Linguistic Foundations Of Pre-Reading Tasks: Activating Learner Schemata For Improved Comprehension In Kenya's CBC Classrooms

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Abstract
Reading comprehension remains a significant challenge for many Kenyan learners despite ongoing curriculum reforms. Under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), emphasis is placed on learner-centered pedagogy, with particular attention to activating prior knowledge as a foundation for meaning-making. This study investigates the implementation and effectiveness of schema-activating pre-reading tasks—such as brainstorming, KWL charts, picture analysis, prediction, and inference—in enhancing Grade 6 learners' reading comprehension. Grounded in Schema Theory and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), the research employed a mixed-methods design, drawing on teacher questionnaires, analysis of learner performance data, and lesson plan reviews from six public primary schools. Findings indicate a strong positive correlation between learners' engagement in structured pre-reading tasks and their post-test comprehension scores, suggesting that such tasks play a crucial role in facilitating textual understanding. The study also identifies key instructional and contextual challenges, including time constraints and limited teacher training on task sequencing. Despite these challenges, the results affirm the pedagogical value of schema-based pre-reading activities in fostering deeper engagement, improved comprehension, and alignment with CBC competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. The paper concludes by recommending targeted professional development and increased instructional time for pre-reading to maximize the benefits of these strategies in CBC classrooms.
Keywords: CBC (Competency-Based Curriculum), Learner-centered pedagogy, Pre-reading tasks, Reading comprehension, Schema Theory, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Teacher practices

I. Introduction

In recent years, Kenya's education system has undergone significant transformation with the implementation of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Introduced in response to calls for more holistic and learner-centered approaches, CBC emphasizes communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and lifelong learning as core competencies each learner should attain. Nowhere is this shift more visible, or more urgently needed, than in the teaching of reading comprehension, a skill foundational to all academic success. Yet, despite these reforms, reading comprehension levels among upper primary learners remain low, pointing to a disconnect between curricular intentions and classroom realities.

Reading comprehension is a process that requires learner involvement and active engagement with the text. This involvement is optimized when a learner is able to draw on their existing knowledge and experiences. This dynamic interaction between a reader's prior knowledge and new textual information is well understood through the lens of Schema Theory (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Rumelhart, 1980). According to this theory, readers interpret and construct meaning based on mental frameworks, or schemata, that are triggered during the reading process. Effective comprehension instruction, therefore, requires deliberate activation of these schemata, especially during the pre-reading phase.

Pre-reading tasks, such as brainstorming, KWL (Know–Want to Know–Learned) charts, picture analysis, and guided questioning, are pedagogical tools designed to activate learners' background knowledge. These tasks not only prime students for the reading process but also align with the learner-centered philosophy of CBC and principles of Task-Based Language Teaching (Ellis, 2003), which emphasizes meaningful, communicative learning. However, observations from Kenyan classrooms suggest that these schema-activating tasks are either underutilized or inconsistently implemented, undermining their potential impact.

Statement Of The Problem

Despite extensive curriculum reforms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), reading comprehension levels among primary school learners remain a persistent concern. Many learners struggle to engage with texts meaningfully, in part because their prior knowledge, crucial for comprehension, is rarely activated effectively in classroom instruction. While schema theory underscores the importance of pre-reading strategies in facilitating comprehension, the practical use of such strategies in Kenyan Grade 6 English classrooms has not been systematically studied. Moreover, there is a paucity of research on how task-based, schema-activating approaches are implemented, or constrained, within the CBC framework. This paper seeks to address this gap by investigating both the application and challenges of pre-reading tasks designed to activate learners' schemata, thereby supporting more effective and inclusive reading pedagogy in CBC classrooms.

Objectives Of The Study

This paper investigates the use of schema-activating pre-reading tasks in Grade 6 English classrooms in Kenya. It seeks to understand how these tasks are applied, the extent to which they support reading comprehension, and the challenges teachers face in implementing them. It is guided by the following objectives;

1. To examine how schema-activating pre-reading tasks are implemented in Grade 6 English classrooms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).
2. To identify the challenges teachers, encounter in their implementation.

While the first objective focuses on exploring the instructional approaches teachers use to activate learners' prior knowledge before reading, the second objective turns attention to the practical and systemic challenges that influence the consistent and effective application of such strategies within the CBC framework.

Research Questions

Specifically, the study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How are schema-activating pre-reading tasks implemented in Grade 6 English classrooms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum?
2. To what extent do these pre-reading tasks support learners' reading comprehension, and what challenges do teachers face in implementing them effectively?

While the first question focuses on the presence and nature of schema-activating pre-reading tasks in classroom practice, the second shifts attention to their pedagogical effectiveness and the contextual challenges that may influence their impact on learner comprehension.

This paper draws on data from a larger embedded case study that examined task-based reading comprehension instruction in six public primary schools over a five-week period. By focusing specifically on the pre-reading phase, it seeks to illuminate a critical yet under-researched aspect of comprehension pedagogy in Kenya. Despite policy shifts under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) emphasizing learner-centered instruction, limited empirical research has examined how Kenyan teachers actually implement schema-activating pre-reading strategies in daily classroom practice. This study addresses that gap by providing classroom-level insights into the pedagogical value and implementation challenges of such tasks. In doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on literacy development in African settings and offers context-specific recommendations for teacher training and policy refinement.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in two interrelated theories that illuminate how learners engage with texts: Schema Theory and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). Together, these frameworks explain not only the cognitive processes involved in reading comprehension but also the pedagogical approaches that can effectively support learners under the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC).

Schema Theory

Schema Theory, introduced by Bartlett (1932) and further developed by Rumelhart (1980), posits that comprehension is an interactive process between the reader's prior knowledge and the information presented in a text. Schemata, mental structures representing knowledge and experiences, are activated when learners encounter new information. When these structures are primed through instructional strategies, learners are better able to predict, interpret, and retain textual information.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) categorize schemata into formal schemata (knowledge of discourse structures and genres) and content schemata (background knowledge about the topic). In Kenyan classrooms, where learners may have limited exposure to certain topics presented in English readers, the activation of content schemata is especially critical. Pre-reading tasks that stimulate discussion, elicit learners' experiences, or introduce vocabulary can help bridge the gap between what learners know and what they are about to read.

In this study, Schema Theory provides a lens for evaluating how well pre-reading tasks activate prior knowledge. It also highlights the risk of comprehension failure when learners' schemata are not engaged. The effectiveness of pre-reading tasks, therefore, hinges on how intentionally they are used to connect learners' knowledge with the new content.

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT)

TBLT, as articulated by Ellis (2003) and Nunan (2004), is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes the use of meaningful tasks as the central unit of planning and instruction. A "task" in TBLT is defined as a goal-oriented activity where meaning is primary and learners use the target language to achieve communicative outcomes. TBLT contrasts with traditional language teaching approaches that prioritize isolated language forms over meaningful language use.

In the context of reading instruction, tasks may involve prediction activities, picture interpretation, group brainstorming, or pre-reading discussions—all of which are communicative and tied to a reading purpose. These tasks serve dual functions: they develop language skills and prepare learners for deeper engagement with texts. Within CBC, which promotes the development of competencies such as communication, collaboration, and learning to learn, TBLT offers a practical framework for planning learner-centered reading lessons.

TBLT also supports the three-phase structure of reading instruction, pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading—where each phase includes carefully designed tasks that scaffold comprehension. In this paper, particular emphasis is placed on pre-reading tasks, as they are most directly linked to schema activation and set the foundation for engagement with the text.

Integrating Theories Within the CBC Context

CBC in Kenya is grounded in constructivist principles, encouraging learners to build knowledge actively rather than receive it passively. Both Schema Theory and TBLT align with this orientation. Schema Theory provides a cognitive explanation for why background knowledge matters, while TBLT offers a pedagogical model for activating that knowledge through purposeful tasks.

In this study, these two frameworks are integrated to evaluate the relevance, effectiveness, and frequency of schema-activating pre-reading tasks in Grade 6 English classrooms. Schema Theory explains the why prior knowledge matters for comprehension, while TBLT explains how tasks can be used to activate that knowledge in meaningful, communicative ways. Together, they provide a robust foundation for understanding how learners access, process, and internalize meaning during reading lessons.

Moreover, both theories highlight the learner's active role in meaning-making, a key expectation under CBC. Teachers are no longer viewed as knowledge transmitters but as facilitators who design learning experiences that connect to what learners already know and push them to expand that knowledge through authentic tasks.

II.   Literature Review

Pre-Reading Tasks and Schema Activation

Schema theory, was introduced into reading research by Bartlett (1932) and later advanced in applied linguistics by scholars such as Carrell (1984) and Ajideh (2003), emphasizes the role of learners' prior knowledge in text comprehension. According to Carrell (1984), reading is an interactive process between the text and the reader's background knowledge, and comprehension is significantly enhanced when learners are helped to access and activate their relevant schemata before engaging with a text.

Subsequent research has reinforced this theoretical foundation by showing how schema-based instruction positively impacts reading comprehension outcomes. Ajideh (2003) argued that tasks designed to activate prior knowledge, such as brainstorming, prediction, and concept mapping, provide cognitive scaffolding that supports learners' ability to make inferences and connect new information with what they already know. Nassaji (2002) also emphasized the facilitative role of top-down processing and background knowledge in second language (L2) reading, noting that pre-reading activities serve as a bridge between the reader's existing mental frameworks and the textual content.

More recently, regional and local studies have begun to explore schema-based approaches within African educational contexts. Njiiri (2022) examined the role of contextual inference activities in reading comprehension performance among Kenyan secondary school learners. The study, highlighted the importance of integrating pre-reading activities that build on learners' prior experiences and sociocultural knowledge. Njiiri noted that while contextual inferencing tasks enhanced comprehension, many classrooms lacked systematic strategies for activating background knowledge prior to reading. This gap was particularly evident in under-resourced public schools, where teachers often defaulted to text-based questioning without sufficient scaffolding.

Similarly, Oluoch et al. (2023) investigated reading comprehension strategies in lower primary schools in western Kenya. Their findings suggest that while teachers recognize the importance of activating learners' prior

knowledge, structured pre-reading tasks are not consistently applied. They advocate for targeted teacher training that integrates schema theory into practical CBC-aligned instructional planning.

Tran et al. (2022), in a comparative study of Vietnamese and South African learners, further confirmed the universality of schema activation strategies in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. Their study underscores the adaptability of tools like picture prediction, contextual questioning, and guided discussions in enhancing learners' reading comprehension, especially when texts are culturally and linguistically accessible.

Therefore, the literature clearly demonstrates the theoretical and empirical value of schema-based instruction in reading. However, there remains a need for more context-specific studies, especially in sub-Saharan African contexts such as Kenya, that go beyond theory to examine how these strategies are implemented on the ground. The present study contributes to this gap by exploring the use and challenges of schema-activating pre-reading tasks among Grade 6 English teachers operating within the CBC framework.

TBLT and Reading Comprehension

Schema Theory and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) provide robust frameworks for enhancing reading comprehension, especially in second language contexts. Schema-based instruction facilitates learners' ability to construct meaning by connecting new textual information to their prior knowledge (Carrell, 1984; Ajideh, 2003). Pre-reading strategies such as KWL charts, questioning, and visual prompts have been shown to effectively activate learners' schemata and enhance comprehension (Nassaji, 2002; Tran et al., 2022).

TBLT, which emphasizes the use of authentic, goal-oriented tasks, supports deeper learner engagement and promotes active meaning-making (Oluoch et al., 2023). When reading instruction is embedded in real-world tasks, learners are more likely to engage critically and collaboratively with texts. However, the adoption of TBLT in many African contexts remains limited. For instance, Piper et al. (2018) highlight challenges in implementing learner-centered pedagogies in Kenyan classrooms, including inadequate teacher preparation and systemic pressures.

Reading Comprehension in Kenya's CBC

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya places strong emphasis on the development of literacy as a foundational skill across all learning areas. According to the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (KICD, 2017), reading comprehension is not only central to language instruction but is also a key enabler of competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. The curriculum advocates for learner-centered approaches that promote active engagement with texts through strategies such as prior knowledge activation, questioning, and contextual interpretation. These practices align with global shifts toward constructivist and meaning-based approaches to reading instruction.

Despite the progressive goals of the CBC, implementation at the classroom level remains uneven. A growing body of local research highlights persistent gaps between curriculum expectations and actual instructional practices. Oluoch, Ochieng, and Muthoni (2023) report that many teachers lack adequate training and ongoing professional development in CBC-aligned pedagogy. This often results in the continued use of traditional, teacher-centered methods that do not fully exploit the potential of learner engagement strategies.

Njiiri (2022) further illustrates this gap in her study on contextual inference strategies in Kenyan classrooms. Although the CBC encourages the use of schema-based tasks to support reading comprehension, many teachers are unable to implement these effectively due to limited pedagogical knowledge and constrained classroom environments. Such findings raise critical questions about the feasibility of curriculum reforms in contexts where systemic support is lacking.

The disconnect between policy and practice underscores the need for research that not only documents implementation challenges but also identifies effective strategies for supporting comprehension in real classroom contexts. While the global literature on schema activation and comprehension is well established (e.g., Carrell, 1984; Ajideh, 2003; Nassaji, 2002), studies focused on the African context remain limited. Recent work such as Oluoch et al. (2023) and Njiiri (2022) has begun to fill this gap, but further empirical research is needed to understand how pedagogical models like Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Schema Theory can be localized for CBC implementation.

III. Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a case study design within a mixed-methods framework, allowing for in-depth exploration of how schema-activating pre-reading tasks are implemented in Grade 6 English classrooms. The case study approach enabled a contextualized examination of teaching practices, while the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data enabled triangulation to increase the validity of the findings.

Participants and Setting

The broader study involved six public primary schools purposively selected from rural and urban areas of Athi River Sub county, Machakos County in Kenya. Approximately 480 grade 6 learners and eight English language teachers participated in a 5 week long reading intervention that saw the teachers utilize pre-, while and post-reading reading activities in their reading comprehension lessons. For the purposes of this paper, analysis focuses specifically on data related to pre-reading activities drawn from the first phase of the intervention (Intervention 1), which targeted schema activation strategies in reading instruction.

Instruments

Data on pre-reading instruction were collected using multiple sources to allow for triangulation: A teacher questionnaire designed to gather information on the use and perceptions of pre-reading tasks. Sample lesson plans that guided the teachers during the intervention and a post-intervention questionnaire, which captured insights and observations made during the reading comprehension lessons and classroom observations

Procedure

The statutory research permits were obtained before going to field. In addition, permission was sought to conduct research in schools from the County and Sub-county education directors and an introductory letter issued to the researcher. Head teachers of the schools involved gave the researcher access to teachers of English who accepted to participate in the study. All the teachers were taken through an orientation session by the researcher to build rapport and explain their role in the study. A pre-intervention questionnaire was filled by all the participating teachers during this orientation session. Over the succeeding 4 weeks, a pre-test, 3thee interventions and a posttest were conducted by the teachers. The researcher delivered the material and stationery at the schools and collected all the scripts and questionnaires for marking at the end of each session. Teachers were guided to choose from the following pre-reading activities: KWL, prediction, picture analysis and discussion during the intervention lesson. All scripts were collected, coded and marked by the researcher and research assistants to avoid any bias.

Ethical protocols were rigorously followed: all participants provided informed consent, identifying information was anonymized, and data were stored securely in line with research ethics guidelines.
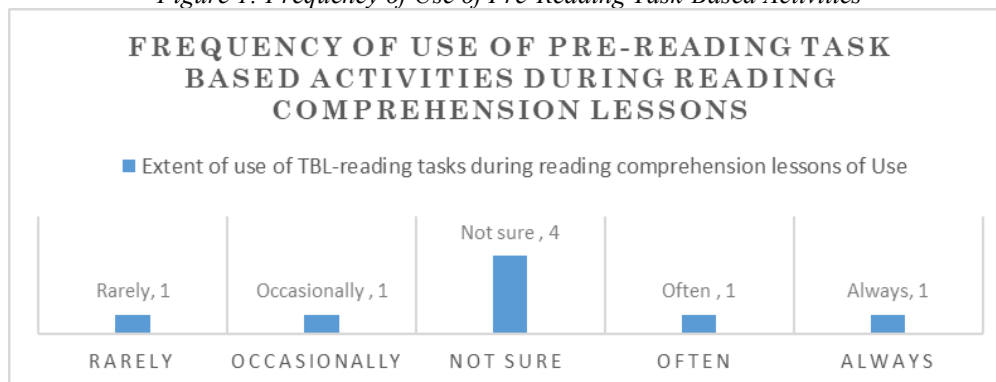
IV.   Findings And Discussion

This section presents the key findings of the study and interprets them in light of the research objectives and theoretical framework. The analysis focuses on how schema-activating pre-reading tasks were implemented in Grade 6 English classrooms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), the extent to which these tasks influenced learners' engagement and reading comprehension, and the challenges teachers faced in their application. Drawing on both learners' performance data and teacher reports, the discussion explores the pedagogical value of task-based pre-reading activities and their alignment with the CBC's emphasis on learner-centered, competency-driven instruction.

Use of Schema-Activating Pre-Reading Tasks

Survey responses on the frequency of schema-activating pre-reading tasks such as brainstorming**,** KWL**,** picture analysis, and prediction revealed a general pattern of inconsistent use and uncertainty among teachers. As shown in Figure 1, when asked how frequently they incorporated task-based pre-reading activities during reading comprehension lessons: 4 teachers indicated they were *"Not Sure"* 1 teacher each selected *"Rarely"*, *"Occasionally"*, *"Often"*, and *"Always"*

Figure 1: Frequency of Use of Pre-Reading Task-Based Activities

FREQUENCY OF USE OF PRE-READING TASK BASED ACTIVITIES DURING READING COMPREHENSION LESSONS

■ Extent of use of TBL-reading tasks during reading comprehension lessons of Use

Not sure , 4

Rarely, 1   Occasionally , 1   Often , 1   Always, 1

RARELY   OCCASIONALLY   NOT SURE   OFTEN   ALWAYS

Source: Researcher' data (2025)

This distribution reflects low confidence and inconsistent implementation of schema-activating tasks. The fact that the majority of teachers (50%) were uncertain about their use of such activities suggests a gap in pedagogical clarity or training. This also implies that many teachers may be engaging in pre-reading practices without explicitly understanding or labelling them as task-based schema-activation techniques.

Teachers' feedback supported these findings. Although brainstorming and picture analysis occasionally occurred—especially in lessons with visually supported texts—these were often informal or incidental. Structured activities like KWL charts or guided prediction exercises were largely absent, and lesson plans lacked concrete task descriptions.

The lack of consistency, coupled with the evident confusion among teachers, aligns with Oluoch (2023), who noted that even under CBC's learner-centered model, many teachers still struggle to distinguish between traditional and task-based pedagogy. As Njiiri (2022) also observes, this pedagogical ambiguity often leads to a mechanical approach to reading instruction, in which critical pre-reading strategies are overlooked or underutilized. These findings signal a critical need for professional development on how to structure and purposefully apply schema-activating tasks during reading instruction—tasks that are vital for comprehension in a second-language context like Kenya's.

Pedagogical Benefits and interpretation through theory

The implementation of pre-reading tasks that deliberately activated learners' background knowledge led to marked improvements in learner engagement and their ability to make meaningful connections with texts. This is consistent with Schema Theory, which posits that comprehension is enhanced when learners can connect new information to pre-existing mental frameworks (Anderson, 1984; Grabe & Stoller, 2013). Figure 2 below shows a comparison between learners' comprehension levels at baseline and what they scored after intervention one stage of the study.

Figure 2: Pre-test vs Post intervention 1 Reading Comprehension Level of Grade 6 Learners
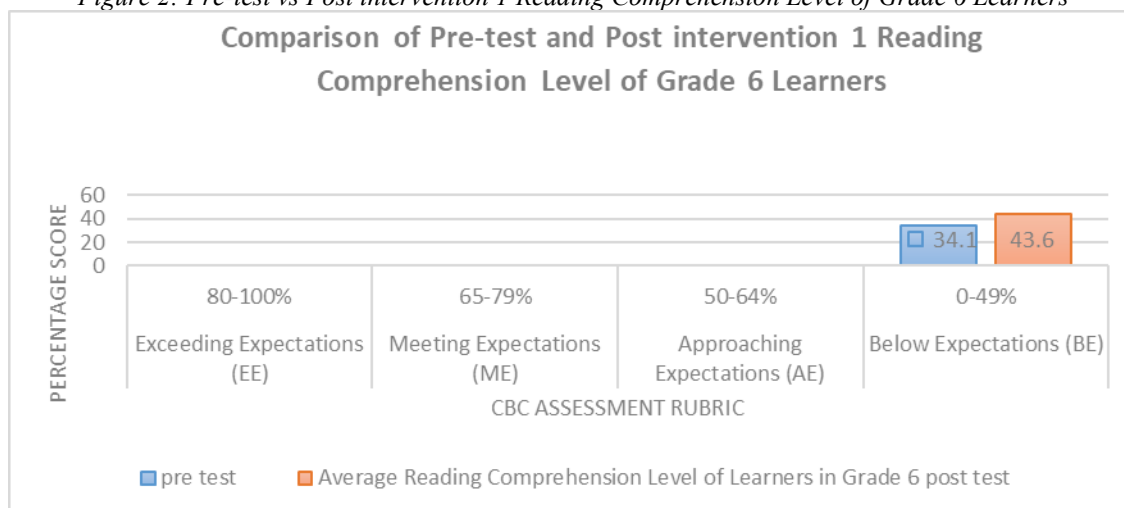
Source: Researcher's data (2025)

To determine the extent to which learners' performance in pre-reading tasks influenced their reading comprehension outcomes, a Pearson correlation test was conducted. This statistical test is commonly used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables—in this case, scores from Intervention 1 (pre-reading tasks) and the overall post-test scores.

Table 1: Pre-test vs Post intervention 1 Reading Comprehension Level of Grade 6 Learners

Correlations			
Case 2		Post-test score overall average	Intervention 1 overall average
Post-test score overall average	Pearson Correlation	1	.869[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	38	38
Intervention 1 overall average	Pearson Correlation	.869[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	38	38

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Researcher's data (2025)

The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.869 between learners' overall post-test scores and their performance in Intervention 1 (pre-reading tasks) indicates a very strong positive relationship, statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This means that learners who performed well in the pre-reading tasks also tended to score highly on the reading comprehension post-test, suggesting a clear link between effective pre-reading engagement and improved comprehension outcomes.

This strong correlation supports the theoretical assertion that pre-reading activities played a vital role in improving comprehension by activating learners' background knowledge, as posited by Schema Theory (Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Carrell, 1983). In Intervention 1, teachers chose from among the following pre-reading tasks; brainstorming, KW charts, picture analysis, role playing, prediction, and inference to stimulate prior knowledge and prepare learners cognitively for the reading tasks. These activities allowed learners to build mental frameworks (schemata) that they could then use to interpret and integrate new information from the text. The

From a (TBLT) perspective, these tasks also required learners to engage in meaningful communication, draw from personal experiences, and work collaboratively—conditions which, according to Ellis (2003), are essential for language development. The statistically significant relationship observed here empirically supports these theoretical underpinnings, indicating that pre-reading tasks not only increased engagement but also translated into measurable gains in comprehension.

This corroborates earlier findings by Njiiri (2022), that activating contextual inference skills prior to reading equips learners with tools to navigate texts more meaningfully, particularly in multilingual contexts where second language learners may lack cultural or lexical familiarity resulting in the improved scores witnessed after the intervention. Further, such tasks have been found to not just enhance comprehension, but also the learners' emotional investment in the text. Learners have been found to approach reading with increased confidence, take initiative to ask clarifying questions, and frequently drew on personal experiences to interpret events or character motives in narratives (Grabe & Stoller, 2013). These patterns suggest that the pre-reading stage functioned as a catalyst for sustained attention and motivation throughout the reading process.

Alignment with CBC Competencies: Communication, Collaboration, and Learning to Learn

The pre-reading tasks were intentionally designed to align with key (CBC) competencies, particularly communication, collaboration, and learning to learn (KICD, 2017). During think-pair-share sessions, semantic mapping, and oral anticipation guides, learners demonstrated enhanced communication skills by articulating their thoughts, negotiating meaning with peers, and using contextually appropriate language. These opportunities supported the development of both receptive and productive skills as encouraged under CBC language learning goals.

Collaboration was fostered through group-based schema activation tasks. As learners co-constructed meaning through shared reflections and prediction activities, they learned to engage with diverse perspectives and build collective understanding—core aspects of CBC's emphasis on learner agency and teamwork (KICD, 2017). These tasks provided low-risk environments in which learners could safely make errors, clarify concepts, and refine their interpretations through peer scaffolding.

The learning to learn competency was particularly evident as learners developed metacognitive strategies. Through pre-reading questions such as *"What do I already know about this topic?"* or *"What do I expect this story to be about?"*, learners became more aware of how prior knowledge influences comprehension. This reflects what Grabe and Stoller (2013) describe as strategic reading, in which learners consciously plan and monitor their understanding—a skill necessary for lifelong learning.

Moreover, these pre-reading engagements supported the task-based learning approach by providing authentic communicative contexts where language use was purposeful and embedded in meaning-making (Ellis, 2003; Willis & Willis, 2007). Tasks were not only cognitively engaging but also linguistically rich, supporting language development alongside the development of higher-order thinking skills.

Challenges and Gaps in Implementing Pre-Reading Tasks

Several challenges emerged during the implementation of pre-reading tasks, which may have influenced the depth and sustainability of the outcomes observed.

Limited Understanding of Task Purpose and Sequencing:

Teacher reports indicated that while the tasks were generally implemented as instructed, there were gaps in understanding their deeper cognitive purpose. Some teachers did not fully grasp how the tasks connect to reading comprehension through schema activation and scaffolding. This suggests a need for more targeted professional development in task-based pedagogy and schema-informed instruction.

Curriculum Overload and Time Constraints:

Teachers also cited curriculum demands and limited time as barriers to fully integrating pre-reading tasks into regular practice. The pressure to cover a wide range of competencies within short instructional periods and the pressure of syllabus completion in time for the impending national exams made it difficult to consistently allocate time for cognitively engaging pre-reading activities.

Short Duration of Study:

The intervention was conducted over a relatively short period of 5 weeks, which may have limited the extent of observable change in long-term reading behavior and instructional habits. A longer-term intervention would allow for deeper teacher engagement and more sustained learner improvement.

These gaps highlight the importance of systemic support—through time allocation, teacher training, and curriculum alignment—to ensure the successful integration of task-based pre-reading strategies within CBC classrooms.

V. Conclusions And Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, several recommendations can be made to support the effective implementation of schema-activating pre-reading tasks in Grade 6 English classrooms under Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). First, there is a need to strengthen both pre-service and in-service teacher training to include practical guidance on the use of Schema Theory and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). This will equip teachers with the necessary skills to design and sequence pre-reading tasks effectively. Additionally, curriculum developers such as KICD should consider explicitly integrating schema-activating strategies into national lesson planning templates and teacher resource materials. This could involve the development of simplified, grade-appropriate guides containing examples of brainstorming, prediction, role-play, and K-W charts aligned to CBC learning outcomes.

To address the challenges identified, particularly time constraints and limited pedagogical support, continuous professional development through school-based mentorship and professional learning communities (PLCs) is essential. Such platforms would enable teachers to share best practices, receive feedback, and build confidence in using learner-centered approaches. Moreover, curriculum pacing guides should be reviewed to allow adequate instructional time for meaningful pre-reading activities. Finally, there is a need for longer-term pedagogical research and intervention trials to observe sustained impact and offer teachers more time to adapt and refine their practices. These measures, taken together, can help embed schema-based pre-reading instruction more firmly within the CBC framework.

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