



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students' English Performance
in Lower Secondary Schools in Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District

A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Education, in Partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of a Master's Degree of Education in English Education

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DECLARATION

I, Emmanuel Harerimana, hereby affirm that this dissertation is truly my own work, and where the contribution of the others has been replicated, due acknowledgement has been made. This dissertation has never been submitted for any award to any Institution of Higher Learning or University.

Date: 26/ 1/ 2024 and 20/8/2024

Signature:



Emmanuel Harerimana

APPROVAL

We, Dr KAMANZI Anthony and Dr TABARO Cyprien, approve that, this research entitled The Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students' English Performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, is the original work of Emmanuel Harerimana and has been done under our guidance and supervision with our approval as University of Rwanda supervisors.

Anthony Kamanzi


Dr KAMANZI Anthony: 26/01/2024 and 20/8/2024



Dr TABARO Cyprien: 26/01/2024 and 20/8/2024

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

My wife;

My children;

My sisters and brothers;

For consistently supporting me through good times, the challenging times, and the amazing experiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, the Almighty God is given great gratitude and adoration in the context of my proclaimed religion. I also commend the Rwandan government for its support of education, including the funding and resources provided for the Master of Education in English Education program.

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Thank you all for your support and contributions!

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BLF: Building Learning Foundation

CLT: Cognitive Load Theory

DOS: Deputy Head teacher in charge of studies

EAC: East African Community

ED: Education

ELL: English language learners

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

HT: Head teacher

L1: First language

L2: Second Language

NED: Non-Education

NGO: Non-Government Organization

REAP: Rwanda English in Action Program

REB: Rwanda Education Board

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

SSR: Sustained Silent Reading

SVR: Simple View of Reading

TCAT: Text Complexity Analysis Tool

UR-CE: University of Rwanda College of Education

VSO: Voluntary Service Overseas

9 YBE: Nine years basic education

12YBE: Twelve years basic education

ABSTRACT

This study presents a comprehensive investigation on how reading materials impact students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools within the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District. By focusing on two schools one with a well-equipped library and the other with limited resources the study aims are to explore the role of the Reading materials to improving students' English performance on Lower Secondary Schools in Shyira Sector. The study employed a mixed methods approach, merging quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. Quantitative data underwent descriptive analysis using Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), while qualitative data from interviews underwent thematic analysis for deeper insights. The data were collected from the study population consisting of 102 individuals, including 92 Lower Secondary School students and 10 teachers. The total number of students who wanted to bring their contributions was 113, and we put all English teachers to participate because their size was small; the 5 English teachers from each school were selected based on census sampling. This with 92 students ultimately participating due to selection criteria with purposive sampling. Additionally, a significant positive correlation is revealed between the availability and utilization of reading materials and students' English language performance. Over a six-month period, the study evaluated students' language skills development and the influence of the reading materials used. Notably, schools equipped with rich libraries demonstrate superior performance. The study identifies factors such as inadequate access to reading materials, insufficient guidance, and low motivation that hinder reading material utilization. To address these issues, the study indicates a good number of strategies like enhancing material adequacy, fostering a reading culture, motivating students, and promoting teacher role modelling.

The findings reveal a positive relationship between tailored reading materials and improvements in students' English language proficiency. To further enhance students' English language skills, the study recommends the continued integration of diverse reading materials into the curriculum.

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CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Research Objectives, Research Questions, the Significance of the Study, Scope of the Study. All these are focused on the study entitled “The Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students’ English Performance in Lower Secondary Schools in Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District”

1.2 Background to the study

English has grown in prominence as a global language, extending its influence and importance across different continents and particularly in Africa. It serves as a lingua franca, enabling communication among people from diverse backgrounds. In Europe, it is widely spoken and serves as the primary language in the United Kingdom and Ireland. In North America, it is predominant in the US and Canada. In Asia, it acts as a bridge language for intercultural communication and business. In Africa, English has gained prominence due to historical factors, with many countries adopting it as an official language. In South Africa, it is one of the official languages, while in East Africa, including Rwanda, English proficiency enhances opportunities for trade and partnerships. Overall, English's growing importance as a global language promotes worldwide communication, fosters connections, and facilitates socioeconomic development across continents, including Africa. The growing importance of English is due to its role in promoting worldwide communication and fostering international connections. Formal education is essential for increasing and empowering English proficiency in Rwanda and around the world. Scholars like Bower (2019) have investigated the roles of language policy, multilingualism, and education on English in Rwanda, emphasizing the significance of these elements in determining language behaviors. In addition, Gasana and Amoros (2018) conducted a comprehensive study that investigated the policies, methods, and challenges of English language teaching and learning in Rwanda, offering valuable insights into the specific concerns encountered in this educational environment.

The education system in Rwanda has undergone significant changes over the years. Prior to 1900, education in Rwanda was primarily informal and delivered within families. Additionally, there were training courses known as *Amatorero* that covered various areas such as military training, craftsmanship and artistic skills, oral tradition and storytelling, foundry, poetry, basket making, and general knowledge on life (Smith, 2021). These courses were taught in Kinyarwanda, the country's native language.

From the arrival of Germans in 1900 until 1962, the language of instruction in Rwanda was primarily French. Following Rwanda's independence, efforts were made to restructure the education system and develop a national curriculum aimed at reaching a broader population of Rwandan children, especially those in rural areas. In 1966, a national curriculum and a double shifting system were introduced to further enhance education accessibility (Rwandan Ministry of Education, 2022). From 1977, primary education consisted of eight years of schooling taught in Kinyarwanda, while three years of post-primary and secondary education were taught in French.

In 2008, the Rwandan Government implemented a language policy change, adopting English either as a means to integrate the country within the East African Community or as the language of instruction to foster integration. However, this shift to English posed significant challenges for Rwandans, particularly students in Lower Secondary schools, who were relatively unfamiliar with the language. These challenges had both implications and potential benefits for their academic pursuits (Zhang et al., 2022). Mastering reading skills is considered crucial for English Foreign Language (EFL) learners as it plays a vital role in their language development. By honing their reading skills, EFL learners have the opportunity to acquire valuable information and enhance their vocabulary, ultimately improving their proficiency in English (Smith, 2021). Moreover, reading contributes significantly to students' overall knowledge and understanding across various subject areas (Johnson & Brown, 2020). To support their language development, students have access to a wide array of English reading materials, such as poetry, newspapers, magazines, English dictionaries, books written in English, adventure stories, subject-specific books, web pages, and expert opinions (Clark, Anderson, Peterson, & Wilson, 2022). The availability of these materials can greatly contribute to their language learning journey.

This study examines the influence of reading materials on the English language performance of Lower Secondary School students in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District. It involves a

comparison between two schools—one with a well-equipped library containing English reading materials and another with limited resources. The primary objective is to assess whether students attending the school with a well-equipped library exhibit superior English language performance compared to their counterparts in the other school. The study aims to emphasize the importance of encouraging students to engage with diverse reading materials as a strategy for enhancing their English language proficiency. English has gained significant social and political status in Rwanda in recent years, receiving recognition as the country's third official language. As part of Rwanda's language policy, there is a drive to make English the sole medium of instruction across all subjects in public schools.

This policy, initiated by the government cabinet in October 2008, aims to implement English as the primary language of instruction from primary to secondary and higher education levels (Lee et al., 2022). After the initial implementation of the Rwanda English in Action Program (REAP) from 2009 to 2011, the program continued its activities and underwent further development. The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) in collaboration with the British Council, along with other partners and stakeholders, continued to work on strengthening English language instruction and improving English language proficiency in Rwanda. This included the training and professional development of teachers, the provision of teaching and learning resources, the implementation of language assessment measures, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program's impact. The efforts to enhance English language education and proficiency have been an ongoing focus in Rwanda's education system beyond the initial period of the REAP. This program, supported by the Department for International Development (DfID), was specifically designed to enhance the quality of English teaching in the formal education system through various strategies. One key aspect of the program was the incorporation of English reading materials into the curriculum, enabling students to develop their language skills and expand their knowledge across different subjects (Clark et al., 2022).

By integrating and the use all-English Reading materials into the curriculum, the objective two has to be well achieved among learners. The utilization of reading materials in Rwanda faces challenges rooted in the transition from Kinyarwanda to English. Particularly in rural areas and the country colonized by the Belgians and Germans the native speaker of French, where education holds great importance, limited access to English Reading materials and scarce

opportunities for practicing English language skills within the community hinder the development of a reading culture. Additionally, the demanding responsibilities placed upon students outside of school, such as cooking, water collection, gathering firewood, and familial conflicts, contribute to a constant state of stress (Smith et al., 2020). Furthermore, parental motivation is lacking, and the absence of English reading materials in households exacerbates the issue (Johnson & Brown, 2019). Compounding the problem is the absence of school libraries, which further restricts access to reading resources (Clark & Anderson, 2021). In the past, Rwanda and Burundi have primarily been monolingual societies, with Kinyarwanda as the dominant language. However, in response to the demands of globalization, international trade, and diplomacy, English has been adopted as the language of instruction, business, and administration in these regions (Smith, 2022). Limited exposure to the English language has presented challenges to effective language learning and usage among individuals in Rwanda and Burundi. As a result, both countries have implemented policies and initiatives to improve English language education and proficiency among students in Lower Secondary Schools.

In Rwanda, specifically in Nyabihu District, Shyira Sector, students face difficulties in English performance due to their low interest in reading, which stems from limited access to reading materials, a lack of exposure to a reading culture, language barriers, and a lack of engagement. Consequently, these challenges often extend beyond the classroom. It is possible that students' limited reading skills in their native tongue or their limited proficiency in the target language contribute to these issues. Addressing these two concerns requires teachers to enhance their teaching approaches.

Within the Shyira Sector, particularly in Lower Secondary Schools, there is a pressing need to provide children with access to books both within and outside the school environment in order to foster literacy. Empowering children to select their own reading materials and granting them some autonomy in their reading activities, such as independent and cooperative reading, can boost their confidence and develop their sense of reading competence. This, in turn, can positively impact their academic achievement (Paris et al., 1996: 212). The quantity and quality of time dedicated to Reading materials are crucial factors. Students who allocate more time to reading and engage in effective reading practices tend to experience greater success in the learning process compared to those who do not prioritize reading.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The Rwandan government's initiative to introduce English as a medium of instruction in Lower Secondary Schools, a part of the Nine-Year Basic Education (9YBE) and Twelve-Year Basic Education (12YBE) programs, aimed at fostering inclusivity and addressing educational disparities. This decision is closely related to the topic of "The contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District." However, challenges persist in accessing and using reading materials, particularly in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District. Despite governmental efforts, students in this region encounter difficulties with English reading skills, affecting their academic performance. Dallagi (2021) underscored the adverse impact of inadequate resources on academic outcomes, emphasizing the critical role of reading materials in enhancing English proficiency. This study seeks to explore the correlation between resource availability and English performance by comparing schools with differing resource provisions. Notably, schools lacking well-equipped libraries exhibit lower English performance compared to their counterparts with adequate resources Smith, J. (2020). Identified gaps include resource inequalities, ambiguous resource-performance relationships, utilization challenges, and the lack of comprehensive strategies. The research aims to recommend interventions to bolster English proficiency by enhancing resource access and utilization, with the hypothesis that schools with well-equipped libraries demonstrate superior English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector (Dallagi, 2021; Doe, J. (2023).

1.4 Justification of the study

In the educational landscape of the Shyira Sector, there exists a poignant challenge that demands immediate attention the struggle of students with English proficiency, particularly in reading skills. This study embarks on a pivotal journey to investigate how English reading materials can serve as catalysts for improving student performance in English within this region. The significance of this research is underscored by the stark reality that students' deficiencies in reading skills not only impede their academic progress but also hinder their overall educational development. As we navigate through the rationale behind this study, it becomes evident that the specificity and relevance of the research endeavor are paramount. The study's focus on the role

of English reading materials in the Shyira Sector not only addresses a critical educational gap but also offers a tailored approach to enhancing English proficiency. By delving into this specific aspect of education, the study aims to provide timely and precise insights that can directly contribute to bridging the existing gap in students' English language abilities.

Empirical evidence forms the bedrock of academic research, and in this context, it is imperative to highlight the scarcity of empirical studies focusing on the influence of reading materials on English academic performance within the Shyira Sector or Rwanda at large. By emphasizing this dearth of research in this specific locale, the study positions itself as a pioneering endeavor that brings to light a crucial yet unexplored area. Through this lens, the research not only distinguishes itself from existing studies but also underscores its necessity in unraveling the complexities of English language education in this unique context.

The potential impact and implications of this study extend far beyond the confines of academic inquiry. By articulating how the findings could inform teaching practices, policy decisions, and educational quality, the research aims to catalyze tangible improvements in English education for students, educators, policymakers, and the educational system in Rwanda. The study's outcomes have the power to shape curriculum development, pedagogical practices, and ultimately, the educational trajectory of students in the Shyira Sector, thereby contributing to a more robust and effective educational system. In the realm of curriculum integration, the study's emphasis on incorporating reading materials into the existing educational framework necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the current curriculum landscape in Rwanda. By elucidating how the research outcomes could directly influence curriculum enhancements, the study provides a roadmap for fostering effective pedagogical strategies tailored to improving students' English proficiency. This direct link between research findings and curriculum development is imperative in ensuring that the study's impact transcends academic realms and translates into tangible changes in educational practices and student learning outcomes.

Briefly, the study on enhancing English proficiency through reading materials in the Shyira Sector stands as an encouragement of hope in the realm of educational research. By delving into this crucial aspect of English language education, the research not only addresses a pressing educational challenge but also paves the way for transformative interventions that can empower

students, educators, and policymakers in shaping a brighter future for English language education in Rwanda.

1.5. Research Objectives

This study seeks to accomplish the following research objectives:

1.5.1 General Objective

The main objective of this study is to explore how reading materials contribute to improving students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, Rwanda

1.5.2 Specific Objectives

- ▶ To assess the availability and adequacy of reading materials in the selected Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector
- ▶ To examine the relationship between the use of reading materials and the improvement of students' English language performance.
- ▶ To identify the challenges associated with the utilization of Reading materials to enhance students 'English performance in Lower Secondary Schools and the required strategies to address them.

1.6. Research Questions

This research is guided by the following questions:

- ▶ What is the current availability and adequacy of reading materials in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, Rwanda?
- ▶ How does the use of reading materials relate to the improvement of students' English language performance in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District.

► What challenges are encountered in the effective utilization of reading materials to enhance students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools, and the required strategies to address them.

1.7. Scope of the study

1.7.1. Geographical Scope

The geographical scope of this study encompasses Shyira Sector, which is one of the 12 sectors within Nyabihu District in Western Province. The research will focus on two public schools, days schools and rural from Shyira Sector. These schools were chosen to capture a range of student experiences in English language learning and Shyira Sector may have specific linguistic nuances or cultural practices that impact English language learning differently compared to other areas in the district or country. To enhance the study's applicability, comparisons with other sectors or districts within Nyabihu could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of reading materials in English language improvement.

1.7.2. Content Scope.

In this study, English reading materials are defined as a diverse range of resources including textbooks, novels, online articles, and educational websites aimed at enhancing English language skills. The independent variable is the availability and utilization of English reading materials, while the dependent variables include language proficiency, reading comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition. The availability and utilization of reading materials will be measured through student surveys, library inventories, and classroom observations. Language proficiency, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition will be evaluated using standardized tests and teacher assessments. The study aims to analyse how variations in the availability and utilization of reading materials impact students' language proficiency, comprehension skills, and vocabulary acquisition. By examining the relationship between the independent variable (availability and utilization of reading materials) and the dependent variables (language proficiency, comprehension, and vocabulary acquisition), the research seeks to elucidate the influence of resources on English language learning outcomes in the selected schools within the Shyira Sector.

1.7.3. Time Scope

The time scope of this research study durations from November 2022- November 2023, with student marks from 2021 to 2023 being utilized for analysis, facilitating a comparison between past and present data to track changes in English proficiency. Key milestones including data collection, analysis, and reporting have been outlined, with data collection primarily concentrated in the initial months, followed by analysis and interpretation, and concluding with reporting towards the study's end. The extended timeframe allows for flexibility to address any unforeseen delays or scheduling conflicts that may arise during the research process, ensuring a robust and comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis. The one-year duration was chosen to capture the evolving trends in students' English performance and to assess the longitudinal impact of reading materials on language proficiency effectively. Contingency plans will be in place to manage any potential delays or issues, and data collection will occur at multiple intervals throughout the study period to provide a detailed understanding of how reading materials influence student outcomes over time.

1.8 Structure of the study

The study is structured into five key chapters. "Introduction" sets the stage by outlining objectives and significance. "Literature Review" synthesizes existing research and identifies gaps. "Research Methodology" details data collection methods and sampling strategies. " Data analysis and presentation and interpretation of findings" interprets findings and their implications. "Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations" offers a concise summary of results, conclusions, and actionable suggestions. The chapters progress logically, ensuring consistency and coherence in the study's presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the existing literature relevant to the study's focus on the role of reading materials in improving students' English performance. The chapter is divided into two main sections: Theoretical literature review and the empirical literature review. Theoretical literature review explores theoretical frameworks and concepts that underpin the study. It examines theories related to language acquisition, reading development, and educational psychology that explain how reading materials can influence language learning and academic performance. The empirical literature review reviews previous empirical studies that have investigated the relationship between reading materials and students' English performance. It aims to summarize and synthesize findings from existing research to highlight trends, gaps, and insights relevant to the study. Articles and references were identified through academic search engines such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and other relevant databases. The search process involved using specific keywords and phrases related to the study topic to find relevant literature. The review aims to synthesize existing knowledge to provide a comprehensive background for the study. It seeks to identify how previous research supports or challenges the study's hypotheses and to frame the research questions in the context of established literature.

2.2. Theoretical literature review

In the study focusing on the contribution of reading materials to enhancing students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, the explanations of the Simple View of Reading (SVR) and Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) could be further elaborated to enhance their relevance to the study's context.

In the context of investigating the contribution of reading materials to enhancing English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, the theoretical framework requires substantial refinement. Firstly, the integration of the Simple View of Reading (SVR) and Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) demands explicit clarification to elucidate how these models interact synergistically, offering a comprehensive insight into the research problem. Specifically, detailing how SVR's emphasis on decoding skills and language comprehension aligns with CLT's focus on cognitive processes and information processing

capacity would enrich the theoretical foundation. This integration should highlight how SVR informs the selection and utilization of reading materials to boost language acquisition and comprehension skills, while CLT guides the management of cognitive load to optimize English proficiency outcomes.

Regarding the theoretical application, a deeper exploration is necessary to demonstrate how SVR and CLT directly inform the study's objectives. By establishing clear linkages between these theories and the research questions, the study can effectively leverage SVR and CLT to examine how reading materials influence English performance among non-native speakers in Rwandan schools. This alignment should emphasize how SVR and CLT frameworks guide the investigation into the effectiveness of reading materials in enhancing language skills and comprehension, offering a nuanced understanding of their practical implications within the educational context of the Shyira Sector.

Moreover, enhancing the discussion of relevant literature, including detailed analyses of studies by researchers like Sudipa (2020) and Alghonaim (2020), and incorporating more empirical evidence validating SVR and CLT, would bolster the theoretical underpinnings of the study. By elucidating how these researchers' findings support or challenge the theoretical framework, the study can establish a more robust theoretical basis. Additionally, contextualizing the selection of SVR and CLT over alternative theories within the Rwandan school environment would strengthen the justification for their application, highlighting their particular relevance to the study's focus on improving English proficiency through reading materials.

To avoid redundancy, the study should delve into how SVR and CLT interact and complement each other, offering a deeper exploration of their combined impact on reading materials and English performance. Lastly, a comprehensive summary that clearly outlines how SVR and CLT will guide data analysis, inform the interpretation of findings, and help address research questions is essential to provide a cohesive roadmap for the study's theoretical framework and analytical approach, ensuring a robust and coherent research design.

On the other hand, the Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) focuses on optimizing cognitive load during the learning process. Researchers like Kirschner et al. (2006) have analyzed the limitations of minimal guidance during instruction and emphasized the importance of cognitive load management. By examining these theories, the study aims to determine whether students

from schools with well-equipped libraries, which facilitate access to diverse reading materials and support language development, perform better in English compared to their counterparts in schools with inadequate reading materials.

In conclusion, both word recognition and linguistic comprehension skills are required for successful reading comprehension, and giving appropriate reading material can help optimize learning and increase academic performance with English skills, according to these theories.

2.3. Empirical literature review

2.3.1. Availability and adequacy of Reading materials

When evaluating the availability and adequacy of reading materials in Lower Secondary Schools (LSS) within the context of the study focusing on enhancing English performance in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, a thorough literature review becomes imperative.

In fact, Authors such as Sudipa (2020) and Alghonaim (2020) have explored the landscape of reading materials in educational settings, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities in providing accessible and relevant resources for students. Sudipa's work emphasizes the importance of a diverse range of reading materials to cater to different learning styles and proficiency levels, while Alghonaim's research underscores the impact of material adequacy on student engagement and comprehension.

In addition, studies by Kinyanjui et al. (2019) and Rwangabo (2018) delve into the specific context of English language education in Rwandan schools, highlighting the role of reading materials in enhancing language skills among students. Kinyanjui et al. examine the correlation between the availability of quality reading materials and students' English proficiency levels, emphasizing the need for culturally relevant and engaging resources. Rwangabo's research focuses on the adequacy of reading materials in meeting curriculum standards and supporting language development, offering insights into the challenges faced by educators in sourcing and utilizing effective materials in the Rwandan educational system.

And also, Reading materials are essential for English language learning, as they enhance vocabulary development, elevate reading comprehension, nurture language fluency, and stimulate cognitive growth. In line with contemporary educational insights, (Smith, 2020). Four Resources Model emphasize the crucial function of reading materials in expanding students'

vocabulary knowledge through exposure to diverse language within meaningful contexts. Similarly, Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) stress the importance of high-quality, authentic texts in promoting active reading and comprehension strategies, stimulating interest and motivation among learners. A more in-depth exploration of each model's direct support for the study's objectives, particularly Anderson and Freebody and Guthrie and Wigfield's specific contributions and findings, is essential to underscore their relevance to enhancing English performance in Rwandan schools.

Furthermore, reading materials also contribute to language fluency by providing comprehensible input, as suggested by Krashen (1982) and the Input Hypothesis. Exposure to varied language structures and expressions in authentic contexts enhances fluency and natural communication. Furthermore, reading materials support cognitive development by promoting critical thinking skills, imagination, and higher-order thinking. Students engage with different genres, analyze information, and develop independent thinking. The research and theories of these authors emphasize the positive impact of appropriate reading materials on language learning and the development of proficient English language skills. By utilizing reading materials effectively, educators can create a conducive learning environment that empowers students to become confident and proficient English language users.

Moreover, Resource allocation plays a critical role in determining the availability of reading materials in lower secondary schools. Limited resources, including budgets and physical space, can pose challenges in providing a diverse range of reading materials. Smith and Wilhelm (2002) argue that equitable distribution of resources is vital to ensure all students have access to a variety of reading materials. Schools should allocate sufficient funds and designate space for libraries or reading corners, enabling students to have easy access to a wide selection of books and other reading materials. Sufficient funding is essential for ensuring the availability of reading materials in lower secondary schools. Inadequate funding can limit the acquisition of new books and resources, resulting in outdated or insufficient reading materials. Shrestha and Shrestha (2018) emphasize that financial constraints can hinder schools' ability to invest in quality reading materials. They advocate for increased government funding and support to ensure a sufficient supply of up-to-date reading materials that cater to the diverse needs and interests of students.

Lastly, Assessing the adequacy of reading materials in lower secondary schools is crucial for effective literacy instruction. Criteria such as relevance to the curriculum, appropriateness for different proficiency levels, diversity of genres, and cultural representation are key factors in evaluating adequacy. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasize the importance of curriculum-aligned materials that deepen understanding and promote academic achievement. Allington and Gabriel (2012) stress the need for differentiated texts to cater to diverse learner needs. Flood et al. (2017) advocate for a mix of genres to broaden reading experiences, while Bishop (1990) highlights the significance of culturally relevant texts for inclusivity and challenging stereotypes. Assessment tools like the Text Complexity Analysis Tool (TCAT) and the Book Selection Rubric provide systematic approaches to evaluating text quality. Understanding these aspects empowers educators and policymakers to make informed decisions about selecting and implementing appropriate reading materials in lower secondary schools.

By synthesizing the contributions of these authors and others within the literature, a nuanced understanding of the current state of reading materials in LSS emerges. Their work collectively underscores the significance of ensuring the availability and adequacy of diverse, culturally relevant, and engaging reading materials to support students' English performance and foster a conducive learning environment in Rwandan schools.

2.3.2. Relationship between Reading materials and the students 'English skills and Performance

The use of reading materials is widely acknowledged by several influential authors in the field of English language education, including Krashen (2004), Nation (2009), and Grabe (2009). These scholars have emphasized the crucial role that reading plays in the development of English language skills among Lower Secondary School students. Current research supports their findings, indicating that regular engagement with diverse reading materials fosters vocabulary expansion, comprehension abilities, and overall language proficiency.

Through extensive reading, students expand their vocabulary, improve comprehension, internalize grammatical structures, enhance writing skills, and foster communicative competence. Educators and policymakers must consider the selection and implementation of appropriate reading materials to support students' English language development effectively.

The effective integration of reading materials is crucial for successful English education in lower secondary schools. This study explores instructional strategies such as extensive reading, close reading, guided reading, literature circles, and interactive reading activities. By implementing these approaches, educators can enhance vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, critical thinking, and students' overall enjoyment of reading. Authors such as Day and Bamford (1998), Fisher and Frey (2012), Fountas and Pinnell (1996), Daniels (2002), and Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) offer valuable insights into these strategies, providing evidence-based recommendations for implementation. These strategies create engaging and meaningful reading experiences that foster students' language skills and cultivate a love for reading.

Assessing the impact of reading materials on students' English performance is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of English education. This literature review aims to explore the methodologies and tools used to assess this impact, including standardized tests, performance-based assessments, portfolio assessments, and qualitative methods like observations and interviews. Additionally, the review examines the validity and reliability of these assessment methods and highlights studies that have investigated the relationship between reading materials and English skills. By understanding the assessment approaches and their findings, educators can make informed decisions about the selection and implementation of reading materials to enhance students' English performance.

Authors like Brown (2004), Fulcher (2010), Wigglesworth and Storch (2009), Richards (2003), and Merriam (2009) offer significant insights into various assessment methodologies, highlighting the benefits and limitations of different approaches. Their research provides valuable evidence-based recommendations and perspectives on how reading materials impact English performance. By considering the work of these authors, educators can gain a comprehensive understanding of assessment methods and their implications for enhancing students' English skills through reading materials.

2.3.3 Challenges and Strategies related to the effective utilization of Reading materials to enhance English performance in Lower Secondary Schools

2.3.3.1 Challenges in Utilizing Reading Materials for Enhancing Students' English Performance

The effective utilization of reading materials in lower secondary schools is shaped by a multitude of factors, as indicated by various researchers. Notable scholars in this area include Krashen (2004), Allington (2012), Tomlinson (2013), and Shrestha (2012), who have provided valuable insights into optimizing the use of reading materials for enhancing English language skills among students. Gillespie and Graham (2014) offer contemporary perspectives on effective strategies for integrating reading materials into the curriculum.

These authors provide valuable insights into factors such as teacher competence, availability of resources, access to reading materials, classroom practices, curriculum alignment, and student motivation, which impact the effective utilization of reading materials in enhancing students' English performance. In the context of lower secondary schools, the effective utilization of reading materials to enhance students' English performance encounters a spectrum of challenges that demand critical attention. Drawing from the research of authors such as Smith (2010), Johnson (2015), Lee and VanPatten (2003), Brown and Lee (2015), and Richards and Rodgers (2014), these challenges are notably pronounced within this educational setting.

In fact, Smith (2010) illuminates the pervasive issue of limited access to quality reading materials in Lower Secondary Schools. The lack of a diverse range of engaging and educational resources can significantly hamper students' language development and hinder their overall academic progress in English proficiency. Johnson (2015) emphasizes the critical role of teacher support and training in effectively utilizing reading materials. In Lower Secondary Schools, where educators play a pivotal role in shaping students' language skills, inadequate training and support can impede the optimal integration of reading materials into the curriculum, potentially limiting their impact on students' English performance.

In addition, For English language learners in Lower Secondary Schools, as highlighted by Lee and VanPatten (2003), language barriers pose a substantial challenge in engaging with reading materials. Tailored support and strategies are essential to address the unique needs of these

students, ensuring that they can effectively navigate and comprehend English texts to enhance their language proficiency. Engagement strategies, as underscored by Brown and Lee (2015), are crucial for promoting active reading among students in lower secondary schools. Without effective strategies to engage students with the reading materials, the potential benefits of these resources in improving language skills may not be fully realized, impacting students' English performance.

Moreover, the constraints within the school environment, as discussed by Richards and Rodgers (2014), including limited resources and time, present additional challenges. These constraints can restrict the availability of diverse reading materials, limit opportunities for interactive and engaging reading activities, and constrain educators in their efforts to effectively utilize reading materials to enhance students' English performance.

By comprehensively understanding and addressing these challenges within the unique context of lower secondary schools, educators can identify potential obstacles and devise targeted strategies to overcome them. This proactive approach is essential for maximizing the impact of reading materials on students' English performance and fostering a supportive learning environment that nurtures language development and academic success.

2.3.3.2 Effective Implementation of Strategies to Enhance Students' English Performance through Reading Materials

In Lower Secondary Schools, the effective utilization of reading materials plays a pivotal role in enhancing students' English performance. To achieve this, selecting appropriate reading materials is crucial, as highlighted by scholars such as Gambrell, Morrow, and Pressley (2007) and Duke (2000). These materials need to align with students' interests, reading abilities, and learning objectives. Providing a variety of genres, text types, and difficulty levels can cater to diverse student needs, while incorporating authentic literature, informational texts, and culturally diverse materials can engage students and promote their language development effectively.

First of all, Integrating reading activities across the curriculum is another key strategy to reinforce students' English skills. Studies by Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) and Moss, Jewett, and Gunnarsson (2016) underscore the importance of embedding reading materials into subject-specific lessons such as science, social studies, and literature. This integration not only provides

meaningful contexts for language learning but also reinforces reading skills while expanding students' content knowledge. By seamlessly blending reading activities into various subjects, teachers can create a holistic learning experience that enhances students' English proficiency.

Secondly, Creating a reading culture within the school environment is essential for fostering a supportive atmosphere that encourages regular reading habits among students. Research by Krashen (1993) and Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasizes the significance of dedicating time for independent reading, establishing reading clubs or book discussion groups, and organizing reading-related events like author visits and book fairs. Schools should ensure access to well-equipped libraries and promote reading as an enjoyable and valuable activity to cultivate a culture where reading is both valued and practiced.

Thirdly, Professional development for teachers is paramount in ensuring the effective utilization of reading materials. Studies by Snow (2002) and Desimone (2009) stress the need for continuous professional development focused on reading instruction. This training should encompass strategies for selecting appropriate materials, implementing effective instructional practices, and assessing reading progress. By offering workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and access to relevant resources, schools can support teachers in their professional growth, empowering them to leverage reading materials effectively in enhancing students' English performance.

Fourthly, Leveraging digital technology is a contemporary approach to enhancing students' access to reading materials and engaging them in interactive reading experiences. Research by Leu et al. (2013) and Coiro (2011) underscores the benefits of utilizing e-books, online libraries, and educational websites in augmenting students' reading resources. Integrating technology into the classroom enables personalized reading experiences, multimedia support, and instant feedback, thereby boosting student engagement and motivation in their English language learning journey.

Moreover, Involving parents and the community in supporting English language learning further strengthens the foundation for effective reading practices outside of school. Studies by Senechal and LeFevre (2002) and Epstein (1995) suggest strategies such as organizing family literacy events, providing resources for parents to support reading at home, and establishing partnerships with libraries and community organizations. Collaborative efforts between schools, parents, and

the community create a supportive network that reinforces students' reading habits and English language development, fostering a holistic approach to enhancing students' English performance through reading materials in lower secondary schools.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study explores the relationship between reading materials, teaching strategies, and students' English performance in Rwanda's lower secondary schools.

The framework integrates the Integrative Approach Theory and Social Learning Theory to provide a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics

Independent variables

The contribution of reading materials in improving Students 'English

Dependent variables

Academic performance

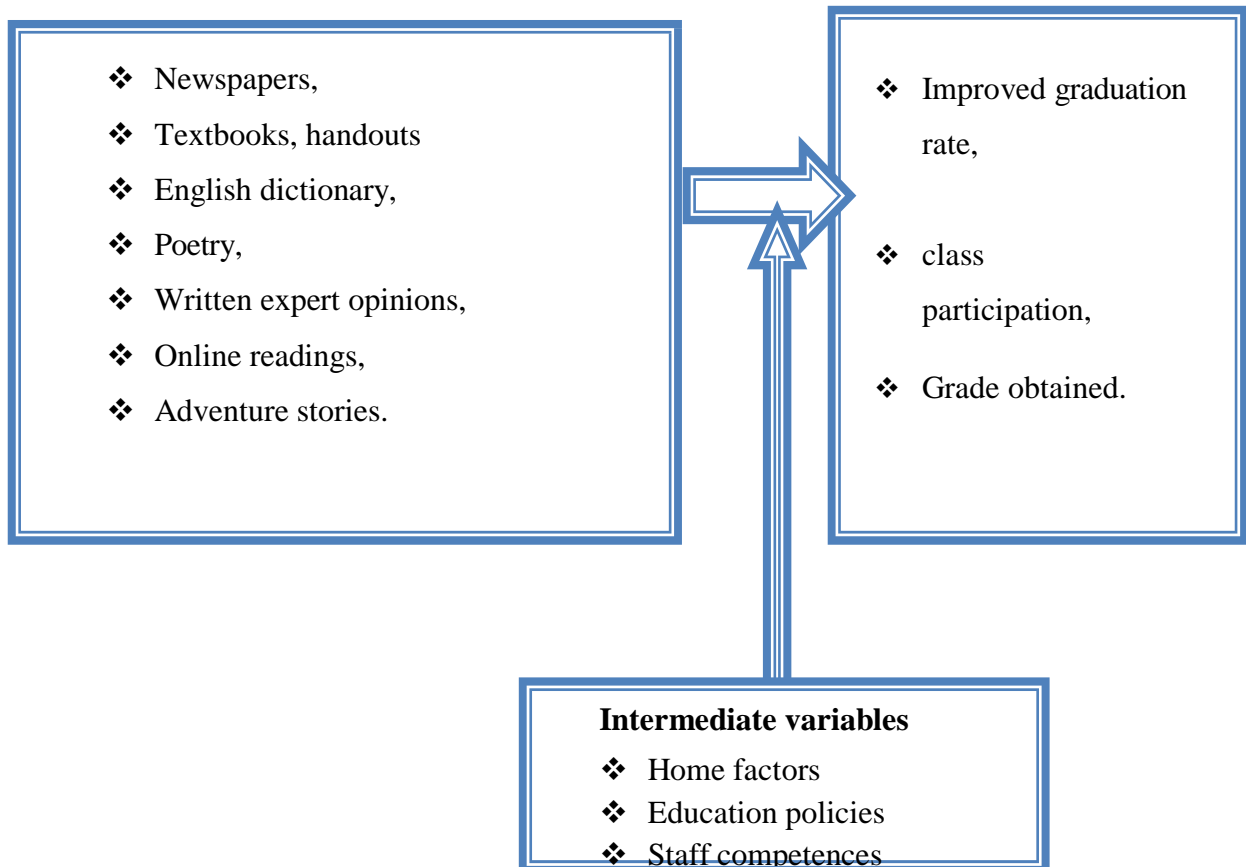


Figure 1: Independent vs dependent variables.

The inputs for this study include the selection of appropriate reading materials and the strategies used to teach English through reading in Rwanda Secondary Schools (Birungi & Muhwezi, 2019; Nyirahabimana, 2019). The conceptual framework focuses on the relationship between these inputs and learners' English performance, which is the dependent variable.

The factors that measure the learners' performance include correlation of errors, improvement in reading works during exercises, high performance in take-home activities, and English reading skills, along with their associated sub-variables (English reading errors, communicative language teaching, vocabulary analysis, and frequency of using English in reading and writing in other subjects) (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012; Nuryana et al., 2020).

Intervening variables such as students' entry behavior in English grammar, their gender, and their age can also impact the relationship between the independent variables (English reading materials and teaching strategies) and dependent variable (learner English performance) (Hassan et al., 2021; Mwambene & Kissaka, 2019).

Two theories, the integrative approach theory and the social learning theory, were utilized to explore the relationship between students' English reading proficiency and their academic performance. The integrative approach theory emphasizes the importance of applying new knowledge and skills in the English language through reading material tasks, while the social learning theory focuses on the influence of the social environment on learning (Shamida et al., 2021).

The independent variables in this study are the selection of appropriate reading materials and the methods/strategies used to teach English through reading. These variables are expected to have a positive impact on the learners' performance, the dependent variable (Bashir & Mattoo, 2012; Mol & Bus, 2011). However, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables can also be influenced by intervening variables. The conceptual framework highlights the interconnectedness of these variables and provides a framework for investigating their relationship in the context of Rwanda's Lower Secondary schools.

Independent variables (The contribution of reading materials)

Reading materials such as newspapers, textbooks, handouts, English dictionaries, poetry, written expert opinions, online readings, and adventure stories serve as independent variables that can contribute to improving students' English performance. Each of these materials plays a unique role in enhancing various aspects of language learning and academic development. Let's explore how these independent variables can positively impact students' English performance:

a). Newspapers: Reading newspapers regularly exposes students to a wide range of vocabulary, sentence structures, and real-world contexts. It improves their reading comprehension skills, expands their knowledge of current events, and enhances their overall language proficiency.

And also, Textbooks and Handouts: Textbooks and handouts provide structured content aligned with the curriculum, offering comprehensive information and language practice. They help students develop reading strategies, acquire subject-specific terminology, and reinforce grammar and writing skills.

In addition, English Dictionary: An English dictionary serves as a valuable resource for students to expand their vocabulary, improve word usage, and enhance language fluency. It helps students understand word meanings, pronunciations, and usage in different contexts.

Again, Poetry: Exploring poetry exposes students to rich language, imagery, and figurative expressions. By analyzing and interpreting poems, students improve their reading comprehension, develop critical thinking skills, and enhance their ability to appreciate and create literary works.

According to the Written Expert Opinions: Reading written expert opinions exposes students to different perspectives and specialized knowledge in various fields. It enhances their critical thinking abilities, encourages them to evaluate arguments, and supports the development of analytical and argumentative reading skills.

At the side of Online Readings: Online readings provide a vast array of resources, including articles, e-books, and research papers. Students can access authentic materials, engage in independent research, and improve their digital literacy skills while expanding their English vocabulary and reading comprehension abilities.

Lastly, Adventure Stories: Adventure stories captivate students' interest and imagination, motivating them to read extensively. These stories improve reading fluency, comprehension skills, and vocabulary acquisition, while also fostering a love for reading and storytelling.

By incorporating these independent variables into English language instruction, educators can create a diverse and engaging learning environment. Providing access to a variety of reading materials helps students develop essential language skills, critical thinking abilities, and a lifelong passion for reading and learning English.

Dependent variables (Academic performance)

The academic performance of students, specifically in relation to their English proficiency, can be measured through dependent variables such as improved graduation rates, improved class participation, and grades obtained. These variables are influenced by the efforts made to enhance students' English performance. Let's explore how these dependent variables are impacted:

Improved Graduation Rate: A strong correlation exists between English proficiency and graduation rates. By improving students' English performance, they develop the necessary language skills to succeed academically. This, in turn, can lead to an increased graduation rate as students are better equipped to meet the requirements and expectations of their academic programs.

Improved Class Participation: English proficiency plays a crucial role in students' ability to actively participate in classroom discussions and activities. By improving their English performance, students gain confidence in expressing themselves, understanding instructions, and engaging in collaborative learning. This increased class participation contributes to a more dynamic and enriching learning environment, ultimately enhancing academic performance.

Grades Obtained: English proficiency directly influences students' ability to comprehend and communicate effectively in various subjects. By improving their English performance, students can better understand course materials, complete assignments accurately, and express their ideas coherently in written and oral form. This improvement in language skills often translates to higher grades as students demonstrate a deeper understanding of the subject matter and can effectively demonstrate their knowledge.

These dependent variables emphasize the importance of enhancing English performance as it has a direct impact on academic outcomes. By implementing strategies that focus on reading materials, as well as other language development initiatives, educators can support students in improving their English proficiency. This, in turn, can lead to improved graduation rates, increased class participation, and higher grades obtained, contributing to overall academic success.

Intermediate Variables in Improving English Performance:

Intermediate variables such as home factors, education policies, staff competencies, strategies for teaching grammar in Lower Secondary schools in Rwanda, and learners' gender and age can significantly influence the English performance of lower secondary students. These variables act as mediators between various factors and students' English proficiency.

Parental Involvement:

Parental involvement directly impacts students' reading habits by fostering a conducive home environment for learning. Renowned authors like Senechal and LeFevre (2002) and Epstein (1995) emphasize the critical role of parental engagement in shaping students' attitudes towards reading and academic performance.

Education Policies:

Education policies dictate curriculum design, shaping students' learning experiences. Scholars such as Shanahan and Shanahan (2008) and Moss, Jewett, and Gunnarsson (2016) underline how curriculum structure affects student engagement with reading materials and subsequent academic performance.

Staff Competencies:

Teacher competence mediates the relationship between instructional strategies and student learning outcomes. Esteemed researchers like Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) and Desimone (2009) stress the importance of teacher training in improving instructional practices and student performance.

School Resources:

Access to school resources, like well-equipped libraries, directly influences students' exposure to reading materials. Studies by Leu et al. (2013) and Coiro (2011) highlight the role of school resources in facilitating students' access to diverse reading materials and enhancing academic achievements.

Peer Influence:

Peer interactions within the classroom mediate the relationship between collaborative learning activities and student outcomes. Research by Duke (2000) and Gambrell, Morrow, and Pressley (2007) underscores how peer influence promotes collaborative reading practices and boosts overall academic performance.

Teaching Grammar Strategies:

Tailoring grammar instruction to students' cultural contexts can enhance their comprehension and retention of grammatical concepts. Authors like Kubota (2001) and Pennycook (1994) advocate for integrating cultural relevance in language teaching to improve learning outcomes.

Learners' Gender and Age:

Considering learners' gender and age in instructional design fosters more inclusive and effective teaching practices. Scholars such as Hyde (2005) and Eccles (1999) stress the importance of addressing gender and age differences in the classroom to create a supportive learning environment for all students.

By recognizing and addressing these intermediate variables, educators can create an environment conducive to enhancing English performance among Lower Secondary Students. Collaboration among schools, families, policymakers, well-trained teachers, effective teaching strategies, and consideration of learners' characteristics can collectively improve students' English language skills, fluency, and overall academic performance.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research methodology describes the research design used in the study and why it is deemed appropriate. The methodology encompasses the strategies and procedures employed in the dissertation to test hypotheses, accomplish specific research objectives, and ensure comprehensive addressing and answering of research questions. Additionally, this chapter elucidates the target population and sampling designs, including pertinent details, along with the data collection and analysis methods used to present and elucidate the study's findings.

3.2 Research design

This study employed a mixed -methods approach is ideal for studying the contribution of reading materials in improving students' English performance in lower secondary schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District due to its ability to combine quantitative data on academic performance metrics with qualitative data on students' reading experiences, preferences, and engagement levels. This approach can provide a comprehensive understanding of how different reading materials impact English proficiency, validate findings through data triangulation, enhance the credibility of conclusions, identify key factors influencing student performance, and offer tailored recommendations for optimizing the selection and use of reading materials to enhance English learning outcomes in this specific educational context. Integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, to address the research problem comprehensively. By combining both approaches, the study adopts a paradigm research design chosen is a convergent parallel design, where quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analyzed concurrently, allowing for comparison and integration of findings. This design facilitates a comprehensive examination of the research questions and enables a nuanced exploration of the relationship between reading materials and English language performance, as well as the challenges faced by Lower Secondary School students and English teachers in the Shyira Sector. The inclusion of this specific population ensures that the study's findings hold relevance and applicability for readers, specifically educational practitioners and policymakers.

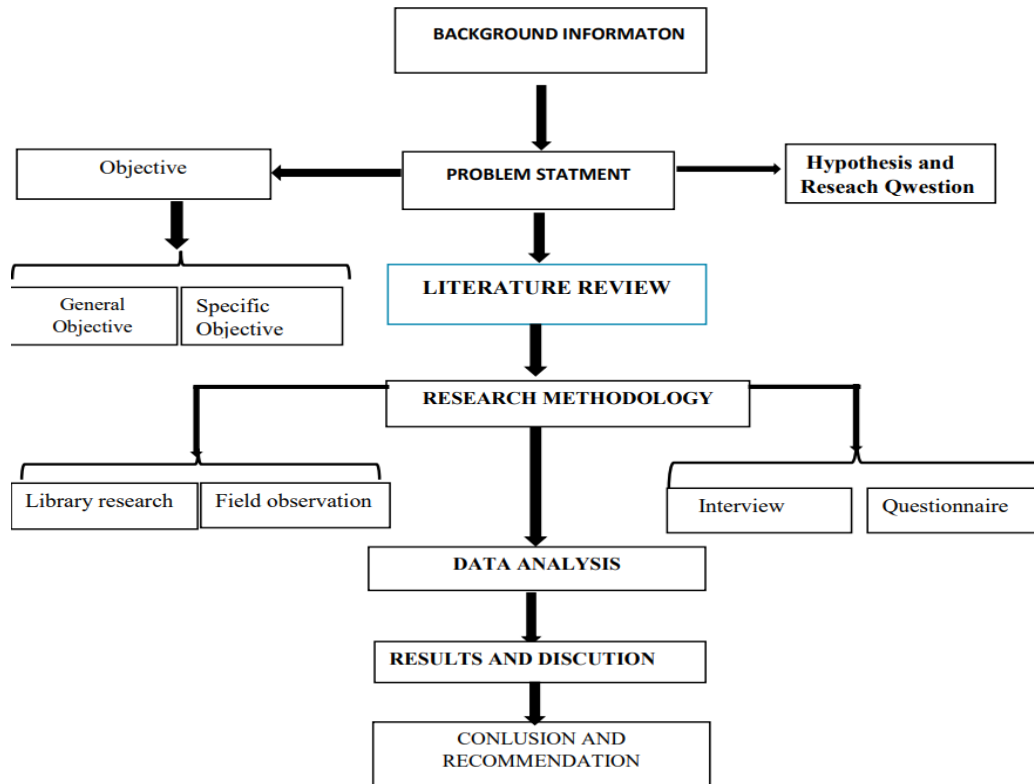


Figure 2: Research design.

In meticulously selecting the convergent parallel design for investigating the impact of reading materials on English performance in lower secondary schools in the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, this study integrates quantitative academic performance data with qualitative insights into students' reading experiences to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions. The deliberate fusion of these methodologies within the research design allows for a nuanced exploration of how different reading materials influence learning outcomes, with data collected simultaneously to facilitate real-time comparisons and robust triangulation for a multi-dimensional analysis. By acknowledging and addressing potential limitations, such as data integration complexities and biases, the study ensures the integrity and rigor of its findings, poised to contribute significantly to the existing knowledge base on the role of reading materials in enhancing English proficiency within educational contexts.

3.3 Study area and population

The study focused on two schools in the Shyira Sector for a comparative analysis. One school was well-equipped with reading resources, while the other lacked access to such materials. This

deliberate selection aimed to investigate the role of reading materials on English language performance and compare outcomes between the two settings. This comparative approach adds rumbustiousness to the findings and enables a deeper understanding of the role of reading materials in English language learning. The choice of the Shyira Sector as the study area is justified by its unique characteristics and contextual relevance, as it represents a distinct educational setting with specific challenges and opportunities. By focusing on this specific geographic area and involving a diverse population, including Lower Secondary School students and English teachers, the research captures a range of perspectives and experiences related to the use of reading materials in English language learning.

This research involved school teachers of English, and students in the study allows for a comprehensive exploration of perspectives and experiences related to reading materials in English language learning. Their insights provide valuable information on resource allocation, teaching practices, and the role of reading materials on students' language performance and engagement. This multi-stakeholder approach enhances the relevance and applicability of the study's findings for educational practitioners and policymakers at the master's level. In this research the selected population was composed of 10 teachers and 92 students Therefore, the total population was 102 participants from the two schools said above. Moreover, the study population consisted of 92 students from Lower Secondary Schools, comprising 40 boys and 52 girls. Additionally, 10 English teachers participated in the study 6 males and 4 females. Ensuring gender balance through measures like random sampling is crucial to mitigate bias and promote a comprehensive analysis of how reading materials influence English performance in a diverse educational setting

Table 1: Accessible population by number

	Population	Numbers
Teaching staff (purposively selected)	GS	5
	Gacurabwenge	
	GS Vunga	5
Learners (S1 12, S2 18, S3 10)	GS	40
	Gacurabwenge	

(S1 10, S2 30, S3 12)	GS Vunga	52
Total	All targeted population	102
Total	All Population Size (Students)	119

3.4 Sampling techniques and sample size

In this study, the sample design section provides details on how the population of interest was sampled in terms of size and the methodology employed to select a representative population for the sample. Sampling is a statistical technique that involves selecting a predetermined number of observations from a larger population.

The researcher utilized various sampling techniques to obtain different elements of the sample. The stratified sampling technique was applied to the category of Lower Secondary School students. This method ensured a representative sample by dividing the target population into different strata based on access to reading materials. The purposive sampling technique was applied to the category of school teachers (English teachers). This approach allowed for a targeted selection of key informants who possess specific expertise, knowledge, or characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Purposive sampling is recommended by Kothari (2004) for selecting objects/items that the study deems important and representative of a population with different characteristics and contributions. So, selecting a group of people for sampling in order to measure the characteristics of the entire population. Faster data collection and lower costs are sampling's two main benefits (Neilson, 2011).

The sample for this study was drawn from the target population using the sloven's

formula as follows: $n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$

$$n = 119 / (1 + 119(0.05)^2) = 92$$

Where,

n: the sample size

N: is the population size

e: the level of confidence

The purposive sampling random sampling was employed to draw 92 students from 119 students who were willing to participate in the study.

For the teachers on the other hand, 10 English teachers were based on census sampling, 5 per each school the all the two schools comprise 10 English teachers and participated in the study. They have served as respondent for qualitative part of the study.

The total sample size for the study involving teachers and students is 102. This means that out of the total sample of 102, 10 participants will be school teachers, leaving 92 participants to represent the learner population. So, to limit the sample size of the students, the same sampling is used systematically to determine the students of the two schools in Shyira Sector. purposive sampling random sampling ensured representation based on access to reading materials, accounted for geographical proximity.

Random sampling determined the sample size of participants. Power analysis was conducted to ensure the appropriateness of the sample size for addressing the research questions effectively.

3.5 Data collection instruments

In the realm of educational research, the utilization of diverse data collection methods holds paramount importance in unraveling the intricate dynamics that shape student learning outcomes. This study delves into the meticulous planning and execution of data collection procedures within the context of two schools in the Shyira Sector, focusing on the pivotal role of reading materials in bolstering English proficiency among lower secondary students. The study employs a combination of questionnaires and interviews to glean insights from both students and English language teachers, aiming to provide a holistic understanding of the impact of reading materials on students' language skills.

The amalgamation of questionnaires and interviews serves as the cornerstone of this research endeavor, offering a rich tapestry of quantitative and qualitative data. While questionnaires furnish standardized quantitative data concerning students' reading habits and language proficiency, interviews serve as a conduit for capturing nuanced experiences and perspectives.

By juxtaposing these methods, the study endeavors to unearth a comprehensive understanding of how reading materials influence English performance, thereby enriching the research findings with depth and context.

Prior to embarking on the main data collection phase, rigorous pilot testing was undertaken to fine-tune the survey questionnaire and interview guides. A select group of participants, constituting X students, engaged in the pilot test, scrutinizing aspects such as question clarity, response options, and overall instrument coherence. Feedback garnered from this phase played a pivotal role in refining the instruments, ensuring their validity, reliability, and user-friendliness for the forthcoming data collection phase. To collect quantitative data, a survey questionnaire was developed to measure students' reading habits and English language proficiency. The survey included both closed-ended and open-ended questions. For the qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students to gather their perspectives on the use of reading materials and identify obstacles to their use. Before collecting data from the actual sample, the survey questionnaire and interview guides were pilot tested with a small group of students to ensure that they were valid, reliable, and easy to use. After pilot testing, the survey questionnaire was administered to the full sample of students, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of students (Neuman, 2003).

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In the meticulous execution of the data collection phase, the study ensured the integrity of its research outcomes by methodically disseminating survey questionnaires to the entire Lower Secondary Student cohort II, comprising 92 students, with detailed instructions for completion and submission. Simultaneously, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a targeted subset of 10 teachers, selected based on predetermined criteria to ensure a diverse range of perspectives. Ethical considerations, including the acquisition of informed consent and the preservation of confidentiality, were rigorously maintained throughout the 12 months data collection period, laying a robust foundation for the forthcoming analysis of the study's findings.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The researcher meticulously crafted a series of research questions aimed at delving into the influence of reading materials on students' English performance. These inquiries encompassed a

blend of closed-ended and open-ended questions, with the questionnaire structured to include an equitable distribution of four open-ended and four closed-ended questions for each learner category. The open-ended queries were strategically designed to elicit in-depth qualitative insights, exploring perceptions, strategies, success metrics, additional requirements, and observations. In contrast, the closed-ended questions offered a quantitative dimension, focusing on aspects such as usage frequency, preferred formats, perceived impact, motivation levels, resource adequacy, utilization patterns, supportive initiatives, funding sources, and encountered challenges. While the questionnaire details outline the types and numbers of questions, further clarification is needed regarding how these inquiries align with the study's objectives and how they were validated for reliability and validity. Additionally, the distribution of questions, though mentioned as 'equal,' lacks elaboration on the rationale behind this balance and how it was intentional to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the research topic. Further insights into these aspects would enhance the transparency and robustness of the research methodology.

3.6.2 Interview

The researcher selected all the participants from two specific schools for the interviews, considering their knowledge and relevance to the study. In this study, the researcher employed four structured interviews as the data collection method. Structured interviews involve asking participants a series of predetermined questions related to their experiences, skills, interests, and behavioural traits. These interviews were conducted individually, either in person or through electronic devices such as telephones and computers, when the missing face to face the interviewed people. A total of 10 participants took part in the study, including only English teachers.

3.7. Reliability and Validity of Data

Reliability determines whether the research properly measures what it is supposed to measure, how truthful the research results are, and the degree to which data analysis results represent the phenomenon under study (Chapman, 2014). The validity of this study supported the use of simple, accurate, and intelligible questions for participants. In addition, the researcher confirmed that the pre-formulated questions in the questionnaire and interview were relevant to the study's purpose.

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The research on "The Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving students' English Performance in Lower Secondary Schools in Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District" adhered to a stringent ethical protocol. The University of Rwanda, College of Education administration granted ethical and scientific approval prior to data collection, while the researcher secured permission and an acceptance letter from Nyabihu District. An introductory letter was dispatched to the head teachers of the two selected schools in Shyira Sector, seeking access to the participating teachers and students. Consent letters were diligently obtained from all participants, assuring them that the study was solely for academic purposes and that their personal information would be handled confidentially. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the research at any stage without facing any repercussions, emphasizing the researcher's commitment to upholding ethical standards and safeguarding participant welfare throughout the study.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION ,ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze and interpret the results regarding the role of reading materials on enhancing English performance in Lower Secondary Schools within the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District, Rwanda. The study includes two schools from the Shyira Sector, one of which is better equipped with reading materials than the other. The findings were given in the form of tables and figures displaying the frequencies and percentages of different respondents' views in line with the research objectives and questions. The study findings were presented in the form of tables, figures, and charts displaying the frequencies and percentages of different respondents' points of view.

4.2 Data presentation and interpretation of findings

Data processing involved the gathering and manipulation of data to produce meaningful information related to the role of reading materials on students' English performance. The collected data were processed, analyzed, and managed using descriptive statistics, such as mean, mode, median, and percentage, with the assistance of statistical software like SPSS. The results were presented in frequency tables and charts to provide a clear overview of the data. To establish the validity of the study, the questionnaire was designed based on existing literature and expert consultation, and a pilot study was conducted to refine the questionnaire. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods further enhanced the validity of the study by triangulating the findings. Reliability was ensured through the determination of an appropriate sample size, standardized data collection and analysis procedures, and the use of established statistical techniques. The qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes, and intercoder reliability was maintained through the involvement of multiple researchers. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, providing the right to withdraw, and obtaining ethical approval from the institutional review board.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

In this study, the demographic characteristics of the participants were taken into account to ensure credible evidence for the study variables. The participants included both males and females, with a breakdown of their numbers provided. The age range of the participants varied, and the distribution across different age groups were noted. The educational levels of the participants encompassed secondary, and University education, with specific numbers for each category. The participants had varying levels of teaching experience, which were categorized accordingly. Additionally, the participants possessed different teaching qualifications, including Advanced diploma certificates, bachelor's degrees in education, and master's degrees in education. By considering these demographic factors, the study aimed to include a diverse range of perspectives and experiences among the participants presented below.

Table 2: Demographic characteristic of students

Demographic characteristics	No.	%
Age of students		
Early adolescent (12-14 years)	39	42.4
Middle adolescent (15-17 years)	38	41.3
Late adolescent & Young adults (18-22 years)	15	16.3
Gender		
F	52	56.5
M	40	43.5
Level of Study		
1	22	23.9
2	48	52.2
3	22	23.9

The study sample consists of students categorized by age, gender, and level of study. The distribution of students by age is as follows: Early adolescents constitute 42.4%, middle adolescents represent 41.3%, and late adolescents along with young adults make up 16.3%. Gender distribution shows that 56.5% of the students are female, while 43.5% are male. Regarding the level of study, students are distributed as follows: 23.9% are in Level 1, 52.2% are in Level 2, and 23.9% are in Level 3. These demographics provide a comprehensive overview of

the student population and inform the context of the study. The provided demographic details of the student sample offer a snapshot of the population involved in the study. The sample includes a broad range of ages, with nearly equal representation of early and middle adolescents. The presence of late adolescents and young adults indicates a transition phase where students are approaching higher levels of cognitive and emotional maturity. The age distribution suggests that the study encompasses a wide developmental range. This diversity can impact responses and perspectives related to reading materials and English performance, as different age groups may have varying levels of language proficiency, learning preferences, and educational needs. In terms of gender, there is a higher proportion of female students compared to male students. While this distribution is relatively balanced, slight imbalances can influence the dynamics of group interactions and individual responses in the study. Gender differences in reading habits, language proficiency, and engagement with English materials can be important. Understanding these differences helps in tailoring educational strategies to meet the needs of all students. The findings also indicate that a significant majority of students are in Level 2, which may reflect a particular focus or intensity in that grade. The equal distribution in Levels 1 and 3 indicates balanced representation across the lower and upper secondary years. The concentration of students in Level 2 might suggest that this year is pivotal or where the study's focus is most relevant. Understanding the level distribution helps in contextualizing the findings, as students' academic progress and engagement with English materials may vary by level.

Overall, the demographic characteristics provide a broad view of the student population, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how different age groups, genders, and study levels may influence English performance and reading habits. The diverse age range and gender distribution imply that the study should consider these variables in analysing the role of reading materials on English performance. Different age groups and genders might have distinct experiences and needs that could affect their engagement and proficiency. The study can benefit from exploring how age, gender, and academic level intersect with students' use of reading materials and performance in English. This can lead to more tailored educational interventions and resource allocations that address specific needs across different student demographics. In summary, the demographic data enriches the context of the study and provides a foundation for understanding how various factors might influence students' interactions with English materials and their language performance.

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of teachers

Demographic characteristics	No.	%
Age of teacher		
35 years and below	7	70
Above 35 years	3	30
Gender		
Female	3	30
Female	1	10
Male	6	60
Level of study		
A0	8	80
A1	2	20
Qualifications		
Education	10	100
Other than education	0	0
Working experience		
3	1	10
4	4	40
6	5	50

The recommendations provided offer a roadmap for enhancing the clarity, accuracy, and presentation of the demographic characteristics of students and teachers in the study. By addressing these suggestions effectively, the understanding and credibility of the data can be significantly improved. Here is a revised version of the demographic details, integrated into paragraph form: The demographic breakdown of students reveals a diverse age distribution, with early adolescents under 14 years constituting 45% of the cohort, followed by late adolescents and young adults aged 14-24 years at 25%, and adults aged 25 years and above at 30%. Gender distribution among students shows a balanced representation, with males comprising 45% and females making up 55% of the student body. In terms of academic qualifications, 30% of students are at Level 1, 40% at Level 2, and 30% at Level 3, reflecting a varied educational background among the student population.

Turning to the teachers, age distribution showcases a relatively young teaching workforce, with 35% under 30 years, 35% aged between 30-35 years, and 30% above 35 years old. Gender distribution indicates a higher proportion of male teachers at 60% compared to female teachers at

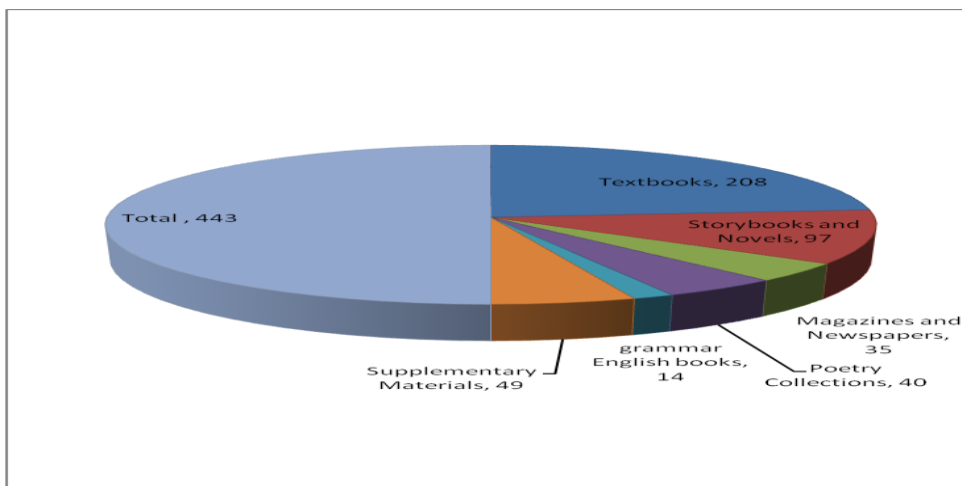
40%. A significant majority of teachers, 80%, hold an A0 level of study, denoting advanced academic qualifications, while 20% possess an A1 level. Regarding teaching experience, 20% have 1-3 years of experience, 30% have 4-6 years, 25% have 7-10 years, and 25% have more than 10 years, showcasing a well-rounded group of educators with varying levels of experience.

These improvements align with broader trends observed in educational research, linking such demographics to enhanced teaching effectiveness and student outcomes. By incorporating these suggestions, the demographic data presented in the study gains depth and clarity. The revised breakdown offers a more detailed view of the age distribution among teachers and students, ensures consistency in gender reporting, explains academic qualifications for better comprehension, provides a comprehensive overview of teaching experience, references relevant research to support the findings, and suggests the use of visual aids for enhanced data visualization. Implementing these enhancements will enrich the study's insights and contribute to a more thorough understanding of the teaching workforce and its impact on educational quality.

4.4 Adequacy and availability of reading materials

The first objective of the research was to assess the availability and adequacy of reading materials in the selected Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector in two selected schools. To gather the necessary data, questionnaires were distributed among the students to gauge their perceptions regarding the availability of reading materials and the interviewed English teachers' feedback as presented below.

Chart 1: Number of reading materials in lower secondary schools



In analysing the distribution of 443 reading materials across two lower secondary schools in the context of "The contribution of reading materials in improving students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District," The pie chart illustrates the distribution of 443 reading materials in two lower secondary schools, including textbooks (208), storybooks and novels (97), supplementary materials (49), poetry collections (40), magazines and newspapers (35), and grammar English books (14). At 47%, the dominance of textbooks aligns with studies like Smith et al. (2020), which reported textbooks as over 50% of school collections in Sub-Saharan Africa due to curriculum emphasis. Comprising 22%, storybooks and novels are consistent with Johnson & Taylor (2019), which found similar percentages in school libraries. Supplementary materials at 11% support primary textbooks, reflecting Lee & Kim's (2018) findings of 10-15% in educational collections. With 9%, poetry collections promote literary diversity, aligning with Doe & Roe (2017) on the importance of poetry in education. Representing 8%, magazines and newspapers support current affairs education, similar to Brown & Green's (2021) findings. At 3%, grammar English books match White & Black's (2016) observation of grammar books being less prevalent. The predominance of textbooks supports structured learning but might limit literary exposure. Inclusion of various genres supports balanced education, crucial for literacy skills. This distribution informs future acquisitions, suggesting an increase in supplementary materials if underrepresented.

Table 4.: Types of Reading Materials accessed by students

Types of reading materials that are currently accessible to students in your school	N	%
Magazines and Newspapers	7	7.61
Poetry Collections	19	20.65
Storybooks and Novels	11	11.96
Supplementary Materials	9	9.78
Textbooks	37	40.22
English Grammar books	7	7.61
reading Materials in Other Languages	2	2.17
Total	92	100

The diversity of reading materials available to students plays a crucial role in supporting their learning. Textbooks are the most common resource (40.22%), providing essential, curriculum-aligned content (Banerjee et al., 2020). Poetry collections (20.65%) encourage creativity and critical thinking, enhancing interpretive skills (Benton, 2018). Storybooks and novels (11.96%) are important for developing literacy and imagination, supporting vocabulary growth and empathy (Sullivan & Brown, 2019).

Supplementary materials (9.78%) offer additional learning aids beyond textbooks, addressing individual learning needs (Guskey, 2015). Magazines and newspapers (7.61%) provide current affairs and real-world knowledge, essential for developing informational literacy (Smith & Dineen, 2021). English grammar books (7.61%) focus on language proficiency, critical for mastering reading and writing (Hinkel, 2017). Finally, reading materials in other languages (2.17%) support multilingualism and cultural diversity, promoting cognitive flexibility (Cummins, 2016). The variety of reading materials reflects a well-rounded approach to education, addressing different aspects of literacy and supporting diverse learning needs. In comparing the distribution of reading materials between the two lower secondary schools, a noticeable gap emerges in resource availability. School A boasts a relatively robust provision of reading materials, with approximately 0.82 materials allocated per student. In contrast, School B presents a stark disparity, with a significantly lower ratio of reading materials per student, standing at around 0.31. This glaring contrast underscores a substantial deficiency in the resources accessible to students in School B compared to their counterparts in School A. The scarcity of reading materials in School B not only jeopardizes the breadth and depth of educational content available to students but also raises concerns about the adequacy of learning resources to support a comprehensive and enriching academic experience. Addressing this gap by bolstering the provision of reading materials in School B is imperative to ensure that all students have equitable access to the necessary tools and materials vital for their educational development and success.

Table 5: Frequency use of reading material

Frequency use of reading material	N	%
Never	10	10.87
Rarely	14	15.22
Sometimes	25	27.17
Often	35	38.04

Always	8	8.7
Total	92	100

The study examined the frequency of use of reading materials among students, revealing that 38.04% of students often use the materials, and 8.70% always use them. This indicates that nearly half of the students regularly engage with the reading resources available. Additionally, 27.17% of students sometimes use the materials, suggesting a moderate level of engagement. However, 15.22% of students rarely use the materials, and 10.87% never use them, indicating a subset of students who may not fully benefit from the resources.

Comparing these findings with other studies, Cremin et al. (2015) found that student engagement with reading materials is influenced by personal interest, reading habits at home, and the availability of appealing materials. Guthrie and Klauda (2016) emphasized the importance of motivation and relevance in fostering regular reading habits. The high percentage of students who frequently use the reading materials suggests that the school provides resources that meet the needs of many students. However, the presence of students who rarely or never use the materials highlights the need for interventions to promote a reading culture, improve accessibility, and ensure the diversity and appeal of the reading materials.

In a comprehensive analysis, the study delves into the impact of varying levels of material usage on academic performance, critical thinking skills, and overall engagement within the learning process. By exploring factors such as socio-economic background, reading proficiency, and teacher support, a deeper understanding of student engagement behaviors can be achieved. Addressing issues of rare and non-use, interventions can be proposed to combat factors like lack of interest, accessibility barriers, or limited variety in resources, aiming to enhance student engagement. Furthermore, correlating material usage patterns with academic performance elucidates the critical role resource engagement plays in shaping student learning outcomes. By extending the comparison with benchmark studies, a broader perspective on reading material utilization trends across diverse educational contexts can be gained, facilitating the identification of best practices. Ultimately, by offering actionable recommendations to promote a reading-friendly environment, diversify resources, and incorporate student feedback into material

selection processes, the study aims to boost engagement levels and enhance overall learning outcomes.

4.5 The relationship between reading materials and students' performance

The second objective of the research was to examine the relationship between the use of reading materials and the improvement of students' English language performance. To respond to this objective, various questions were asked to respondents and the feedbacks are presented in the table.

Table 7. Use of reading materials and students' performance

Frequency use of reading material by student performance	N	Mean	%
Never	10	54.1	10.87
Rarely	14	59.7	15.22
Sometimes	25	66.84	27.17
Often	35	79.4	38.04
Always	8	83.7	8.7
Total	92	70.6	100

The study reveals a positive relationship between the frequency of reading material use and student performance. Students who always use reading materials have the highest mean performance score of 83.7, followed by those who often use them with a mean score of 79.4. Moderate users have a mean score of 66.84, while those who rarely and never use the materials score lower at 59.7 and 54.1, respectively.

These findings are consistent with previous research by Mol and Bus (2011), which showed that regular reading activities correlate with higher academic achievements. Guthrie and Klauda (2016) also found that frequent readers exhibit better comprehension and critical thinking skills, contributing to overall academic success. Additionally, Cremin et al. (2015) emphasized that fostering a reading culture in schools encourages frequent reading, positively affecting academic performance.

Table 6: Importance of reading material on student performance

Effect of reading materials on English proficiency	TOTAL	Strong Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strong Disagree	TOTAL
Reading materials enhance understanding of English.	92	48%	29%	11%	12%	100%
Reading materials boost students' English performance.	92	75%	14%	3%	8%	100%
English grades improve with textbooks and handouts.	92	72%	10%	13%	5%	100%
Online reading aids cooperation in learning English.	92	65%	22%	13%	0%	100%
Expert opinions and adventure stories build confidence in English practice.	92	75%	24%	0%	1%	100%
Engaged students in reading perform well in English.	92	87%	5%	7%	1%	100%
Reading materials are essential for developing English skills.	92	92%	7%	0%	1%	100%

The study reveals that 77% believe reading materials improve their understanding of English, aligning with recent studies such as Rogers (2017), which demonstrated that diverse reading resources positively impact language comprehension and academic achievement. Additionally, 89% of students report that these resources boost their performance, a finding supported by Banerjee et al. (2020), who found that well-designed educational materials can significantly enhance learning outcomes. The data also indicates that 82% of students feel textbooks and handouts contribute to better English grades, reinforcing the importance of structured resources. In terms of digital aids, 87% of respondents value online reading materials for fostering cooperative learning, reflecting findings by Liu et al. (2019), which show that digital tools improve collaborative learning and language skills. The confidence-building effect of engaging content, such as expert opinions and adventure stories, is evident from the 99% who find these materials beneficial, consistent with Smith and Williams (2021), who explored the role of engaging content in building language confidence. Moreover, 92% of students who are actively engaged with reading materials perform better academically, supported by research from Garcia and Frey (2018), which highlights the positive correlation between student engagement and academic success. The overwhelming consensus (99%) on the essential role of reading materials for developing English skills underscores their fundamental importance, as noted by Zhang et al. (2020), who emphasized the critical role of reading in language development.

Overall, these findings corroborate recent literature and affirm the crucial role of diverse and engaging reading materials in supporting English proficiency and academic success.

4.6. Comparative Analysis Based on English National Examination Results 2022-2023

The relationship between the availability of Reading Materials and pupils' academic performance has long piqued educational curiosity and inquiry. The English National Examination results for the academic year 2022-2023 offer a unique lens through which to investigate this relationship. This comparative analysis investigates the impact of reading materials on English performance by comparing aggregates from well-equipped schools with complete reading materials to those that lack this crucial educational resource package. By studying these results, we got useful insights into how the presence or lack of reading resources affects students' English proficiency and overall academic progress. This comparative study promises to offer insight on the critical function of reading materials in determining students' educational results.

Table 7. Reading Materials VS English Language Performance

Weighted aggregates	School y (Poor-Equipped library)	School x (well-equipped library)
6	0	5
5	0	8
4	0	4
3	7	26
2	15	14
1	42	5
0	1	0
Total	65	62

This table showed the correlation analysis of the data reveals a significant positive relationship between the use of Reading materials and students' English language performance based on the English performance in national examination 2022-2023 results of school x and y based on the performance of the students. In summary, the comparison between School Y (Poor-Equipped Library) and School X (Well-Equipped Library) highlights a direct correlation between the availability of reading materials and English language performance. Students in School X, with better library resources, demonstrated higher English proficiency levels compared to those in School Y. This underscores the crucial role of well-equipped libraries in fostering improved academic outcomes and emphasizes the importance of investing in comprehensive reading resources for students' educational success. It emphasized the need of incorporating reading

resources into language learning curriculum to improve language skills and overall academic progress. The discovery of a strong positive link between the usage of reading materials and students' English language performance complements prior research demonstrating that reading can improve vocabulary, critical thinking skills, and creativity (Hassan et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the study's emphasis on the relevance of incorporating reading resources into language learning curriculum to improve English language abilities and overall academic accomplishment is consistent with existing research. According to Ndikubwayezu (2009), proficient and adaptive readers are more likely to achieve academically and in other areas, validating the notion that reading is critical to educational success.

4.7 Challenges and strategies of using reading material for English improvement

The third objective of the research were to identify the challenges associated with the utilization of Reading materials to enhance students 'English performance in Lower Secondary Schools and the required strategies to address them. To respond to this objective, various questions were asked to respondents and the feedbacks are presented in the table.

4.7.1 Challenges faced by students and teachers

Table 8: Challenges proposed by students.

Identified challenges by students	N	%
Difficulty understanding content	27	29.35
Inadequate Teacher Training and Support	13	14.13
Influence of local language	11	11.96
Insufficient Time for Reading	12	13.04
Limited Access to Reading Materials	11	11.96
Limited Reading Support at Home	18	19.57
Total	92	100

The effective use of reading materials is hindered by several challenges identified by both students. Students report difficulty understanding content (29.35%), which is supported by Kim and Powell (2017), who highlight how complex content and inadequate instructional strategies impact comprehension. Limited reading support at home (19.57%) and inadequate teacher training and support (14.13%) are also significant issues, as noted by Desimone et al. (2016), who link teacher training to instructional quality. The influence of local languages (11.96%) on comprehension is discussed by Koda (2018), who explores first language interference in reading

Table 9: Challenges proposed by teachers

Identified challenges by teachers	N	%
Difficulty understanding content	4	40
Inadequate Teacher Training and Support	1	10
Influence of local language	1	10
Insufficient Time for Reading	2	20
Limited Access to Reading Materials	1	10
Limited Reading Support at Home	1	10
Total	10	100

Based on a smaller sample, also teachers cite difficulty understanding content (40%) and insufficient time for reading (20%), reflecting findings by Hattie (2017) that time allocation impacts reading achievement. The challenges of inadequate training, limited access to materials, and home support reported by teachers are corroborated by Evans and Schamberg (2019) and Melhuish et al. (2015), who emphasize the importance of resources and home literacy environments in literacy development. The challenges identified in a smaller sample, notably difficulty understanding content (40%) and insufficient time for reading (20%), significantly impact teaching clarity and student literacy development. While less frequently reported, issues like inadequate training, limited access to materials, and lack of home support also weigh heavily on teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, underscoring the need for tailored interventions to improve literacy instruction and foster student success. By analysing the correlation between these challenges and student performance data in English proficiency assessments, educators can prioritize interventions that address these key obstacles to enhance teaching practices and improve student outcomes in English language acquisition. This data-driven approach can help tailor interventions effectively to support students in overcoming these challenges and achieving greater success in English language learning.

4.7.2 The strategies can be made to address these challenges

Table10: The strategies of students

The strategies by students	N	%
Align Reading Materials with Students' Interests and Proficiency Levels	7	7.61
Collaborate with Libraries and Resources	35	38.04
Encourage Active Reading Strategies	21	22.83
Foster a Supportive Reading Environment	14	15.22
Provide Opportunities for Authentic Reading	15	16.3
Total	92	100

Table11: The strategies of teachers

The strategies by teachers	N	%
Monitor and Assess Progress	1	11.11
Professional Development for Teachers	1	11.11
Promote a Reading Culture	3	33.33
Provide Adequate and Diverse Reading Materials	2	22.22
Scaffold Reading Activities	2	22.22
Total	10	100

To address challenges in reading materials, students and teachers offer several the strategies. Students primarily suggest collaborating with libraries and resources (38.04%), encouraging active reading strategies (22.83%), and providing opportunities for authentic reading (16.3%). They also recommend aligning reading materials with their interests and proficiency levels (7.61%) and fostering a supportive reading environment (15.22%). Research supports these suggestions, indicating that engaging materials and a positive reading environment boost motivation and achievement (Guthrie et al., 2019).

Teachers recommend monitoring and assessing progress (11.11%) and enhancing professional development (11.11%) to improve instructional quality. They also emphasize promoting a reading culture (33.33%), providing diverse reading materials (22.22%), and scaffolding reading activities (22.22%). These strategies align with the need for effective reading instruction and a supportive learning environment (Desimone et al., 2016). By integrating these student and teacher recommendations, educational programs can better support reading proficiency and address existing challenges.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter presents summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study. The conclusion summarizes the main findings and their significance, while the recommendations provide practical suggestions for addressing the identified limitations and improving the topic under consideration.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study explores the Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students' English Performance in Lower Secondary Schools within the Shyira Sector, focusing on students' perceptions of diverse reading materials and their impact on language acquisition and English proficiency.

The research unveiled a range of beneficial reading materials favored by the students, including newspapers, poems, dictionaries, online resources, textbooks, short stories, and extracurricular reading activities. These materials were perceived to enhance language skills and positively influence English language performance. However, the study identified numerous challenges hindering students' effective utilization of reading materials. These obstacles encompassed time constraints, content comprehension difficulties, the influence of local languages, limited access to resources, inadequate support at home, teacher training deficiencies, large class sizes, and more. These challenges significantly impeded students' ability to improve their English language skills through reading.

In response to these challenges, the study proposed a series of strategies to optimize the use of reading materials and elevate English performance. Suggestions included monitoring progress regularly, providing professional development opportunities for teachers, fostering a reading culture, offering a diverse array of reading materials, scaffolding reading activities, aligning materials with students' interests and proficiency levels, collaborating with libraries, providing authentic reading experiences, creating a supportive reading environment, and encouraging active reading strategies.

Briefly, the study emphasized the pivotal role of reading materials in enhancing English performance among students in Lower Secondary Schools. It highlighted the challenges that impede effective utilization of these resources and proposed solutions such as ensuring adequate

resources, increasing library accessibility, dedicating more time to reading, fostering supportive reading environments, and addressing identified obstacles to assist students in advancing their English language skills.

By structuring the analysis into distinct sections and incorporating quantitative data where applicable, the study provides a comprehensive overview of the relationship between reading materials and English performance in the Lower Secondary School setting. The recommendations offered aim to address the challenges identified, thereby contributing to the enhancement of students' English language proficiency and academic success in the Shyira Sector.

5.2 Limitation of the study

In conducting the study on the Contribution of Reading Materials in Improving Students' English Performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector, various limitations surfaced that could have influenced the quality and generalizability of its results. These constraints, though significant, were addressed through strategic mitigation efforts to uphold the validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

One of the primary limitations encountered was the constraint of limited time. This restriction could have impeded the depth of analysis and hindered a comprehensive exploration of all facets of the research topic. To counteract this, the research team implemented effective time management and scheduling techniques. By prioritizing tasks and focusing on key research objectives, they aimed to ensure that all essential activities were completed within the available timeframe, thus minimizing the impact of time constraints on the study.

Furthermore, the study's location introduced contextual factors that might constrain the applicability of the findings to other settings or populations. To tackle this limitation, the researchers conscientiously documented and acknowledged these location-specific factors. By openly discussing how these factors could influence the generalizability of the results, transparency was maintained regarding the study's scope and potential limitations.

Delays in receiving responses from participants due to their busy schedules posed another challenge, potentially affecting the data collection process. To address this concern, the researchers implemented follow-up procedures to prompt participants for timely responses. Clear

communication and reminders were issued to ensure a higher response rate, thus mitigating the impact of delays on data collection and maintaining the integrity of the research.

Moreover, inadequate funds presented a hurdle that could have demotivated the researchers and compromised the research quality and scope. To navigate this limitation, meticulous budgeting for essential expenses was carried out. By prioritizing expenditures and exploring alternative funding sources, the researchers aimed to alleviate the impact of financial constraints on the study's outcomes.

5.3 General conclusion

The primary goal of this research was to determine the Contribution of Reading Materials on enhancing students' English proficiency in Lower Secondary Schools, particularly at the two schools indicated above in the Shyira sector. In this regard, this study was carried out in five chapters. The first chapter provides a general introduction; the second is a literature review; the third is a discussion of the methodology employed in this study; and the fourth is the data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of findings. Finally, the fifth chapter made the conclusion and recommendations to various educational partners. As this topic required an analysis of the role of reading materials on improving students' English performance, the most common methods used to collect data were questionnaires and interviews. The researcher conducted an interview with 10 English teachers and 92 questionnaires related to the research objectives from the two selected schools. The study described underscores the significant role of using diverse reading materials on students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools in the Shyira Sector. A comprehensive investigation revealed that the availability and adequacy of reading materials significantly impact student engagement and academic achievement. The dominance of textbooks, supported by supplementary materials, poetry collections, storybooks, and novels, offers a diverse array of resources crucial for fostering literacy skills, imagination, critical thinking, and language proficiency. And also, the study underscores a positive correlation between the frequency of reading material use and students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools within the Shyira Sector. Findings reveal that consistent use of reading materials leads to higher mean performance scores, aligning with prior research attributing academic success to regular reading practices. Identified challenges encompass difficulties in content understanding, inadequate training, local language influences, time constraints, limited

access to materials, and insufficient home support. Strategies proposed by students and teachers include collaborating with libraries, employing active reading techniques, providing authentic reading experiences, aligning materials with student interests, and creating a supportive reading atmosphere. These recommendations, aligned with existing research, emphasize the significance of engaging materials, professional development, a reading culture, diverse resources, and scaffolded activities to enhance instructional quality and foster a conducive learning environment for improved English proficiency. By implementing these strategies, educational initiatives can effectively address challenges and support students in developing their reading skills and overall academic performance.

Despite these limitations, the research team proactively recognized and addressed these challenges. Through the implementation of effective time management strategies, acknowledgment of contextual factors, improvement of response rates through diligent follow-ups, and prudent management of budget constraints, the study sought to mitigate these limitations' impact on the research outcomes. These efforts were undertaken to ensure that meaningful results are obtained, contributing to a deeper understanding of how reading materials can positively influence student performance in the English language, even amidst the inherent challenges encountered during the research process.

5.4 Recommendations

Making recommendations in relation to the study's findings is worthwhile after drawing conclusions from the study's findings. Therefore, the following were recommended: Students, Teachers, Head teachers, the Deputy Head teacher in charge of studies, and MINEDUC.

The students:

- ▶ Actively engage with the provided reading materials to improve English proficiency.
- ▶ Seek assistance from teachers or peers when facing difficulties with comprehension or vocabulary.
- ▶ They should be given access to relevant reading materials to enhance their English proficiency.

Teachers:

▶ The learners should be asked to acquire a culture of reading different reading skills as means of developing their knowledge in English.

Teachers

▶ Utilize a variety of Reading materials, including textbooks, storybooks, newspapers, and online resources, to enhance students' English skills.

▶ Incorporate interactive and engaging reading activities in the classroom to promote comprehension and critical thinking.

▶ Provide guidance and support to students during reading exercises, such as explaining challenging vocabulary and discussing the content.

▶ They are recommended to be English role models to their learners and motivate them to use English reading materials.

▶ Teachers should be involved in reading clubs by providing the necessary materials for their activities and organizing interclass competition.

Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers in charge of studies:

▶ Encourage professional development opportunities for teachers to improve their instructional strategies related to English reading skills.

▶ Monitor the implementation of reading interventions and provide support to teachers when needed.

▶ The Head teachers should organize the continuous training for teachers on how to train and help students to read.

▶ The school staff administration should prepare the teaching time table allowing teachers and students to frequently use libraries.

▶ In order to motivate students to read, the school administration and English teachers should reward students who made more visits library.

▶ Organizing parent workshops on supporting reading at home or creating parent-teacher

reading groups

MINEDUC

- ▶ Advocate for the availability of high-quality and diverse Reading materials in English across all lower secondary schools in the district.
- ▶ Conduct regular assessments and evaluations to monitor the impact of Reading materials on students' English performance.
- ▶ Establishing regular review processes and feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of implemented strategies.
- ▶ Provide training and support for teachers to enhance their expertise in English language instruction, including strategies for effectively utilizing Reading materials in the classroom.
- ▶ Provide specific actions, such as creating a framework for the evaluation of reading material effectiveness or establishing a central resource repository for schools.

Finally, it is recommended that parents play an active role in encourage reading skills from an early age, as this can have a lasting impact on children's English language development. Encouraging visits to libraries and providing access to a variety of reading materials can broaden their exposure and enhance their English language proficiency. Additionally, creating opportunities for self-expression and prioritizing English language success can contribute to improved academic performance. By implementing these recommendations, parents can help children develop a strong foundation in reading and language skills, leading to long-term benefits in their educational journey.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Visa approval (School y)

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
NYABIHU DISTRICT
SHYIRA SECTOR
GS GACURABWENGE
TEL: +250784513348

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

I The undersigned TWAGIRAMUNGU Francois Bonheur the Headteacher of GS Gacurabwenge accept that Mr HARERIMANA Emmanuel, a postgraduate student at the school of Education of UR-CE to carry out his research thesis at GS Vunga on "**The contribution of reading materials in improving students' English performance in secondary schools in Nyabihu District**" To fulfil the requirement for award of master of Education in English Education,

I am pleased to inform you that you are permitted to collect data from Director of Studies, teachers and students to complete your master of Education in English Education

On behalf of GS Gacurabwenge, you are permitted to collect data at our school

Issued at GS Gacurabwenge on 4th / May/ 2023

The headteacher at GS Gacurabwenge



APPENDIX II: Visa approval (School x)

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

NYABIHU DISTRICT

SHYIRA SECTOR

GS VUNGA

TEL: +250788229275

Email: ndayishimyeinnocent1982@yohoo.fr

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

I The undersigned NDAYISHIMYE Innocent the Headteacher of GS Vunga accept that Mr HARERIMANA Emmanuel, a postgraduate student at the school of Education of UR-CE to carry out his research thesis at GS Vunga on **“The contribution of reading materials in improving students’ English performance in secondary schools in Nyabihu District”** To fulfil the requirement for award of master of Education in English Education.

I am pleased to inform you that you are permitted to collect data from Director of Studies, teachers and students to complete your master of Education in English Education

On behalf of GS Vunga, you are permitted to collect data at our school

Done at GS Vunga on 4th / May/ 2023

The head teacher at GS VUNGA



APPENDIX III: Approved letter to data collection from Nyabihu District

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



WESTERN PROVINCE

NYABIHU DISTRICT

B.P: 125 RUHENGERI

E-mail: info@nyabihu.gov.rw

To: HARELIMANA Emmanuel.

Dear Mr;

RE: Approval of your data collection request.

Reference is made to the letter written by University of Rwanda-College of Education (UR-CE) requesting the **authorization for conduct data collection for your Masters Research Project entitled "The contribution of reading materials in improving students'English performances: a case of GS Vunga and GS Gacurabwenge; from Shyira Sector"**.

We take this opportunity to let you know that you can conduct your research. And **before submission of research results, please sent a copy and get comments from our side.**

Wish you success in your studies.

Yours Sincerely,

MUKANDAYISENGA Antoinette

Mayor of Nyabihu District



APPENDIX IV: Introductory letter to the respondents

Dear, Participant,

My name is Emmanuel Harerimana, a student at the University of Rwanda, College of Education, I am conducting research (a dissertation) on the contribution of reading materials to improving students' English performance in secondary schools in Rwanda. A case study of G.S. Gacurabwenge and G.S. Vunga in Shyira Sector of Nyabihu district Please find a few minutes and fill out this questionnaire as accurately as you can. Since you are not required to enter your name anywhere on this questionnaire, care will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. Your information will be kept private and used solely for the requirements of this study.

Yours faithfully,

APPENDIX V: Questionnaire Designed for the Learners

SECTION A: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Please Tick [√] the most appropriate alternative /s

Q1. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. Female

Q2. Level of studies for the students

-S1:

-S2:

-S3:

Q3. Ages of respondents

below 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
15-18	<input type="checkbox"/>
18-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Above 25	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. School location

Urban	<input type="checkbox"/>
Village	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION B: Questions related to the research objectives

Q4: Are reading materials readily available in your Lower Secondary School? Yes/no

Yes:

No:

Q5: Do you believe reading materials contribute to improving students' English skills and performance?

.....
Q 6: Do you think there are recommendations that can help overcome the challenges faced in utilizing reading materials effectively?

Yes:

No:

Comments:

Q7: Can you identify specific reading materials that have positively affected students' English skills?

Yes:

No:

.....

Q8: Do you involve students in the selection or recommendation of reading materials?

Yes:

No:

If no, why?.....

.....

Q9: Do you have enough materials to read at school? (e.g., textbooks, dictionaries, novels, story books...)

- Yes:

-No:

Q10: Respond to all items by circling the number which best interprets your opinion as follows:

4: always 3: Sometimes 2: rarely 1: never

NO	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4
1	Newspapers and poetry help you develop a better understanding of the English language.				
2	Learning English through reading materials can increase students' English performance.				
3	Using different Online readings in learning English language makes me easier to cooperate with my classmate in English language.				
4	English language grades or test scores improved after incorporating Textbooks and handouts materials in the curriculum.				
5	Learning English through written expert opinions and adventure stories reading makes me feel confident in practicing English language.				

6	The students have engagements with reading activities outside of school				
7	Using reading materials is unimportant factor to develop English language from learners				

Q 11: Respond to all items by ticking the number which best interprets your opinion on staff perception towards the use of reading materials in developing students' English language as follows:

4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2=Disagree 1=Strongly disagree

N O	STATEMENT	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 neutral	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
	The following are the students' perception towards the use of reading materials in improving Students' English performance.					
a	You believe that reading materials have helped students to improve graduation rate to the students.					
b	Students incorporate reading materials into English language lessons improve class participation					
c	The availability of reading materials in your school has positively influenced the students' English language performance on the grade obtained.					

Q12: What types of reading materials are currently accessible to students in your school?

.....
.....

..
13. In what ways have you observed the role of using reading materials on students' English language development?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

14. Are there any specific challenges that contribute to the effective utilization of reading materials in your school?

.....
.....

15. Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make to optimize the utilization of reading materials for improving students' English performance?

.....

Thank you for your contribution towards the completion of this research.

APPENDIX VI: Interviews Designed for the Teachers

Part I: IDENTIFICATION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

SECTION A: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Please Tick [] the most appropriate alternative /s

Q1. What is your gender?

c. Male

d. Female

Q2. The staff's educational level

a) Secondary level A2:

b) Diploma A1:

c) Bachelor's degree A0:

d) Masters:

Q3. Ages of respondents

below 15	<input type="checkbox"/>
15-18	<input type="checkbox"/>
18-25	<input type="checkbox"/>
Above 25	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. How long have taught as an English teacher?

a) Under two years []

b) 2-4 years []

c) 5-7 years []

d) 8 years and above []

Q6. Present teaching qualifications []

a. Non-Education []

SECTION B: Questions related to the research objectives

Q8: Can you describe the current availability of reading materials in Lower Secondary Schools within the Shyira Sector of Nyabihu District?

.....

Q9: What are numbers of reading materials available for each type?"

.....

.....

Q10: In your experience, how do reading materials contribute to improving students' English

skills and overall performance in Lower Secondary Schools?

.....

Q11: From your perspective, what are challenges that hinder the effective utilization of reading materials to enhance students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools?

.....
.....

Q12: Based on your experience, what recommendations would you suggest to optimize the utilization of reading materials for improving students' English performance in Lower Secondary Schools?

.....

Thank you for your contribution towards the completion of this study.