schools may limit its applicability to other educational settings. To address this limitation, future research could explore the implementation of reading comprehension instruction in L2 classrooms across various educational contexts and grade levels.

In Ghana, Oduro et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative inquiry into the approaches used by grade 4 English language teachers to remediate phonics difficulties among struggling readers at the Unipra South Cluster of Schools. The study found that teachers predominantly used jolly phonics and rhyming methods for remediation, using materials such as flashcards, manila cards, chalkboards, and textbooks. The study's implications highlight the importance of utilizing effective phonics strategies to support struggling readers in Ghanaian schools. However, the study's limitation lies in the focus on grade 4 teachers in a specific cluster of schools. Future research could explore phonics remediation strategies across various grade levels and schools in Ghana.

In Zimbabwe, Nyamayedenga (2020) investigated how primary school teachers' beliefs affected the implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT). The study employed a qualitative approach with five purposively selected teachers as participants. The study found that teachers' beliefs influenced the way CLT was

implemented, with some teachers not fully embracing CLT principles and methods. The study's implications highlight the importance of addressing teachers' beliefs and providing adequate training to enhance the effective implementation of CLT. However, the study's limitation lies in the small sample size and focus on a specific region in Zimbabwe. Future research could investigate teachers' beliefs and CLT implementation in a wider range of schools and regions.

In Kenya, Andiema (2022) investigated the implementation of activity-based learning in public preprimary schools in West Pokot County. The mixed-methods study included 41 head teachers and 168 preprimary school teachers. The study found that activity-based learning was occasionally used, with inadequate resources hindering its implementation. The study's implications highlight the need for adequate infrastructure and instructional resources to support activity-based learning in preprimary schools. However, the study's limitation lies in the focus on a specific county in Kenya and a relatively small sample size. Future research could explore the implementation of activity-based learning in preprimary schools across various counties in Kenya to provide a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness.

In Tanzania, John et al. (2021) explored the challenges faced in the adoption and implementation of the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in primary schools. The qualitative study involved five public primary schools, revealing challenges such as lack of subject specialization and mastery among teachers, inadequate time for CLT implementation, insufficient teaching and learning resources, lack of regular in-service training for English teachers, and crowded classes. The study's implications emphasize the need to address these challenges to enhance the effective implementation of CLT. However, the study's limitation lies in the focus on a limited number of schools and the specific context of Tanzanian primary education. Future research could expand the scope to include a more diverse range of schools and regions to gain a broader understanding of the challenges faced in CLT implementation.

## Methodology

This study employed a mixed research paradigm and a convergent parallel research design. The study was conducted in Temeke municipality in the Dar es Salaam region. A sample of 550 respondents was included, including 400 pupils, 10 head teachers, 40 randomly selected teachers and 50 English language teachers of the respective class. Both probability and nonprobability sampling techniques were used to obtain the study sample. The study used interview guides, questionnaires and classroom observation guides as tools for data collection. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the pupils and English language teachers, while the interview guide was used to collect data from the head teachers. An observation guide was used to collect data on how the teachers taught reading and writing skills during their

lessons. In this study, validity was ensured by research experts. The research tools were submitted to experts in the field of research to check content validity if the tools covered the specific objectives and the content of the study. Reliability in the current study was ensured by using the test-retest method. This method was used to measure consistency over time by administering the same test to the same group of people on two different occasions. This study used descriptive statistics to analyse quantitative data, while content analysis or textual analysis was used to analyse qualitative data.

## Results and Discussion

### Availability of teaching resources for reading and listening skills in English

The study was interested in determining the available resources to teach reading and listening skills. The teachers were provided with a rating scale to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement, and their responses are summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1. Teachers' Responses on the Availability of Resources**

Statement	SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1. At this school each pupils has a book for learning listening and reading skills?	10	20	4	8	1	2	0	0	35	70
2. The textbooks used provide opportunity for learning listening skills?	34	68	0	0	0	0	4	8	2	4
3. Each pupil has an access to audio resources for learning listening skills	0	0	0	0	10	20	0	0	40	80
4. Each pupils have the access to visual materials for learning reading skills	35	70	0	0	0	0	10	20	0	0
5. The available books have the needed activities for pupils to learn reading skills	30	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	20
6. The available books have the needed activities for pupils to learn listening skills	35	70	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0
7. Every pupil is involved in different activities to acquire the reading and listening skills	40	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. There is no sharing of books for leading and listening skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	38	

9. The available books can be taken by pupils to learn while at home	12	24	0	0	0	0	2	0	26	0
10. The available resources are effective on enhancing the attainment of listening and reading skills	35	70	0	0	5	0	0	0	10	20
11. Each pupils can manage to read any the story from the pupils book about three paragraphs without hesitation.	0	0	18	36	1	2	9	18	23	46
12. The pupils can listen short story orally and be able to answer short answers correctly	0	0	10	20	2	4	10	20	28	56
13. The available listening and reading activities suggested in the pupils books raised the pupils' enthusiasm to learn more.	36	72	0	0	14	28	0	0	0	0
14. The English teacher is capable of using and managing available audial and visual resources to impart listening and reading skills effectively.	0	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	27	54
15. The English class is at least have ten English posters which allow the pupils to revise their learnt knowledge to develop listening and reading skills.	0	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	47	94

Source; Field data, 2023

The data indicate that 70% of the teachers strongly disagree that pupils have enough books for listening and reading, signifying that the majority of the respondents express dissatisfaction with the availability of reading and listening materials for pupils. This finding is consistent with the study by John et al. (2021) in Tanzanian primary schools, where inadequate textbooks, storybooks, and teaching media were reported as problems hindering the effective implementation of language teaching. The similarity in findings between the current study and John et al.'s research highlights the recurrent issue of limited teaching and learning resources in Tanzanian educational institutions. The implication of this finding is that the scarcity of resources,

particularly textbooks and supplementary materials, may hamper pupils' language development and reading skills, as they lack essential materials to support their learning.

The data reveal that 68% of the teachers believe that the available textbooks provide an opportunity for learning listening skills, suggesting that the majority of the respondents recognize the potential of existing textbooks to contribute to the enhancement of pupils' listening abilities. This finding aligns with the study by Polat and Eristi (2019) in Turkey, which showed that authentic video materials had positive effects on the development of English listening skills. The agreement between the current study and Polat and Eristi's research underscores the importance of using appropriate teaching and learning materials to foster language development among students. The implication of this finding is that despite resource limitations, the existing materials can still serve as valuable tools in developing pupils' listening skills and facilitating language learning.

The data demonstrate that challenges with reading abilities can be mitigated by the instructor preparing and executing an exciting and favorable teaching and learning process. This highlights the significance of a positive teaching approach and a supportive learning environment in addressing difficulties related to reading skills. The study by Lungu and Mkandawire (2022) in Zambia also emphasized the role of a conducive learning environment and a rich print environment in fostering literacy skills among pupils. The alignment between the current study and Lungu and Mkandawire's research reinforces the idea that the teaching process and learning environment play pivotal roles in shaping pupils' language abilities. The implication of this finding is that teachers should focus on creating engaging and supportive learning experiences to enhance pupils' reading skills and overall language development.

When asked about *how the availability of teaching and learning resources influences the attainment of listening and reading skills among public primary pupils at this school?* The head teacher of school A noted the following:

*“Overcrowding in public primary schools should be handled such that a class has no more than forty pupils. Reading skills in English could be efficiently taught in primary school with good teacher training and the introduction of preschool courses in every primary school. It has been observed that public primary schools such as mine here have insufficient teaching and reading materials and, in certain cases, no reading materials.*

Another head teacher said that

*“Reading a book is an extremely crucial pastime that no student should be denied during his or her formative years. This is because reading books stimulates young readers' minds, encourages unique thinking, and develops into a critical source of knowledge,*

*ideas, and inspiration. Furthermore, reading books instills the habit of reading in children.*

During an interview with an English teacher, one of the standard two English teachers in Temeke, he narrated the following:

*“Reading a book is an extremely crucial pastime that no student should be denied during his or her formative years. This is because reading books stimulates young readers' minds, encourages unique thinking, and develops into a critical source of knowledge, ideas, and inspiration. Furthermore, reading books instills the habit of reading in children, and the problem that we encounter in our school is the pupils' book ratio. We have 4678 of all pupils but have only 120 English books for all pupils, calculating the ratio you can sense as to how difficult it is to attain teaching effectiveness in our school.”*

When responding to the question, another English teacher commented that

*“The availability of books is very important in the teaching of English in our schools. Our pupils should have home-schooled books to develop skills in different skills but with the majority of our pupils and the shortage of books it is very difficult for every student to have a book, we have had a procedure to introduce the books to pupils very seriously as the books are not enough and if you tell parents to buy books they say it is clearly a government job they pay taxes*

Based on objective number one, the research aimed to determine the opinions of teachers in improving pupils' performance in listening and reading skills. When responding to the question, *“In your opinion, what should be improved to make pupils perform well in listening and reading skills”*, one of the English teachers said that:

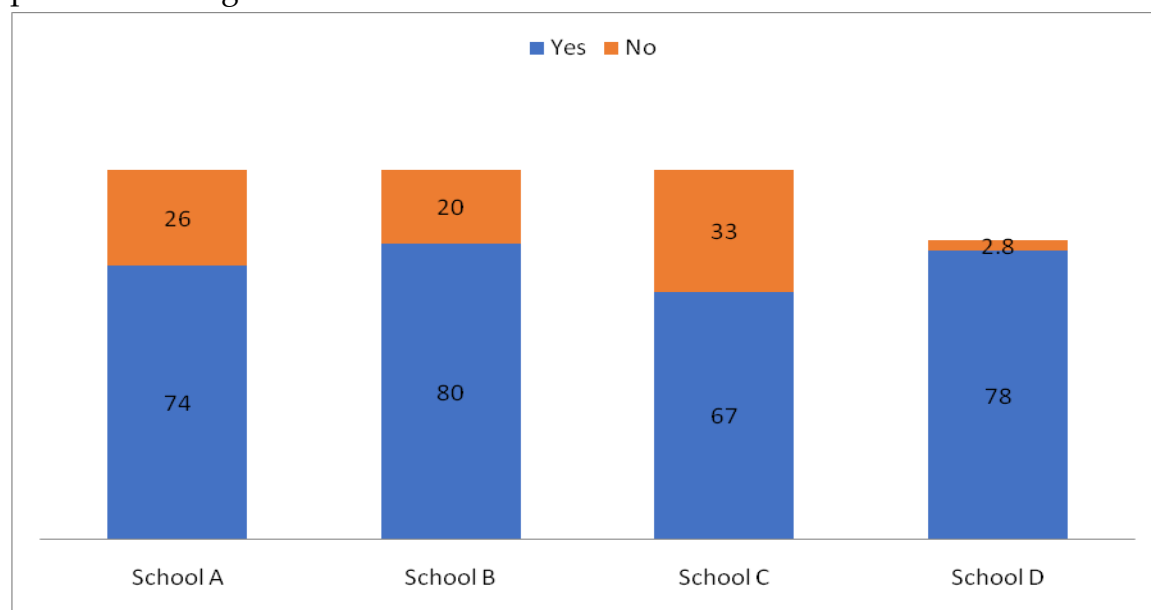
*“It should be mentioned that the availability of reading materials is critical for improving pupils' reading skills. Reading books is equally important in training fluency and comprehension reading skills. A lack of reading books or insufficient reading textbooks may have a negative impact on pupils' ability to improve their reading skills, whether it be fluency reading or comprehension reading.”* (Interview, June, 12th 2023)

Insights from head teachers and English teachers on the influence of teaching and learning resources on pupils' development of listening and reading skills reveal that educators in leadership positions and front-line teachers recognize the pivotal role of resource availability in fostering effective language skill development among pupils. Although no specific support from previous studies is provided in the given data for this paragraph, the overall theme of limited resources in the previous studies (Polat and Eristi, 2019; Lungu and Mkandawire, 2022) aligns with the acknowledgement of resource importance in the current study. The implication of this

finding is that both school leaders and teachers are aware of the significance of resource availability and should work collaboratively to address resource challenges, thereby supporting pupils' language development.

Generally, the data highlight the significance of addressing the shortage of teaching and learning resources, particularly textbooks, to enhance pupils' language development and reading skills. The findings align with previous research, emphasizing the need to prioritize the provision of adequate resources in educational institutions. Existing materials, despite limitations, can still be valuable tools in fostering listening skills and facilitating language learning. Additionally, a positive teaching approach and a supportive learning environment are crucial in addressing challenges with reading abilities. The recognition of resource availability by both school leadership and teachers underscores the need for collective efforts to overcome resource challenges and support pupils' language skill development, ultimately contributing to their overall academic success.

The pupils were also asked a number of questions aimed at collecting data to address the first objective of the study. In the first question, they were asked to indicate whether they had attended preprimary education. Their responses to this question are presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Pupils' Responses on Whether They Attended Preprimary School**

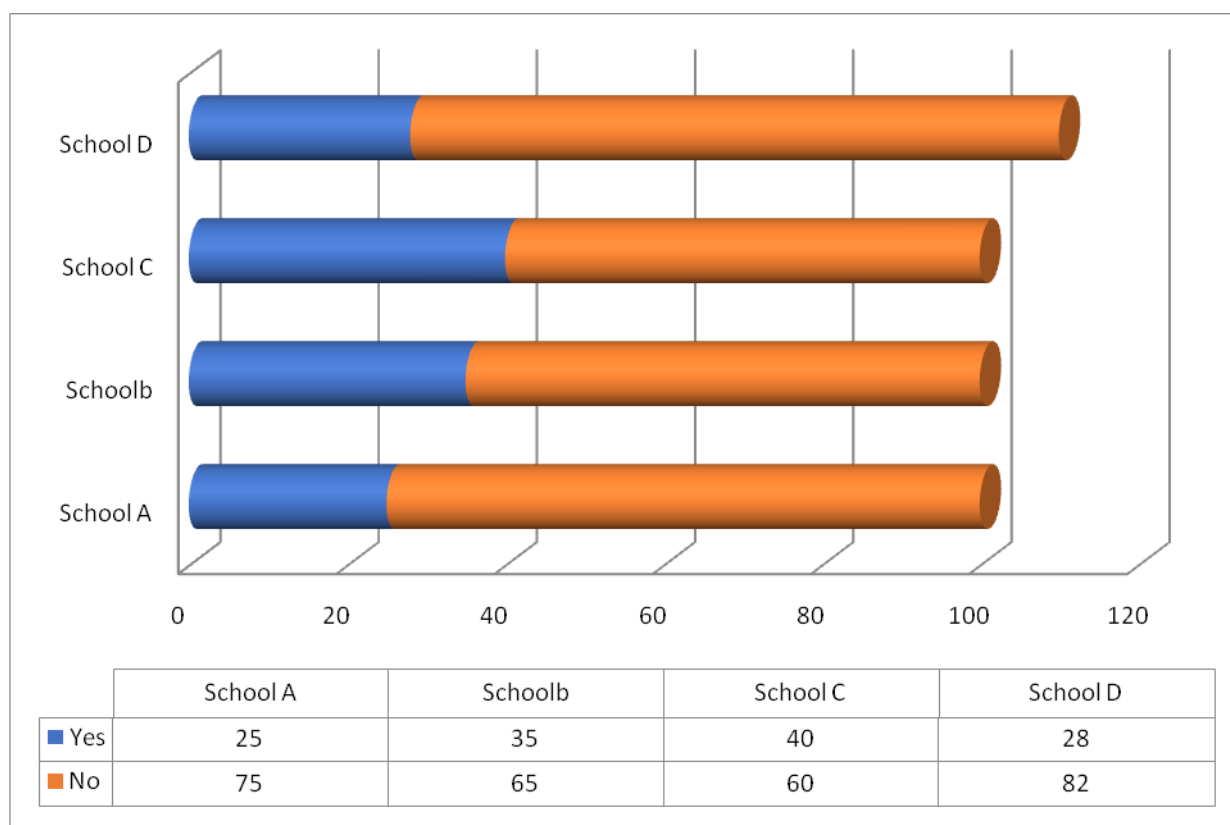
The data presented in Figure 1 indicate that approximately 75% of all pupils in Temeke Municipality attended preprimary education before starting standard education. This finding implies that the government policy of education in 2005, which made preprimary education compulsory for preparing pupils with the basic 3 Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic), is being well observed in the municipality. Preprimary education provides open room for teachers to more easily teach pupils

who already possess a foundation in reading, counting, and writing. However, the surprising aspect is that some pupils reach standard seven and form one without knowing how to write, read, or count, raising questions about how they managed to pass their final examinations without these essential skills.

Support from previous studies provides valuable insights into the significance of foundational education and its impact on language development and learning outcomes. Polat and Eristi's research in Turkey (2019) emphasizes the positive effects of authentic video materials on English listening skills, aligning with the idea that preprimary education enhances language abilities before standard education. Similarly, Lungu and Mkandawire's study in Zambia (2022) highlights the role of the teaching environment in shaping literacy skills, suggesting that preprimary education establishes a foundation for language development and reading culture. Oppong Frimpong's research in Ghana (2021) stresses the importance of accessible teaching materials for effective learning interactions, demonstrating that appropriate resources in early childhood education significantly affect learning outcomes. Additionally, John et al.'s study in Tanzania (2021) underscores the issue of inadequate resources hindering language teaching in primary schools, further emphasizing the importance of preprimary education in preparing pupils with foundational skills for standard ones.

Generally, the data support the notion that preprimary education plays a crucial role in preparing pupils with essential foundational skills before entering formal education. The support from previous studies reinforces the idea that foundational education, when well implemented, can positively impact pupils' language development and learning outcomes. However, the observation that some pupils reach higher grades without acquiring basic skills raises concerns about the consistency and effectiveness of the educational system in ensuring that all pupils receive a strong foundation in their early years. Addressing these challenges can lead to improved language proficiency and academic success for pupils throughout their educational journey.

The second question asked the pupils whether they learned the English language while they were at preprimary school. The response to this question is summarized in Figure 2.



Source: Field data, 2023

**Figure 2.**

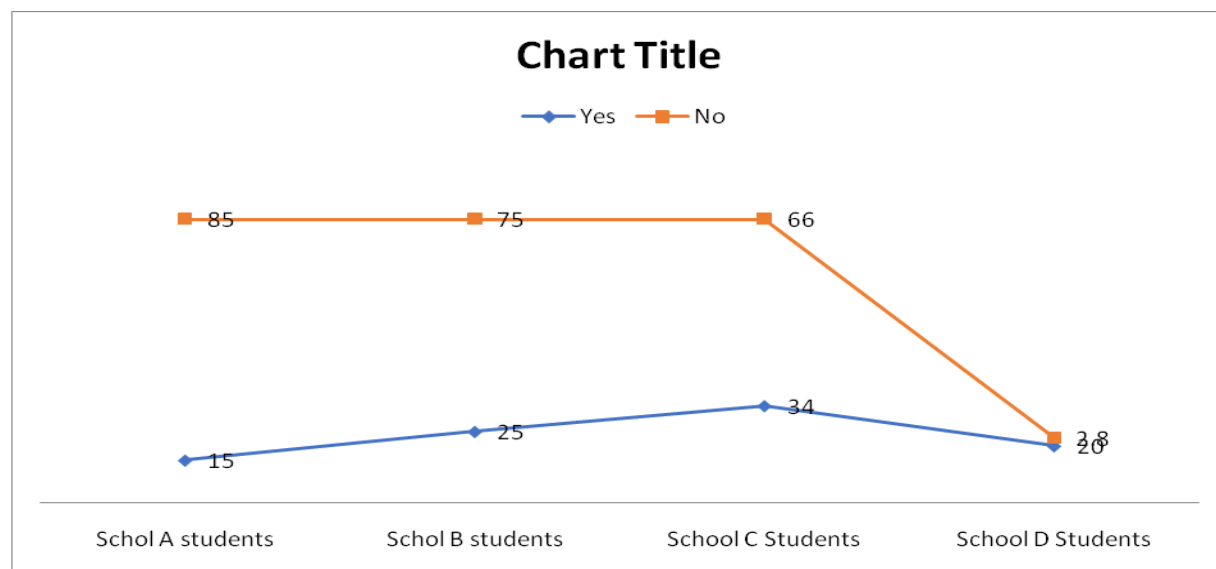
### **Pupils' Responses on Whether They Learned English While at the Preprimary**

The findings from Figure 2 show that approximately 75% of pupils did not learn English in preprimary education, while 25% reported having learned English during their time in preprimary school. The government's education policy instructs that English should begin in standard three, which may explain why pupils in private schools, who start learning English from kindergarten, demonstrate more competence in the language. Interestingly, to distinguish themselves from government schools, private schools used to be named "academic" before being instructed to call themselves "English medium schools." This suggests that English language instruction should start at an early stage, and the current selection of certain schools as English medium schools creates a double standard, leaving some primary schools in Temeke with poor English performance, potentially hindering their progress.

Support from previous studies provides insights into the significance of early language instruction and its impact on language development. Polat and Eristi's research in Turkey (2019) emphasizes the effectiveness of authentic video materials in improving English listening skills, suggesting that early exposure to language can positively influence language proficiency. Similarly, Lungu and Mkandawire's study in Zambia (2022) highlights the importance of the teaching and learning environment

in shaping literacy skills, indicating that starting language instruction early can foster a culture of reading and language development.

The third question asked the students whether they had English books at their home places for them to learn at home. The responses to this question are summarized in Figure 3.



Source; field data, 2023

**Figure 3.**  
**Students' Response on the Availability of English Books at Home**

From the findings in Figure 3, it is evident that 85% of pupils do not have English books at home, while only 15% of respondents report having English books. This result implies that many pupils do not prioritize reading English language materials outside of the school setting. The consequence of this lack of engagement with English becomes apparent when they join primary schools and realize that English is the medium of instruction. Support from previous studies further highlights the importance of early language exposure and access to relevant learning materials. For instance, Polat and Eristi's research in Turkey (2019) emphasizes the positive impact of authentic video materials on English listening skills, suggesting that exposure to authentic language samples can foster language development. Similarly, Lungu and Mkandawire's study in Zambia (2022) stresses the role of the teaching and learning environment in shaping reading skills, emphasizing the significance of a print-rich environment and library facilities. Oppong Frimpong's research in Ghana (2021) underscores the importance of readily available teaching and learning materials for effective interactions, indicating that pupils' accessibility to materials impacts their engagement with learning. Moreover, John et al.'s study in Tanzania (2021) highlights the issue of inadequate resources hindering effective language teaching, further

reinforcing the importance of providing pupils with access to appropriate materials. In conclusion, the data show a concerning lack of English language materials at home for the majority of pupils, which may contribute to their challenges in adapting to English as the medium of instruction in primary schools. Early language exposure and access to appropriate learning resources are crucial for fostering language development and preparing pupils for successful language learning in formal educational settings. Ensuring pupils have access to English language materials both at school and at home can positively impact their language proficiency and overall academic performance.

### **Factors Affecting Pupils' Attainment of Listening and Reading Skills in English**

The study was also aimed at determining factors affecting pupils' attainment of listening and reading skills in English. The researcher used interviews, questionnaires and observation methods to collect data from teachers and pupils. The results revealed that pupils' lack of confidence is a factor that contributes to their inadequate reading abilities in school on a daily basis. The study discovered that pupils' confidence in learning to read in class was low and inadequate. Pupils are not in a position to practice reading and are also not prepared to answer comprehension questions in class, as observed by the researcher in all selected primary schools in Temeke.

The following voices were from two teachers: *I can say their confidence level is poor and inadequate, they lack self-assurance, and they lack the "I can read spirit."* Another teacher stated, *"They lack confidence in trying to practice reading."* The National Academy of Sciences (2018) elaborated on the relationship between pupils' confidence and their academic performance, stating that pupils' perception of their ability or self-confidence is the central mediating construct of their achievement striving in reading. Another teacher asserted:

Pupil confidence in reading sessions in class is low since the majority of them are still new readers (learning to read); as a result, their confidence level is inadequate. The American Library Association (2018) emphasizes that confidence plays a large part in a child's performance in reading and other school subjects to call attention to why the inadequacy of pupils' confidence in reading is a worrisome experience in teaching pupils how to read. To support the American Library Association's (2018) point, the National Academy of Sciences (2018) agrees that confidence and motivation to persevere are the most important factors in pupils' acquisition of expert reading ability.

Teachers and parents failed to inspire pupils' interest in reading; as such, pupils' motivation to learn to read was insufficient. It was also discovered that both the school and the parent component are hesitant to encourage pupils to establish positive attitudes toward reading and that there is insufficient parental involvement in supporting pupils learning to read fluently at home. Lyon (2000) emphasized the importance of home influence on children's reading ability, stating that children who

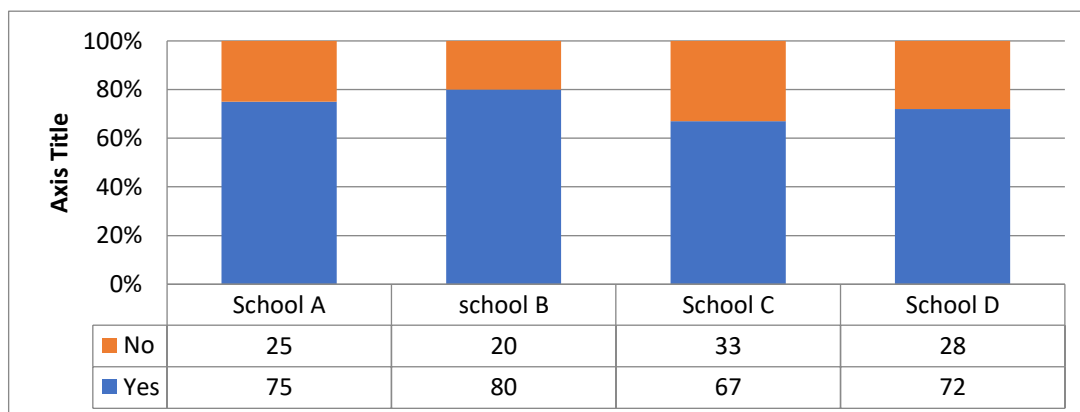
have literacy experiences from birth have an advantage in vocabulary development, reading, and comprehension over those who do not have literacy influence from home.

Another teacher shared the following thoughts: Some of the issues that hamper reading skills are that parents do not always acquire prereader books for their children on time, and teachers do not always assist pupils in creating a desire to learn how to read in school. Lyon (2000) supported this finding by adding that children from households where parents' reading levels and habits are low are more likely to fail to read.

According to the study, the school has a propensity to not motivate pupils to read tale books or word cards or to organize reading competitions among pupils. A teacher stated, "We have no reading competition among pupils in this school to motivate them to read always." Another instructor stated, "The motivation level to encourage pupils to read story books in this school is low." It would have been preferable if teachers could have externally motivated the pupils to develop their interest in learning to read, as claimed by Guthrie (2009), who claims that some of the external reasons why pupils read in school are reading assignments given to them by their teachers and punishment teachers give to pupils who fail to read in class.

The study discovered that language teachers lack the necessary skills to urge pupils to read and become habitual readers. A teacher claimed that there is not enough motivation because teachers do not know how to educate children to read. The findings are consistent with Rany's (2013) findings, which state that one of the reasons why pupils lack motivation to learn how to read is that language teachers are not well trained to teach reading in class and thus lack teaching strategies to pique pupils' interest in learning how to read.

The pupils were also asked a number of questions about this objective. The first question was whether they knew how to read English. Their responses to this question are summarized in Figure 4.

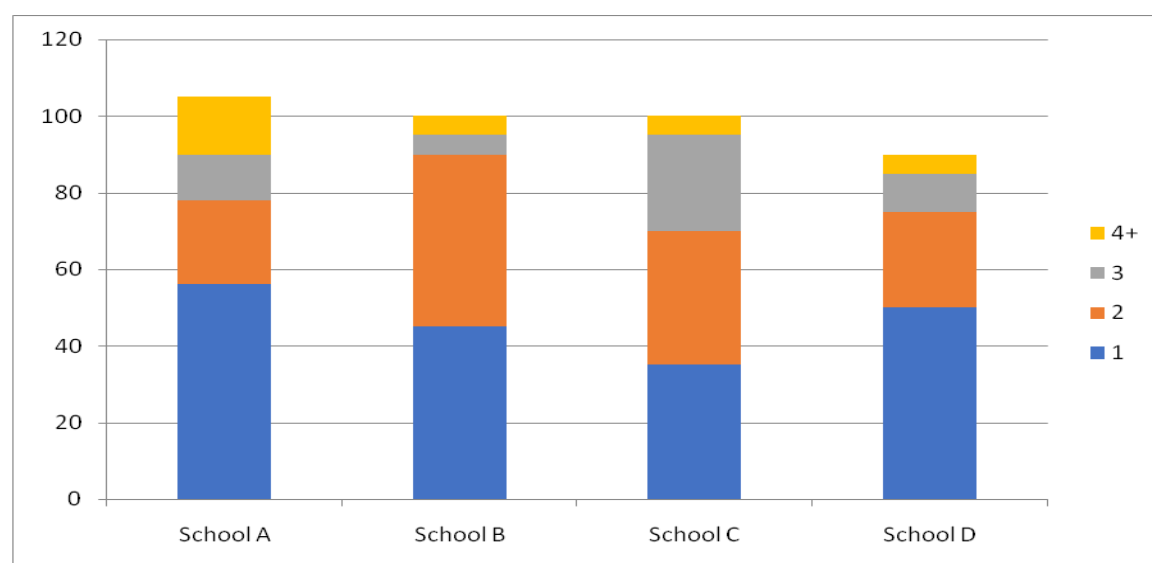


Source: Field data (2023)

**Figure 4. Pupils' Responses on Their Ability to Read English**

Based on the last objective, the researcher aimed to determine the status of English language to primary school. The researcher asked all 400 pupils in four schools, and only 45% agreed that they know how to read English, as the figure above justified the results. Figure 4 shows that the number of pupils who demanded that they know how to read English was above 50% percent in seven, but the situation was bad in standards six, five, and four when approximately 67% of pupils failed to read English.

The researcher also asked the pupils about the number of paragraphs they could read effectively. Their responses to this question are summarized in Figure 5.



Source: Field Data (2023)

**Figure 5.**  
**The Number of Paragraphs Pupils Can Read Effectively**

From figure 5, the number of pupils who had the ability to read more than two paragraphs in standard 3 was just 5% percent, standard 4 was 12% percent, standard 5 was 14% percent, standard six was 16% able to read more than paragraphs, and standard seven was 25% able to read more than two paragraphs but heisting and shucking. After observing the reading of each class selected, the study found that only 15% of all pupils could read a story in two paragraphs. The study also discovered that a shortage of prereader books and other reading tools in the school is one of the reasons why pupils have inadequate reading skills. It was also discovered that a shortage of prereaders books such as "I want to start reading vol. 1 and 2, my first picture reading book, my book of alphabets and letters" is one of the reasons why pupils in the school have low reading ability.

A study indicated that word pronunciation and reading aloud were not properly taught in school due to a shortage of text materials. According to one teacher,

*the lack of textbooks is one of the greatest challenges to teaching reading in this school because the books provide a guide for pupils on how to learn to read. Another teacher stated, "Pupils who do not have textbooks cannot follow the entire class in a reading comprehension or read aloud lesson."* This finding was supported by Adebayo's (2008) findings that a lack of text books and suitable and usable reader books are the causes of pupils' poor reading skills and performance in school.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

It is very obvious that many English learners' chief goal is to speak and read fluently in this compulsory subject, which requires constant listening and reading in English to enable them to speak and write in this language. Teaching English listening and reading is a complex process that requires proper and in-depth planning and training for one to achieve listening and reading skills objectives. It can be difficult to assess listening and reading skills. A teacher can listen to what they say and read. The problem of poor proficiency in the English language seems mostly to affect non-English speaking countries compared to English speaking countries.

This proves that the English language cannot be learned by just mastering the rules of grammar or through the lecture teaching method but that English is learned through conversation and discussion in context. This is true because the main purpose of learning English is to improve the four language skills (listening, reading speaking and writing) to enable them to use the English language communicatively.

Teachers must employ interactive teaching techniques to increase pupils' capacities both as individuals and as a group. Pupils must have an active role in processes outside the scope of traditional didactic approaches, such as the analysis of educational needs, the design of learning objectives, course development, teaching and learning processes, and the assessment of learning outcomes.

Last but not least, the results of the study are understandable: due to a severe shortage of reading materials, the findings from classroom observations in the reading skills class revealed that most teachers in public primary schools were teaching reading skills at various grades without using all of the methods, strategies, and steps of teaching reading skills that were taught in teachers' training colleges. As a result, the majority of them used very basic teaching aids that they created themselves utilizing cement paper sacks or chalkboard sketches. The sketches were cleaned up just before the lesson ended. Furthermore, textbooks, supplementary books, and other reading resources were in short supply, not to mention some teachers' failure to make appropriate use of the available textbooks.

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