READING DIFFICULTIES IN GRADE SIX LEARNERS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING READING: A CASE OF CHADIZA AND CHIPATA DISTRICTS, ZAMBIA.

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Zambia in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in Child and Adolescent Psychology.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

LUSAKA

2013

I, Linda Mwanamukubi, declare that this dissertation:

(a) Represents my own work;

(b) Has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other University; and

(c) Does not incorporate any published work or material from another dissertation.

Signed…………………………………………………

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APPROVAL

This dissertation of Linda Mwanamukubi has been approved as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Child and Adolescent Psychology by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the basic skills that a child should master during their first school years to be able to assimilate new knowledge and skills in future. The aim of the study was to explore factors that contribute to causes of reading difficulties among grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching them how to read. The sample comprised of two hundred and six participants drawn from ten schools in Chadiza and Chipata districts of the Eastern province of Zambia was used. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. Information was derived using teacher questionnaire, checklist on reading errors, word list levels 1- 5 and reading passages levels 1- 4.

The study found that most of the grade six pupils were not able to read fluently as expected of their grade level. As they read, they committed errors such as mispronouncing, substituting, adding and omitting some words. The teachers had their own perceptions of the causes of reading difficulties and these included; language and communication problems, psychological factors and others. There was also a significant correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners. The study further revealed that teachers faced a number of challenges in teaching reading to these learners. These challenges included, inadequate teaching and learning materials, high teacher – pupil ratio and others. Reading difficulties is a problem which is wide spread although it is not receiving the necessary attention that it deserves. Based on these findings, the study recommended that apart from just providing adequate learning and teaching materials and building more schools, methods of teaching how to read such as the whole word method should be used. Diagnostic assessment methods and remedial measures on reading difficulties must be taught to teachers so that they are adequately prepared to help learners with reading difficulties.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband Victor Kangwa and my two lovely sons, Bupe and Lwiindi .

I am very grateful for all the support and encouragement that you gave to me. You gave me a reason to go on with my studies when I felt like giving up.

To all of you, I will forever be indebted.

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CHAPTER ONE

ACRONYMS

ANOVA……………………………….. Analysis of Variance

DEBS………………………………… District Education Board Secretary

INSPRO……………………………….. .Inclusive Schooling Programme

MoE …………………………………….Ministry of Education

OECD…………………………………Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PISA……………………………………Programme for International Student Assessment

SACMEQ…………………………………Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality

SPSS………………………………… Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNESCO……………………………….United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNZAREC………………………….. …University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee

WHO…………………………………… World Health Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed at exploring factors that contribute to reading difficulties in grade six learners and challenges faced by teachers in teaching them how to read. The ability to read is important if one is to succeed in school. This is due to the fact that the comprehension of everything that is learnt in school depends on the learner's good reading skills. According to Lyon (2003), if children do not learn to read, understand, write and use language to communicate their ideas and perspectives, their favourable conditions for a fulfilling and rewarding life are seriously compromised.

This chapter looks at the background to the study. It discusses reading difficulties at a regional and national level. It further looks at the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, general objective, specific objectives, research questions and the significance of the study. Finally, it gives a brief summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Regional Perspective

From the global perspective, reading difficulties have been estimated to be at two to five percent among school-going children (Wong, 1998). Findings from the study that was carried out in the United Kingdom among the English speaking children, revealed that, "of the grade two and three children whose reading was assessed, approximately a quarter were functioning at a fairly low level for their grade and approximately one in twenty, were hardly able to read at all" (Gross, 1995, p. 143).

Furthermore, a study which was carried out by the Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality in about fifteen African countries which included Zambia, Mauritius, Uganda, South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana and others revealed that most of the pupils read below what was expected of their grade level while some of them were not able to read at all. To be specific, low performing countries included Mauritius, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe where it is reported that, 97.6% of the grade six learners were virtually unable to read. Such reports do not give a good picture about what is happening in the education sector. Where is the problem? Is it the pupils who are dull, is there something wrong with the curriculum? Could it be the teachers who are not well trained, or there is something wrong with the teaching methods? All these questions deserve to be answered, if the problem is to be solved.

1.1.2 Zambian Perspective

Research on reading difficulties among pupils in Zambia has a short history although for a long time now, Zambia has been concerned with the unsatisfactory levels of reading ability among school children (Kachenga, 2008). Research has shown that most pupils reach as far as grade six without the ability to read (Kelly, 1999). A study conducted by Matafwali (2005) found that 49.1% of the pupils could not read words at all and 57.5% children could not read any single sentence. The ability to read is by far the most important ingredient for one to excel in other subjects as far as academic work is concerned.

Another study on reading ability in grade six conducted in 1995 by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the International Institute for Education Planning in Paris revealed that, levels of reading ability were very low in primary schools. Unfortunately, according to Reading Support for Zambian Children report (2010–2011), reading achievement levels for

grade six learners in Zambia are among the lowest in Africa. There is poor reading performance at grade six level in the Zambian basic schools. The Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Education Quality report (2011), found that overall, the achievement levels in reading for both boys and girls remained very low.

The Ministry of Education policy document emphasizes the importance of reading skills by stating that, "the fundamental aim of the curriculum for lower and middle basic classes (grades one to seven) is to enable pupils to read and write clearly, correctly and confidently in a Zambian language and in English. The Ministry of Education attaches the highest priority to the attainment of this goal" (MoE, 1996, 34).

Generally, according to Rayner et al (2001) in Kalindi (2005), reading is significant in general ways that touch everyone because the ability to read and write is an essential ingredient of success in most societies where so much information is transmitted in written form. Learning to read seems like something which comes about naturally but for most children, learning to read requires extra effort and it may be a long and complicated process lasting several years.

The causes of reading difficulties vary from one child to the other. McGuiness (2004) argues that, children who fail to learn to read do so mainly because of environmental causes and not biological factors. This means that there are certain factors in the environment which may cause the child to have a reading difficulty. For instance, if there is no one to motivate the child both at school and at home, the child might not acquire reading skills. When the effective methods of teaching are missing, learners may become reading disabled.

Reading skills are usually taught during the first three (3) years of primary education so that as children progress in their education, they are able to understand the concepts that they are taught (Paananen, et. al., 2009). In addition, research has shown that, there are high chances for children who have not acquired reading skills by grade 3 or 4 to develop reading problems (Torgesen, 1998). In other words, the ability to read becomes useful if one is to gain more knowledge. This is so because, the growing technicalization of society has brought increasing demands for literacy (Chall & Stahl, 2008). However, most learners are unable to use reading as a tool for learning new information. They are unable to read. Reading difficulties are usually detected in childhood, but it takes someone knowledgeable to identify that a child has a reading difficulty. If no interventions are put in place, reading difficulty can affect someone through adulthood.

It is important to note that reading difficulties are real. According to Douglass (op. cit.), a moderate percentage of children read significantly below their mental ability, meaning that they have a reading difficulty.

When one looks at this scenario, it means that teachers who teach reading to learners with reading difficulties face a lot of challenges. According to Ministry of Education (1992), most teachers have been working in exceptionally difficult circumstances: too many pupils in classes, teaching materials are not enough and pupil attendance may be erratic. Furthermore, the under staffing levels especially in rural schools has worsened the problem. One teacher has to attend to more than one class hence being overburdened. As a result, it poses a challenge for teachers to identify and spend more time with those learners who have reading difficulties.

Identification of learners who experience reading difficulties should be done early for remediation to have an impact. Unfortunately in Zambia, data for identification of non-readers often lacks classroom relevance and therefore learners' reading difficulties are not prevented (Kalindi, 2005). It is against this background that this study tried to identify factors that contribute to reading difficulties and investigate the challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

1.2 Rationale of the study

Research suggests that the levels of reading in Zambian schools do not give a good picture of the standards of education (Matafwali, 2005). Although reading may seem like something which comes about naturally, it is really a struggle for some children to acquire reading skills. As a result, many of them are forced to repeat an academic year because of their poor performance. Worse still, some of the pupils drop out of school because they develop a negative attitude towards school. However, not much is known about the kind of reading difficulties that pupils face as they are reading as well as the challenges that teachers face in teaching reading to grade six pupils/learners hence the need to conduct this study.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The ability to read seems to be very important if one is to succeed in life. "Reading and writing are basic skills that a child should master during their first school years to be able to assimilate new knowledge and skills in future" (Paananen, et. al.: p. 25). Ideally, pupils are expected to be fluent in reading by the time they reach grade six because reading skills are taught during the first three years of primary education as earlier mentioned. It is also argued that without the ability to read, one's performance in other school subjects might get affected (OECD/UNESCO, 2000).

However, there are many children that encounter reading problems in Zambia to an extent that some of them might complete 7 years of primary education without the ability to read even a three letter word. This condition may sometimes cause them to repeat an academic year or drop out from school (MoE, 1992). Results from most studies carried out on reading indicate that most pupils are not able to read according to what is expected of their grade level. A study conducted in Zambia by the Southern Africa Consortium for Measuring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 1995 found that 97.6% of the grade six (6) learners were unable to read (Kelly, 1999). It is against this background that this study sought to establish the factors that that lead to reading difficulties. The study will further indentify challenges that teachers experience in teaching reading.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The following were the objectives that guided the study:

1.4.1 General objective

The general objective of this study was two fold;

- To identify factors contributing to reading difficulties among grade six learners.

- To identify challenges that teachers face in teaching reading to grade six learners.

1.4.2   Specific objectives

- To find out the effect of physical home environment on learners' reading ability.

- To explore gender differences in reading ability.

- To identify what methods teachers used in teaching reading to learners.

- To investigate measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties.

- To find out teachers' perceptions of causes of reading difficulties.

- To find out if teachers conducted diagnostic assessments in reading.

- To find the relationship between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are teachers' perceptions on the causes of reading difficulties?

- Does the physical home environment have a negative effect on one's reading ability?

- Are boys more susceptible to reading difficulties as compared to girls?

- What are the methods used by teachers in teaching reading to learners?

- Do teachers conduct diagnostic assessments in reading?

- What measures do teachers put in place against reading difficulties?

- Is there a significant relationship between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners?

- What are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading to learners?

1.6 Significance of the study

The ability to read is an important skill in today's modern world where so much information is transmitted in written form. It is important that people have reading skills whether they are in school or not.

The choice of this research topic emanated from an observation from past research that, levels of reading difficulties among primary school pupils are very high and Zambia is not an exception (Kelly, 1999). Zambia could possibly be having thousands of children who have severe reading problems which have not been detected. Therefore there is need to identify and understand these reading difficulties early in life and the challenges they bring about so that the situation could possibly be changed for the better.

This study involved grade six learners from Chadiza and Chipata districts of eastern Zambia. This group was chosen because, the following year, they are supposed to be in grade seven to write their examinations which are to be read and answered in English without anybody's help. These examinations are very critical as they determine whether the pupil will proceed to secondary education or not. Therefore, it is expected that by the time a pupil reaches grade six, s/he must be competent in reading.

The other reason for choosing learners in grade six is that, reading skills are usually taught during the initial three (3) years of primary education (Paananen, et al, 2009). Therefore, the assumption is that by grade six (6) pupils would have been competent readers.

It is hoped that this study will, to a reasonable extent, help teachers in general, special education teachers, therapists in various fields and other relevant stakeholders know how to handle children with reading difficulties.

It is often said that, '*children are the future leaders*'. What kind of future can it be if the leaders are not able to read? Children are a major component of any given society and their competence in all aspects of life is critical for the functioning of society at large.

It is hoped that this study has therefore, contributed to information generation in this domain. It is one way of building up a far greater knowledge and evidence base of problems, interventions and what works with this group of young people.

1.7 Operational Definition of Research Terms

1.7.1 Reading

This is a term used to refer to a deliberate process of looking at and understanding written language (Williams, 1998 in Kalindi, 2005).

1.7.2 Reading Difficulty

This is a term used to refer to an unexpected failure in learning to read, write or spell in spite of normal senses, normal intelligence and adequate opportunity and motivation (Peyrard-Janvid, et al, 2004). For purposes of this study, reading difficulty is the unexpected failure to read fluently and this includes mispronouncing, omitting, substituting as well as adding words.

1.7.3 Home Environment

The home environment can be defined as a setting which contains features of the literacy and living environment(Barnett & Casper, 2001). The living environment includes physical objects such as housing variables(Wachs, 2003). In developing countries, measures of the home environment include quality of housing and kind and source of facilities such as water, light and fuel(Aria & de Vos, 1996; Arimah, 1992; Ngorosho, 2009). For the purposes of this study, home environment has been designed to refer to availability of a reading table and source of light.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the background of the study. This chapter reviews relevant literature on reading difficulties according to the objectives of the study. The review is subdivided into the following categories-

(i)   Causes of reading difficulties.

(ii)   Physical home environment.

(iii)   Gender differences in reading.

(iv)   Methods of teaching how to read.

(v)   Diagnostic assessment in reading.

(vi)   Remediation of reading difficulties

(vii)   Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading

2.1 Causal Factors of Reading Difficulties

There seems to be great controversy on what the causes of reading difficulties are. Some scholars relate reading difficulties to neurological factors while others relate them to environmental factors. Discussions have been held in the United States of America and Scandinavian countries to find out whether reading difficulties are caused by psychological or neurological factors (Maruyama, 2007). Reading difficulties are complex and the causes are difficult to pin point.

Maruyama (2007) cites three considerations which support the view that reading difficulties are caused by neurological factors. These are, disorientation and disorganisation in the recognition of visual patterns due to brain damages, hereditary relationship of reading

disability and the interrelationship between visual, auditory, temporal and kinaesthetic disorientation and disorganisation. Mando (2008) indicates that reading failure is mainly caused by failure to acquire phonological awareness and skills in alphabetical coding.

Ojanen (2007) says reading difficulty can be a result of inadequate teaching. Teachers have a lot of work in teaching literacy skills so that a lot of children would become fluent readers. Environmental factors also contribute to one having reading difficulties. For example, the home and school environments. If there is no one to motivate the child at home as well as in school, it will be very difficult for a child to develop interest in reading. Furthermore, teachers also have their own perceptions of what causes reading difficulties.

2.2 Home Environment

According to Paananen, et. al (2009), the home environment plays a role on pupils' reading ability. It can affect someone either positively or negatively. In the home environment, there are many factors which can cause someone to have reading difficulties. These include; mother tongue interference, lack of motivation, lack of text books and reading materials, parents' literacy levels, effects of poverty (e. g poor nutrition, lack of proper furniture for studies), kind/nature of lighting system, lack of support by parents or guardians and the community at large. The home environment is very important for a child's growth in all aspects of life and this includes education. For one to thrive academically, a conducive home environment is very cardinal.

2.3 Gender Differences in Reading.

Generally, girls tend to do better than boys when it comes to reading. In the past, studies on gender differences in educational performance mainly focused on the underachievement of

females (OECD/UNESCO, 2000). However, things are not the same anymore. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in (OECD/UNESCO, ibid) suggests that the trend has changed and now females perform better than males when it comes to reading.

The tendency for females to be good performers in reading seems to be global. In most of the countries on average, it has been argued that females reach higher levels of performance in reading literacy than males. The better performance of females in reading is substantial particularly in Albania, Finland, Latvia and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where it is equal to or higher than 50 score points, half of one international standard deviation (OECD/UNESCO, ibid).

Furthermore, in the process of child development on one hand, girls usually speak their first words earlier than boys. As a result, girls in general tend to acquire their language faster and develop large vocabularies than boys (Rathus, 2006 in Carducci, 2009). On the other hand, boys tend to have problems when it comes to reading and in most cases, their reading is below their grade level.

These gender differences in reading literacy worldwide may also be as a result of broader societal and cultural contexts or of educational policies and practices. In most societies, parents tend to be gentle with the girl children as they are growing up. This could probably be due to the fact that girls are considered to be '*a weaker sex*' . Parents tend to spend more time talking to and smiling at and demonstrating more emotional expressiveness to and focusing more on emotions when talking to their infant daughters than their infant sons (Martin et al. 2002 in Carducci, ibid).

Boys are usually engaged in rough games from an early age. There is no much talking done except actions where boys are generally taught to be strong and independent from the onset.

Because of this early emphasis on language ability for girls, it has been suggested that they are more likely to rely on verbal skills as they interact with others which will help them to further develop skills (Carducci, op. cit.).

One of the scientific explanations for linguistic oriented skills favouring girls may lie in biological forces. The left hemisphere of the brain, which is central to language may mature more rapidly in girls than in boys (Diamond et. Al.,1983 in Kail, 2007). This could be the reason for girls being better than boys when it comes to reading.

2.4 Methods of Teaching Reading

It is very common in a classroom situation to find both slow and fast learners. Some are good in reading while others are poor readers. In this kind of situation, it all depends on the teacher to use those methods of teaching reading which will help the poor readers.

 Unfortunately, most of the teachers do not have adequate knowledge on how to help such learners with special needs. The kind of training that teachers get does not adequately prepare them to handle all pupils according to their needs. Most pupils require close supervision if they are to perform better in academic work. As a result, even when the teacher knows that a particular pupil is a poor reader, s/he is not in a position to help (Kalindi, 2005).

From this scenario, it can be said that, teachers use the same method of teaching for all pupils in a classroom despite one being a good or poor reader. All the necessary materials can be in place but this will not help improve the skills of poor readers as long as the teacher, who is the key person in this whole process is not competent enough to help the poor readers (Kalindi, 2005). This means that the poor readers are not given a chance to improve

themselves where reading is concerned. The good readers have an advantage in this case and the poor readers are left out of the learning process.

Teaching normally starts with the smallest and easiest things and children learn to read and write longer and more complicated things as time goes by (Lyytinen, 2006). Learning to read is a gradual process. Today, a child will learn to read letters in the alphabet, the next day the child will be able to read words, then sentences and so on.

It is important to note that most teachers work under harsh conditions such as, attending to so many classes in a day, too many pupils in one classroom, inadequate reading materials and experiencing irregular attendance at school by pupils (MoE, 1992). Furthermore, there are no incentives to motivate the teachers especially those in remote areas. As a result, such teachers will have no drive to concentrate on poor readers. It is up to the pupil whether s/he has understood or not. The methods of classroom approaches to reading , such as the 'look and say' method, resulted in most pupils in primary schools' level of reading in English to be inadequate for learning to take place (Kalindi, 2005).

There is also the Primary Reading Programme (PRP) whose aim is to provide child centred classroom instructions. However, it has not been easy to attain this goal due to the high number of pupils in classrooms hence making it difficult for teachers to offer education on a one-to- one basis for those children with special needs (Matafwali, 2005). The classrooms are just too crowded hence stressing the teachers. These disadvantages those pupils with special needs as teachers are too tired to concentrate on such pupils on an individual basis as earlier mentioned.

Lyytinen (2006) goes on to say that, there are traditional methods of help which involve one-to-one teaching with a teacher, doing some extra exercises and giving more time in written

examinations. But in a country like Zambia, this is very difficult to achieve due to the high pupil teacher ratio - there are few teachers attending to huge numbers of pupils.

2.5 Diagnostic Assessment in Reading

Diagnostic assessment in reading is very important if children with reading difficulties are to be helped. The Inclusive Schooling Programme (INSPRO) places those children with reading problems in the same class with those who do not have reading problems without taking into consideration the extent of the problem. As a result, most of the children with reading difficulties may go unnoticed more especially in the early stages of their primary education. For this reason, it is cardinal that children having reading problems are identified using available assessment methods so that they get positive results from early intervention (Matafwali, 2005). A problem is better solved while it is still in its infant stage unlike waiting until it gets worse because it might require a lot of time and intensive effort. This means that it might be very difficult to solve the problem.

2.6 Remediation of Reading Difficulties

Learning how to read is a process which begins early in the life of a child, (Torgesen, Wagner and Roshotte, 1994). Even before a child reaches school going age, parents and other care givers usually try to teach the child to master letters of the alphabet. From there, the child is taught how to read words and so on until s/he starts going to pre-school or primary school, for those children who might not have an opportunity to attend pre-school.

As soon as parents or teachers notice that the child is having difficulties in reading, it is important to put the necessary measures in place. Interventions must be started as soon as possible before the problem gets out of hand. One remediation programme used in countries like Finland is the 'Ekapeli' which is a computer based learning game which helps the child

to become fluent in letter sound connections. The Ekapeli was developed by Professor Heikki Lyytinen in 2003. This game is now widely used and other language versions of the game have been tested (Kachenga, 2008).

According to research evidence, it is very difficult to catch up or become fluent readers once learners lag behind in the language –based skills of reading unless intensive measures are put in place (Matafwali, 2005). Early intervention is very cardinal as it can help in ameliorating the problem rather than waiting until it is too late.

There is need to know the causes of reading difficulties before intervening. It is very difficult for a problem to be solved without understanding its cause. For example, if it is found that the cause of the reading difficulty is lack of phonological awareness and skills in alphabetical coding, there is need for teachers to be trained on the letter-sound correspondence methods of teaching which are based on alphabetical codes (Mando, 2008). These teachers will in turn help the pupils with reading difficulties.

2.7 Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading

In virtually every class, there could be a learner with a reading difficulty. As such, during their career, every teacher meets several learners for whom reading is laborious, and even learners who think that they cannot read. Teaching these learners is a challenge for the teachers and the entire school (Paananen, et. al., 2009). Classroom effectiveness of teachers heavily depends on their knowledge of the subject matter and their pedagogical skills. Unfortunately, most teachers are not oriented towards helping poor readers in their classes. In their training, they were not adequately prepared to teach all children according to their needs. Therefore, even in cases where reading materials are adequate, reading skills of poor readers are not improved the most important person, who is the teacher in this case does not know how to help the poor readers (Kalindi, 2005).

It is also important to bear in mind that, teachers have been working under difficult circumstances such as, too many pupils in classes, erratic pupil attendance and others (MoE, 1992). When there are too many pupils in a classroom, it becomes difficult for the teacher to give individual attention especially to those who may be lagging behind in reading. Furthermore, serious shortages of teaching and learning materials, as well as poor staffing especially in remote areas also make it a challenge for teachers in teaching reading (MoE, 2008). A teacher may have the required skills in teaching reading, but it becomes difficult for him/her to teach effectively if the necessary teaching and learning materials are not in place. Poor staffing levels means teachers have to attend to more than one class hence being overburdened. In turn, they will not be able to pay particular attention to those learners who have difficulties in reading.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed related literature to the study in order to guide the development of the research methodology which is given in this chapter. The chapter is divided into the following sub-sections; research design, main study, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedure, data analysis, data interpretation, limitations and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research designs. This was because , "no single method can give the subtle variations in ongoing human experience" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 12). Quantitative data was derived using a quasi- experimental approach because there was no control for all confounding variables (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Qualitative data was analysed thematically, that is, according to themes. Kombo and Tromp(2006) define themes as main subjects that come up in a discussion.

3.2 Pilot Study

Before the main study was conducted, a pilot study was carried out in October, 2010. The inclusion criteria used in the selection of tools in this study was that tools should be standardised. However, the objectives of the pilot study were to test the assessment tools in the following ways;

• Acquaintance with the assessment tools.

• To ensure that instructions were clearly understood by the respondents.

- Reactions of respondents to the use of assessment tools (whether with interest or difficult).

- Their relevance to the objectives of the study.

According to Keat (1981), it is important to pre-test test the tools because it helps the researcher redesign the tools in case s/he does not seem to get the right information from the participants.

A total number of eight(8) respondents were included in the pilot study, that is, four(6) learners and two(2) teachers from one school.

The response from the teachers and the learners was good despite the questionnaires being bulky. It was time consuming but worthwhile because all the questions were relevant to the objectives of the study. The respondents showed interest in the study and were cooperative.

The only challenge was on the names that were used in the reading passages for pupil questionnaires. It was difficult for the learners to know whether it was a person's name or it meant something else. For instance, the name Koome. This prompted the researcher to replace such names with local ones in the main study. In general, ambiguities in the tools were corrected.

3.3 Population

The target population was all grade six learners and grade six teachers in Chadiza and Chipata districts.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Owing to the fact that the focus of this study was to identify reading difficulties amongst the grade six learners, the study population consisted of primary school pupils. Selection of the

schools was done using simple random sampling procedure. The following were the schools that participated in the study; from Chadiza district, there was Kapachi, Vubwi, Matemba, Katantha and Chipanje Basic Schools. From Chipata district, there was Hillside, St. Betty, Katopola, Umodzi and Mpezeni Basic Schools.

One hundred and ninety two (192) learners and fourteen (14) teachers participated in the study. For the learners, the sample was chosen using simple random sampling because it provides an equal chance of being selected (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Therefore, each of the learners had an equal chance of participating in the study. Class registers were used to select learners using the simple random sampling method. The purpose of the study was explained to the learners and they were given a chance to ask any questions which they might have had and they were given feedback. From each school, twenty learners were sampled and gender balance was taken into account. The learners were interviewed on a one - to – one basis with the researcher using questionnaires (See appendices E to J).

Below is a table summarising the distribution of learner respondents;

Table 3.1: Distribution of learner respondents.

District	Boys	Girls	Total
Chadiza	47	47	94
Chipata	49	49	98
Total	**96**	**96**	**192**

3. 5 Research Instruments and their Administration

The instruments used were developed by the researcher for the purpose of the present study. The pilot study done prior to the main study determined the suitability of these instruments.

Listed and discussed below are the four instruments that were used to collect data for the study.

3.5.1 Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was used to get particulars of the teachers as well as their educational qualifications. In addition, the teacher questionnaire was used to assess how teachers identified learners with reading difficulties.

3.5.2 Checklist on Reading Errors

The checklist on reading errors was used by teachers to bring out the problems that they faced in dealing with pupils who were unable to read, common mistakes that pupils made when reading as well as the performance of pupils in class.

3.5.3 Word List Levels 1 – 5

The word list levels 1 to 5 was used to find out the number of correct words that each participant was able to read. Each level had 20 words.

3.5.4 Reading Passages Levels 1 – 4

Each participant was given four passages to read. As the participant was reading, the researcher took note of the mistakes made. These mistakes included; words substituted, words mispronounced, words added and words omitted. The first two passages had six questions each at the end and these were supposed to be answered by the respondents. The last two passages had ten questions each, which were also supposed to be answered by the respondents. The aim of these questions was to assess how well the pupil was able to comprehend the material he/she had read.

3.6 Main Study

Data collection was carried out between October and December, 2010. During this period, participants were contacted from selected schools in Chadiza and Chipata districts, Zambia.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was scheduled to take place between November, 2010 and January, 2011. However, the exercise was completed in early December before the learners went on holiday. This allowed the researcher to be on time with the University of Zambia calendar which was scheduled to commence on 10th January, 2011.

Interviews were conducted from classrooms and at times, from outside under some trees. This was in cases where the classrooms were occupied. The teacher respondents were given instructions on how to answer the questionnaires and they too were given a chance to ask questions where they were not clear.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was facilitated through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was then coded according to the variables under investigation and the total score was calculated. Descriptive statistics used were measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) where as inferential statistics were analysed using chi-square. The testing of hypotheses was done at $P = 0.05$ significance level. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. In this method, the researcher read through all scripts many times in order to get a total understanding for them. Thereafter, the researcher condensed the responses to make briefs more succinct and meaningful, without distorting the participants' ideas. The responses were summarised, in line with the principles stated by Creswell (1994). The formulated phrases were clustered into themes which were shared by the participants' scripts.

3.9 Limitations of the study

There were three main challenges faced in the field. Firstly, the researcher had intended to have twenty (20) teachers in the sample regardless of gender and two hundred (200) pupils with an equal representation of gender. However, only fourteen (14) teachers and one hundred and ninety two (192) pupils were in the sample. This was due to financial constraints as well as that, during the time of collecting data, most of the teachers who teach grade six pupils were not in school as they were involved in the 2010 Census exercise. Therefore, instead of having two teacher respondents per school, some schools only had one teacher to respond.

Secondly, there was a high rate of absenteeism amongst the grade six learners. This was due to the fact that, at the time of collecting data, it was the period that those learners in grade seven were writing their final examinations and the other pupils were asked to stay away during this period. Furthermore, it was the start of the rainy season and some learners especially in Chadiza district were going to the fields to assist their families with cultivating the land. Other learners were herding cattle while some were burning charcoal hence absenting themselves from school.

The last limitation of the present study was that, it was not possible to conclusively say that the nature of lighting system and having a reading table at home had an effect on learners' reading ability.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Matters of ethics were highly considered in this study. To start with, permission was sought from The University of Zambia Research Ethics Committee (UNZAREC) to go ahead with the study. Thereafter, permission was sought from the office of the Provincial Education Officer, Eastern province, the District Education Board Secretaries in Chadiza and Chipata districts for using the schools in the study.

At the school level, the head teachers gave consent for the learners to participate in the study. The teachers who were part of the sample also gave consent to participate. The aim of the study was clearly explained to the learners and the teachers prior to the commencement of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY.

4.0 Introduction

Having outlined the research methodology in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the findings of the study to identify factors contributing to reading difficulties among the grade six learners and the challenges teachers face in teaching reading to this category of pupils. The data collected during the study was subjected to statistical analysis to verify the hypotheses stated. Data was analysed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 11.5). Pearson correlation, measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) as well as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to analyse the results. Qualitative data was analysed thematically.

The findings are presented under the following headings;

1. Professional qualification of teachers.

2. Teachers' perceptions on the causes of reading difficulties.

3. The effect of lighting system at home on learners' reading ability.

4. The effect of availability of a reading table at home on learners' reading ability.

5. Gender differences in reading ability.

6. Methods used by teachers in teaching reading.

7. Measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties.

8. Diagnostic assessment of reading difficulties.

9. Teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and the actual performance of learners.

10. Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading.

4.1 Professional qualification of teachers.

Professional qualification of teachers has been reported in literature to influence the ability of teachers in identifying reading difficulties among pupils. Depending on the kind of training that teachers received, they might or might not be able to identify specific reading errors that pupils make.

Table 4.1: Professional qualification of teachers.

Professional Qualification	Frequency
Untrained	1
Certificate	5
Diploma	7
Not indicated	1
GRAND TOTAL	**14**

4.2 Teachers' Perceptions on the Causes of Reading Difficulties.

The present study sought suggestions from teachers as to what the causes of reading difficulties were. Ten (10) teachers in the study indicated that reading difficulties were a result of language and communication problems, three (3) teachers cited psychological factors whereas one (1) teacher mentioned environmental factors.

4.3 Home environment

The home environment in this study was operationally defined as those things at home which might have an effect learners' reading ability.

4.3.1 The effect of the nature of lighting system at home on learners'reading ability.

 The present study examined the nature of lighting system at home and its effect on learners' reading ability.

There was a moderate effect of nature of lighting system at home on learners' reading ability. (f (10, 154) = 3.188, p < .05, partial   = 9.4).

Only 9.4% of the variance that account for reading ability can be accounted for by lighting system. The table on the next page gives a summary of the results.

Table 4.2: Analysis of variance on kind of lighting system and availability of a reading table at home.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	177.977[a]	10	17.798	2.505	.008	.140
Intercept	1278.782	1	1278.782	179.954	.000	.539
Lighting	113.285	5	22.657	3.188	.009	.094
Table	3.203	1	3.203	.451	.503	.003
lighting * table	63.422	4	15.855	2.231	.068	.055
Error	1094.350	154	7.106			
Total	6582.000	165				
Corrected Total	1272.327	164				

a. R Squared = .140 (Adjusted R Squared = .084)

4.3.2 The effect of availability of a reading table at home on learners' reading ability.

The present study examined the availability of a reading table at home and its effect on pupils' reading ability.

There was no significant effect of having a reading table at home on reading ability. (f (10, 154), .451, p > .05, partial = .3). Having a reading table at home accounted for only 3% of the variance in the reading ability of the learners. The results are presented in table 4.2.

4.4 Gender differences in reading ability.

This study sought to explore the gender differences in reading ability. It was found that 42.9% of the boys committed errors as they read compared to 35.7% of the girls. Only 21.4% of the learners did not commit errors.

Table 4.3: Gender differences in reading ability

BOYS THAT COMMITTED ERRORS	GIRLS THAT COMMITTED ERRORS	PUPILS WITHOUT ERRORS	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
83 (43%)	69 (36%)	40 (21%)	192

4.5 Methods used by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

This study sought to find out what methods teachers use in teaching reading. The results indicate that nine (9) teachers preferred using the whole word method. Two (2) teachers used the phonics method and one (1) teacher used the syllabic method. The other two (2) teachers used the look and say method.

4.6 Measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties

According to the findings, eight (8) teachers used remedial work which helps the poor readers to develop their reading skills. Two (2) teachers reported using reading competition, another two (2) teachers used intensive reading as a way of helping learners with reading difficulties. Furthermore, two (2) teachers used other methods.

4.7 Diagnostic assessment of reading difficulties.

According to the findings of this study, all the fourteen (14) teachers in the sample said they conducted diagnostic assessments of reading difficulties. Seven (7) teachers said they assessed learners on a monthly basis and six (6) teachers did it on a weekly basis. One teacher did not give any response.

In assessing reading difficulties, teachers tended to use the same methods they used in teaching reading. According to the findings of this study, two (2) and three (3) teachers used phonics and word method respectively. The other two (2) teachers used the look and say method. Lastly, two (2) teachers used group circles and five (5) teachers used other methods.

Table 4.4: Assessment of reading ability.

Do you assess learners' reading ability?	Number of teachers
YES	14
NO	0
TOTAL	**14**

Table 4.5: Frequency of assessing reading ability.

How often do you assess reading?	Number of teachers
Weekly	6
Monthly	7
No response	1
Total	**14**

Table 4.6: Methods used in assessing reading.

What methods do you use in assessing reading?	Number of teachers
Phonics	2
Word method	3
Look and say	2
Group circles	2
Other methods	5
Total	**14**

4.8 The relationship between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners.

Teachers were able to identify specific reading errors that learners usually made in reading. These errors included omitting, substituting, mispronouncing and adding words. Once the teacher identified a particular leaner to have a certain reading error, there was a correlation with that learner's academic performance. If the learner frequently committed reading errors, even the performance in class was most likely to be poor.

Generally, there was a moderate correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance by learners.

Table 4.7: Learners' performance on given reading tasks.

	Academic performance	Omitting words&letters	Substituting words&letters	Mispronouncing words&letters	Adding words&letters
Academic performance	1	.404**	.454**	.410**	.327**
		.000	.000	.000	.000
	191	188	190	189	190
Omitting words & letters	.404**	1	.852**	.761**	.789**
	.000		.000	.000	.000
	188	188	188	188	188
Substituting words & letters	.454**	.852**	1	.833**	.850**
	.000	.000		.000	.000
	190	188	190	189	190
Mispronouncing words& letters	.410**	.761**	.833**	1	.754**
	.000	.000	.000		.000
	189	187	189	189	189
Adding words & letters	.327**	.789**	.850**	.754**	1
	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	190	188	190	189	190

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1- tailed).

There was a moderate relationship between academic performance and omitting of words and letters. (r = .404, N = 188, p = < 0.05, one tailed). It was a fairly moderate correlation: 16.3% of variance explained.

There was a moderate correlation between words substituted and academic performance (r = .454, N 190, p < 0.05, one tailed). It was a moderate correlation: 20.6% of variance explained.

There was a moderate correlation between words mispronounced and academic performance (r = .410, N 189, p < 0.05, one tailed). It was a fairly moderate correlation: 16.8% of variance explained.

 There was a moderate correlation between words added and academic performance (r = .327, N 190, p < 0.05, one tailed): 10.7% of variance explained.

Table 4.8: Correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners.

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Teachers' ability	1					
2. Omitting words and letters	.40**	.13				
3. Substituting words and letters	45**	.19*	85**			
4. Mispronouncing words and letters	41**	.13	76**	83**		
5. Adding words and letters	.33**	.27**	79**	85**	75**	
Mean	2.28	4.05	3.56	3.47	3.22	3.63
SD	.75	1.36	1.33	1.30	1.29	1.33

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (one – tailed).

* correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (one – tailed).

4.9 Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

This study sought to find out the challenges that teachers face in teaching reading. According to the findings, 4 of the teachers cited lack of teaching and learning materials while poor pupil background was rated second by 3 of teachers as challenges faced in teaching reading. Furthermore, 3 of the teachers did not respond, 2 and 1 of the teachers mentioned teaching pronunciations and big number of pupils in one classroom respectively as challenges faced. Lastly, 1 of the teachers mentioned other reasons.

Table 4.9: Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading.

Kind of challenge	Number of teachers
Lack of teaching materials	4
Poor pupil background	3
No response	3
Teaching pronunciations	2
Big number of pupils	1
Other reasons	1
Total	**14**

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS.

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the findings of the study. In this study, reading difficulty was defined as the unexpected failure in learning to read fluently and this includes mispronouncing, substituting, omitting as well as adding words. This chapter discusses the findings of the study with reference to the reviewed literature. It is divided according to the specific objectives of the study

1.   Teachers' perceptions on the causes of reading difficulties.

2.   The effect of nature of lighting system at home on learners' reading ability.

3.   The effect of availability of a reading table at home on learners' reading ability.

4.   Boys' susceptibility to reading difficulties compared to girls.

5.   Methods used by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

6.   Measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties

7.   Diagnostic assessment of reading difficulties.

8.   Correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners.

9.   Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

5.1 Teachers' perceptions on the causes of reading difficulties

According to literature, there are many causes of reading difficulties and it is not easy to single out one factor as the major cause. The causes of reading difficulties are intertwined and these include environmental factors, biological factors, psychological factors, etc. Results from this study corroborate with the literature which suggests that reading difficulties are not

caused by a single factor (Maruyama, 2007). However, it is important to note that some factors play a greater role than others. According to the teachers interviewed in this study, the leading cause of reading difficulties is language and communication problems. The teachers were of the view that, there is too much of mother tongue interference and pupils cannot communicate in English. Considering the study areas, which are Chadiza and Chipata, pupils use Chewa and Ngoni respectively at home and at school in the initial stages of primary education according to the government policy. Unfortunately, this trend seems to continue even as pupils proceed to higher grades which is not supposed to be the case. The mother tongue seems to have an upper hand compared to English which is the official language.

The other cause of reading difficulties from the teachers' point of view is psychological factors. These include; lack of motivation, laziness, lack of support from parents as well as past failure in school work. Some pupils just feel lazy to concentrate on reading especially if they have been failing in schoolwork. They feel that it is just a sheer waste of time. If the parents or guardians are not there to support their children, they cannot be motivated to improve in their reading skills.

Environmental factors seem to play a role when it comes to reading difficulties, that is, according to one of the teachers as well as the literature. Environmental factors include parents/guardians' illiteracy, poor learning environment and poor teaching. It is important to note that the environment includes the home as well as the school environment. Usually, if the parents/guardians are illiterate, it is rare that they encourage their children to concentrate on their studies. However, despite being illiterate, there are still some parents/guardians who can motivate their children to concentrate on school work because they realise the importance of education and do not want their children to undergo what they went through.

5.2 The nature of lighting system at home and its effect on one's reading ability

There is sufficient research evidence which suggests that the home environment contributes to learners' ability to read and write (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Hoff, 2003; Jariene & Razmantiene, 2006).This study sought to examine the effect of the nature of lighting system at home on one's reading ability. These results suggest that some variance in the scores on reading ability can be accounted for by the nature of lighting system at home. The findings also indicate that the majority of the learners are not affected by the nature of lighting system at home when it comes to reading. This finding is inconsistent with the literature which indicates that home environmental factors do affect learners' reading ability. According to the findings, only 9.4% of the variance that account for reading ability can be accounted for by the nature of lighting system at home.

However, research evidence which suggests that home environmental factors have an effect on learners' reading ability cannot be ruled out because the home environment consists of so many factors which can affect one's reading ability and the nature of lighting system just contributes a negligible percentage to one's reading ability. The home environment is significant in so many ways and this has always stimulated a lot of discussion. The family's primary responsibility is to provide care and nurturing to the young ones but the family is also important for the child's education (Paananen, et. al., 2009). Therefore, in my opinion, an environment which is so appreciative and supportive is fundamentally important to supporting reading. It prevents reading difficulties or stops them from worsening. When a child encounters problems in reading, the least that family members or indeed the community at large can do is to provide appreciation and security. Children with reading difficulties must not be treated as outcasts. They must be motivated so that this recurrent failure does not reduce the child's self-esteem as a learner. It can be argued that consistent support helps children with reading difficulties to regain their self confidence.

It is also important to note that since the nature of lighting system at home has got little bearing on one's reading ability, there are other factors in the home environment which do. Paananen, et. al., (ibid) argues that social problems of the family, insufficient support, insufficient sleep or nutrition, ambiguous daily routines, violence aimed at family members or the child himself/herself, the effect of a family member's emotional problems or anxiety of the child, etc are some of the factors which may manifest in daily situations as reading difficulties for the child.

5.3 Effect of availability of a reading table at home on learners' reading ability

An attempt was made to explore the effect of availability of a reading table at home on learners' reading ability. The present study findings indicate that the availability of a reading table at home has got no effect on one's reading ability. As earlier alluded to, the availability of a reading table at home also falls under home environmental factors. Literature on reading indicates that there are certain things in the home environment which can affect one's reading ability. For instance, if the environment is not cognitively stimulating, that is, if there are no reading books, reading table, jigsaw puzzles, building, etc., children may not be motivated to learn to read or write (Rie, Mupuala & Dow, 2008).

According to the findings of the present study, the availability of a reading table had no effect on one's reading ability. Only 3% of the variance that account for reading ability can be accounted for by having a reading table at home. This means that whether one has a reading table at home or not, it would not have an effect on his or her reading ability. Someone can still be able to read from the floor, bed, lap and so on.

5.4 Gender differences in reading ability.

When it comes to gender, the findings of the study indicate that girls were doing fairly well compared to boys. These results corroborate with literature evidence which suggest that generally, girls tend to do better than boys when it comes to reading and this trend seems to be global (OECD/UNESCO, 2000). The reason could be that English is considered to be a feminine subject, just like reading generally. Furthermore, literature suggests that parents tend to spend more time talking to their girl children from an early age where as boys are engaged in rough games. Not so much talking is done except action(Rathus, 2006 in Carducci, 2009). One scientific explanation favouring girls in linguistic oriented skills lies in biological forces. The left hemisphere of the brain which central to language may mature much earlier in girls than in boys(Diamond, et. Al. 1983 in Kail, 2007). However, it is important that both boys and girls get interested in learning how to read in English as this is a requirement if one is to make progress in many aspects of life. During the study, it was observed that if one did not know the word, girls would put more effort by trying to read it in their local language whereas boys would just be silent.

5.5 Methods of teaching reading

Learning to read is a gradual process which starts with the smallest and easiest things. As time goes by, one learns to read words, sentences and so on. According to literature, most of the teachers use the same method of teaching reading regardless of whether one is a good or poor reader. In this study, the methods of teaching reading that teachers used were explored. It was discovered that teachers used so many different methods of teaching reading. These included syllabic method, phonetics, skimming, scanning, whole word method, alphabet and other methods. The methods and classroom approaches to reading such as the 'look and say' method, resulted in most pupils at primary school level of reading in English to be inadequate

for learning to take place (Kalindi, 2005). Most of the teachers preferred using the phonics and whole word method as they said that it was easy for the pupils to learn using these methods.

5.6 Measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties.

This study explored the measures put in place by teachers against reading difficulties. According to literature, some teachers do not know how to assist poor readers because they were not trained to do so. However, the findings of this study do not agree with the literature as teachers know what measures to put in place if one is a poor reader. Findings of this study indicate that some teachers may assist poor readers by putting them in reading circles, giving them remedial work and many other ways. However, assisting such children on a one-to-one basis was not possible due to the fact that most teachers, especially in rural schools work in exceptionally difficult circumstances such as lack of teaching and learning materials, too many pupils in classes, absenteeism, etc. Most teachers use remedial work to assist those pupils with reading difficulties to develop their reading skills.

5.7 Diagnostic assessment of reading difficulties.

In as much as teachers are able to identify specific reading errors that some learners have, the question still remains as to how these learners are assisted to catch up with their peers who are fluent in reading. Literature indicates that it is not rare to find a learner who cannot read or write fluently. During their course of work, most teachers meet several children for whom learning is laborious and this poses a challenge for the teacher (Paananen, et.al.,2009). The Inclusive Schooling Programme (INSPRO) places those children with reading difficulties in the same class with those who do not have problems without taking into consideration the extent of the problem. Therefore, it is cardinal that children experiencing reading difficulties

are identified using those assessment methods which are available so that they get positive results from early intervention (Matafwali, 2005).

Unfortunately, most of the teachers do not have adequate knowledge on how to help such learners with special needs especially considering the way INSPRO is tailored. Learners with reading difficulties and those without reading difficulties are placed in the same class hence disadvantaging the former because they are likely to require special attention. Therefore, early intervention and individualised teaching are very cardinal if learners with reading difficulties are to be assisted. The kind of training that teachers get does not adequately prepare them to teach all pupils according to their needs. As a result, even when the teacher knows that a particular pupil is a poor reader, s/he is not in a position to help (Kalindi, 2005). There could be sufficient reading materials around but of what use are they if the most important person who is the teacher and is supposed to help pupils develop reading skills does not know anything in this regard?

5.8 Correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners.

An attempt was made to explore the correlation between teachers' ability to identify specific reading errors and actual performance of learners. A moderate correlation was established.

Findings of this study indicate that teachers were able to identify errors committed by pupils while reading and the effects on actual academic performance. Teachers were able to note that a particular pupil omits, substitutes, mispronounces or adds words while reading. It was found that the most error that pupils committed was mispronunciation of words, especially for those from rural schools. This could have been due to mother tongue interference because most of the pupils in rural schools were still taught in the indigenous language which is *Chewa* in almost all the subjects even at grade six level. This seems to have a negative impact

on the pupils. Most of them were refusing to read in English saying unless the questionnaires were in *Chewa* because it is the language they are used to. It can be argued that this is what contributed to most of the pupils mispronouncing words because they were trying to read them in a vernacular way.

Furthermore, the results of this study seem to contradict the argument from (MoE, 1996; Tambulukani, 2001; Sampa, 2003) which indicates that, initial reading in Zambia was carried out in English, a language that most children have very little or no knowledge of when they are enrolled in school contributed to the low levels of both reading and writing shown by most Zambian children. From the above scenario, it seems that the policy of teaching children in their local language first can work well with those in urban schools. This is because, after that, they continue to learn in English which is the official language. For those in rural areas, it seems to disadvantage them because even in the upper grades, pupils continue learning nearly all the subjects in their local language. At this point, the problem could be with the teachers because they are the ones who are supposed to guide the pupils. Teachers are supposed to teach in local language when it is time to do so.

In addition, the more errors that the pupil committed, the more negative effect it had on the actual academic performance. Take for instance, if a pupil had a problem of mispronouncing and substituting words, even when it came to comprehension work, they were not able to answer the questions because they were not able to properly understand the passages due to the same errors.

5.9 Challenges faced by teachers in teaching reading to learners.

According to the findings of this study, teachers face so many challenges in terms of teaching reading. The Ministry of Education (1992) cites among other challenges lack of learning and teaching materials and high number of pupils in one classroom. These are in line with the

findings of this study. Teaching and learning materials are cardinal if effective learning is to take place. These materials guide the teachers on what to teach and the learners are able to learn from their materials. In addition, teaching pronunciations is a challenge for teachers. Most of the learners tend to pronounce English words according to the way they pronounce vernacular words. This takes a lot of effort on the teachers' part in trying to make the learners differentiate the pronunciation of English words and vernacular words.

Furthermore, limited number of school places and low staffing levels lead to classes being overcrowded. This makes it difficult for teachers to teach effectively in such an environment. Even when teachers notice that a particular learner is lagging behind in reading, individualised attention to such a one may be difficult as the teacher is overburdened. Poor pupil background has also been reported to be a challenge for teaching reading to learners. This goes back to the home environment where children have to be motivated when it comes to reading. According to Paananen, et. al., (2009), children are part of the environment and whatever difficulties they experience today may spring from far history of the family. The family is important for the child's progression in his/her studies. If children are not motivated to read from an early age, chances are that, they might experience difficulties when they get into school.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of the study were discussed with reference to the literature reviewed. The current chapter presents the summary and recommendations.

6.1 Summary.

The purpose of the study was first to identify factors that cause reading difficulties among grade six pupils. Secondly, the study was designed to identify the challenges that teachers face in teaching reading to grade six learners.

Findings of this study indicate that grade six learners have reading difficulties. These include omitting, substituting and adding words as well as mispronouncing words. This is a big challenge for the teachers who teach these learners. This can be frustrating for both the learners and teachers especially where the teacher does not understand the causes of reading difficulties, how to assess those learners with reading difficulties as well as how to help out. According to the findings of this study, teachers have their own perceptions about the causes of reading difficulties and their own way of assessing learners with reading difficulties. In addition, it was found that boys are more susceptible to reading difficulties as compared to girls hence, the need for both sexes to be encouraged to learn to read fluently.

The home environment can also negatively affect the reading ability of learners. Many are the factors that can contribute to this such as poverty, illiterate levels of parents or guardians, etc. However, the factors which were explored in this study, (nature of lighting system at home and availability of a reading table at home) did not affect the reading ability of learners. This

is not to say that the home environment has no effect on one's reading ability but the home environment itself consists of so many factors.

6.2 Recommendations.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made and may be utilised by relevant institutions such as the Ministry of Education in an effort to alleviate reading difficulties among primary school learners in general and grade six learners in particular;

- The teacher- learner ratio must be reduced so as to enable individual attention especially when it comes to assisting pupils with reading difficulties. In this regard, government has to employ more teachers and build more schools.
- Government and other stakeholders must provide more teaching and learning materials in schools where these items are lacking.
- Boy children must be encouraged to learn to read as this would enhance their understanding of other subjects at school and life in general.
- Teachers must receive training on methods of conducting diagnostic assessments in reading so that they are able to identify those learners with special needs such as reading difficulties since these teachers may come across such learners as they execute their duties considering the fact that there is INSPRO.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

1. This study only looked at one province (eastern) of Zambia and was limited to two districts out of the eight districts in that province. A similar study should be carried out in other provinces.

2. This study mainly concentrated on reading difficulties. Sometimes reading difficulties may occur along side writing difficulties while at times, they may occur independently. Therefore, more studies are recommended to cover writing difficulties, difficulties to do with mathematics and so on.

3. This study focused on government schools. A similar study could be carried out to look at reading difficulties in private schools.

Finally, it is my hope that the issue of reading difficulties will be given the attention it deserves by the government and other stakeholders so that the problem is reduced.

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CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

TITLE OF PROJECT: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO READING DIFFICULTIES IN GRADE SIX LEARNERS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING READING.

Name of Researcher: Linda Mwanamukubi

You are being asked to join a research study. The goal is to identify reading difficulties among school pupils and challenges that teachers face in teaching reading to grade six pupils.

First, you need to know all about this study and what you will need to do if you join this study. We will answer any questions that you have. After we have told you everything and you understand, you can decide if you want to join or not. If you agree to join, you will need to sign. You can keep a copy and we will keep a copy.

Information Sheet

It is your choice to join this study.

- You may choose not to join the study.

- If you choose to join the study, you can leave the study at any time.

- If you choose to join the study, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to.

- If you choose to join the study, no information about you will be given to anyone.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE STUDY:

If you want to join this study, first you need to sign this form. When you join the study, you will need to answer two questionnaires (questionnaire for teachers and checklist on reading errors).

BENEFITS TO YOU:

By joining this study, you can help other teachers to understand how methods of teaching reading and other factors can affect reading in children.

COSTS TO YOU:

It does not cost anything for you to join this study.

YOUR RECORDS WILL BE PRIVATE:

The information we will get from you will be kept private. This information will be kept in safe storage that does not have your name on them. Only the code number will be used.

PERSONS TO CONTACT IN CASE OF PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS:

Linda Mwanamukubi	Dr . L. M. Imasiku
Cell : 0977 650403	Cell: 0977 396176
The University of Zambia	The University of Zambia
Psychology Department	Psychology Department

Please tick to confirm

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated…………………………………………………………………… for the above study.

- I have had enough opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

- I fully understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

- I fully understand that data collected during the study , will be looked at by responsible individuals from (The University of Zambia) or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my records.

- I agree to take part in the above research study

…………………………………………   ………………………………

Name of Person taking consent   **Signature**

Date………………………………………………………………

CONSENT FORM FOR SCHOOL AUTHORITIES

TITLE OF PROJECT: FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO READING DIFFICULTIES IN GRADE SIX LEARNERS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING READING.

Name of Researcher: Linda Mwanamukubi

You are being asked to join a research study. The goal is to identify reading difficulties among school pupils and challenges that teachers face in teaching reading to grade six pupils.

First, you need to know all about this study and what your pupils will need to do if they join this study. We will answer any questions that you or they have. After we have told you everything and you understand, you can decide if you want your pupils to join or not. If you agree that your pupils can join, you will need to sign on behalf of your pupils. You can keep a copy and we will keep a copy.

Information Sheet

It is your choice to join this study.

- You may choose that your pupils do not to join the study.

- If you choose that your pupils join the study, they can leave the study at any time.

- If you choose that your pupils join the study, they do not have to answer any questions that they do not want to.

- If you choose that your pupils join the study, no information about them will be given to anyone.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE STUDY:

If you want your pupils to join this study, first you need to sign this form. When they join the study, we will ask them questions using questionnaires to assess how fluent they are in reading.

BENEFITS TO YOU:

By joining this study, you can help your pupils to read more effectively because of the in depth understanding they will have from the materials they will be exposed to.

COSTS TO YOU:

It does not cost anything for your pupils to join this study.

YOUR RECORDS WILL BE PRIVATE:

The information we will get from the pupils will be kept private. This information will be kept in safe storage that does not have their names on them. Only the code number will be used.

PERSONS TO CONTACT IN CASE OF PROBLEMS OR QUESTIONS:

Linda Mwanamukubi   Dr. L M. Imasiku

Cell: 0977 650403   Cell: 0977 396176

The University of Zambia   The University of Zambia

Psychology Department   Psychology Department

Please tick to confirm

- I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated…………………………………………………………………… for the above study.

- I have had enough opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

- I fully understand that my pupils' participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

- I fully understand that data collected during the study , will be looked at by responsible individuals from (The University of Zambia) or from regulatory authorities, where it is relevant to my pupils' taking part in this research. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my pupils' records.

- I agree that my pupils can take part in the above research study

……………………………………………   ………………………………..

Name of Person taking consent   **Signature**

Date……………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………

A Questionnaire for Teachers on Identification of Learners with Reading Difficulties

Directory Information

Please provide the following information by filling in as requested

(i)   Your age bracket: Below 20 [   ]   21-30[   ] 31-40 [   ]   41-50 [   ]above 50 [   ]

(ii)   Gender: Male[   ]   Female[   ]

(iii)   Name of your school _____ Location _____ Division

_____ District_____ Province_____

(iv)   Your professional grade   P3[   ]   P2[   ]   P1[   ]   S1[   ] Diploma[   ]   AT [   ]

B.Ed[   ]   Untrained   [   ]   Other   (specify)

_____

(v)   Year of graduation from teacher training college _____

(vi)   Area of specialization _____

(vii) Indicate your number of years of teaching experience in lower and upper primary by

ticking in the relevant place below:

Lower primary classes (Grade 1to 3)

1-3yrs [   ]   4-to 7yrs [   ] 8-10yrs [   ]   11-14yrs [   ]   Over 15yrs [   ]

Middle Primary classes (Grade 4 to 5)

1-3yrs [ ]   4-to 7yrs [   ]   8-10yr [   ]   11-14yrs [   ] Over 15yrs [   ]

Upper primary classes (Grade 6-7)

1-3 [ ]   4-7 [ ]   8-10 [ ]   11-14 [ ]   Over 15 [   ]

(ix)   What is the total number of pupils in your class _____?

(x)   Indicate the number of boys and girls in the class: No. of Boys _____

        No. of Girls _____

B. Information on Teaching of Reading and assessment

1.   a. Number of pupils in your class?   Boys _____   Girls ___

        b. Number of repeaters in your class   Boys _____   Girls _____

        c. How many of them cannot read at class level?   Boys [   ]   Girls [   ]

        d. How many students in your class cannot read?

        Words   _____

        Sentences   _____

        Passages   _____

2.   Indicate whether or not you teach reading by ticking accordingly.

        Yes [   ]   No [   ]

2b.   If yes, indicate by ticking the description that best describes your level of confidence

        in the teaching of reading.

        Very confident   [   ]

        Confident   [   ]

Not confident   [   ]

Not sure   [   ]

c.   State all the methods of teaching reading that you were taught in college if you went to college? _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____

d.   Which   of   the   methods   mentioned   above   do   you   prefer?

_____

_____

3a.   Do you ever assess pupils' reading ability?   Yes_____   No_____

b.   What   methods   do   you   use   to   assess   students'   reading   ability?

_____

_____

_____

c.   Briefly describe how you assess pupils' reading ability

_____

d. How often do you test children's reading ability?

Every week   [ ]

Every month [ ]

Every term   [ ]

Every year   [ ]

4a. Which basal do you use when teaching reading/class textbook?

_____

_____

b. What are the weaknesses and strengths of the basal reader/textbook?

_____

_____

c. Which other supplementary material do you use in teaching reading?

_____

_____

5a.   Do you experience difficulties in teaching reading to your grade 6 pupils?

       Yes   [ ]   No   [ ]

b.   If yes, list some of the difficulties you encounter in your class.

_____

_____

_____

c.   What strategies have you used to help poor readers in your class?

_____

_____

_____

d.   Which strategies have worked best for you?

_____

_____

_____

e.   What difficulties do you encounter in teaching poor readers?

_____

_____

6a.   Do you have any resource person or persons you can consult to help you address the

problems   you   encounter   in   teaching   poor   readers?

_____

_____

b.   How would you rate the help you get from the ones you have mentioned above?

(i)   Adequate help   [   ]

(ii)   Average help   [   ]

(iii)   Little help   [   ]

(iv)   No help at all   [   ]

c.   What advice (if any) have you tried that has worked?

_____

_____

_____

7.   Are there areas you still need assistance?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]

Specify

_____

_____

8.   How would you rate the importance of teaching reading efficiently in lower primary

classes (1 - 3)?

(i)   Very important   [   ]

(ii)   Important   [   ]

(iii)   Average   [   ]

(iv)   Less important   [   ]

(v)   Not important   [   ]

9.   How does the Continuous Assessment Test (CATs) assist you in improving teaching

of

reading in your class?

(i)   Very much   [   ]

(ii)   Much   [   ]

(iii)   Average   [   ]

(iv)   Not much   [   ]

(v)   Continuous assessment is not relevant in the teaching of reading   [   ]

b. How often do you give Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) in reading to your

learners?

(i)   Monthly   [   ]

(ii)   Once a term   [   ]

(iii)   Twice a term   [   ]

(iii)   Once a year   [   ]

(iv)   Other(s), (specify)

_____

_____

_____

10a.   Which of these methods of teaching reading do you use most frequently and why?

Phonics method (Decoding Phonetic method)   [   ]

The alphabetic method   [   ]

Whole word method   [   ]

Language experience approach   [   ]

Other(s), specify

_____

_____

Why?

_____

_____

_____

b.What difficulties do you experience when using each of the methods you have

mentioned above?

_____

_____

_____

11.   Which textbooks do you use as reference in your class when teaching reading?

_____

_____

_____

C. Information about children characteristics

12 a.   Are there pupils who have repeated class 6?

        Yes [   ]   No [   ]   Not sure [   ]

        b. How many have repeated in total? _____

        c. How many of the repeaters if any are boys and how many are girls?

        No of girls_____   No of boys _____

13a. How many pupils in your class have reading difficulties?

Boys _____ Girls _____

b. How many of these pupils are repeaters in class 6?

Boys _____ Girls _____

c. List the common characteristics of children with reading difficulties that you have

identified?

_____

_____

_____

14. What are the characteristics of a good reader in class?

_____

_____

_____

15. What are the characteristics of a poor reader in class?

_____

_____

D. Methods of Assessment and Remediation

16.   What do you think is the most common cause of reading difficulties in your Grade 6 pupils? (Tick one or more)

(i)   Child cannot communicate in English   [ ]

(ii)   Mother tongue interference   [ ]

(iii)   Lack of motivation   [ ]

(iv)   Laziness   [ ]

(v)   Chronic sickness   [ ]

(vi)   Lack of text books and reading materials   [ ]

(vii)   Past continuous failure in school work   [ ]

(viii)   Lack of support by parents   [ ]

(ix)   Effects of poverty   [ ]

(x)   Genetic (Inherited problem)   [ ]

(xi)   Parents' illiteracy level   [ ]

(xii)   Overloading of the curriculum   [ ]

(xiii)   Poor teaching   [ ]

(xiv)   Poor learning environment   [ ]

         Other (s), specify   [

_____

_____

_____

_____

17. In your opinion, how does inability to read impact on your pupils' overall

performance in other subjects?

English comprehension _____

Writing composition _____

Other subjects _____

18a. What does your school policy say in assisting pupils who cannot read at all?

Lower _____

Middle _____

Grade 6_____

b. Suggest what additional help can be provided to improve the standards of reading

performance   in   your   school

._____

_____

_____

19a. What strategies do you use to remediate reading difficulties in the children in your

class?

_____

b.   What are the most effective ways that you have used to help poor readers?

_____

_____

_____

20.   What recommendations do you have to improve reading among the grade 6

pupils?

_____

_____

_____

21a.   Do you think there is a relationship between reading proficiency and class work

scores?_____

_____

_____

b.   What other suggestions do you have that would enable primary schools to reduce the

number   of   pupils   with   reading   difficulties?

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

Checklist on Reading Errors (To be filled by the teachers)

Child's Name _____ School _____

Zone _____ Sub-Location _____

Division_____ District _____ Province _____

What are the most common difficulties you notice in Grade 6 pupils who are unable to read?

_____

_____

_____

Go through the following list and tick in the column that corresponds to the frequency of each difficulty according to your experience.

Child	1. Not at all	2. Less Frequent	3. Average	4.More Frequent	5.Most frequent
1. Omits a letter, word or sentence of (e.g. Jane- a cat)					
2. Substitutes a word or letter for another (e.g. The house, horse was big)					
3. Mispronounces words of (pottle or bottle)					
4. Adds letters or words (e.g. the cat ran (fast) after the rat.					

Child's Academic Progress Records (to be filled by the child's teacher)

    (i)   State the number of days the child has been absent from class for the last one year.

    _____

State   the   reasons   for   the   child's   absence

_____

_____

_____

_____

(ii) Describe the child's academic performance

      _____

_____

_____

(iii)Any other information not contained in (i-ii)

_____

_____

_____

Record form for individual children:

Instructions: Child fills in his/her own particulars with the help of the researcher:

Section one:

a) Child's particulars

Child's name _____

School _____ Class_____

Province_____ District _____ Division_____

Location _____ Zone_____

Child's birth date _____ Age _____

Gender:　　**Male**_____ **Female**_____

Names of the father_____

Occupation_____

Names of the mother_____

Occupation_____

b)　Child's Status at Home

Number of siblings:　Brothers _____　　　　Sisters _____

Child's order of birth in the family

1ˢᵗ [ ]   2ⁿᵈ [ ]   3ʳᵈ [ ]   4ᵗʰ[ ]   5ᵗʰ[   ]

6ᵗʰ [ ]

Other (Specify) _____

_____

_____

What kind of light do you use at night to read at home? (E.g. Electricity, Lamp etc)

Specify:_____

_____

_____

Do you have a reading table or a reading corner at home?

Yes   [ ]   No[ ]

APPENDIX F

WORDLIST LEVELS 1-5

Child's Name: _____

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
1. good	1. Village	1. Subject	1. narrow	1. monitor
2. house	2. politely	2. neat rows	2. affection	2. heifer
3. knife	3. colourful	3. whisper	3. cruelty	3. bulk
4. pupil	4. open	4. syringe	4. neglect	4. dull
5. numbers	5. dawn	5. bandage	5. burst	5. lantern
6. grandchild	6. position	6. responsibility	6. depart	6. relations
7. thumb	7. clothes-line	7. beg	7. dignity	7. newsmen
8. mud	8. shopping	8. grown ups	8. plough	8. beach
9. weather	9. elbow	9. beyond	9. celebrate	9. landscape
10. uniform	10. toothbrush	10. opposite	10. community	10. horizon
11. sweep	11. wheelbarrow	11. pedestrian	11. workers	11. conversation
12. clock face	12. fare	12. pilot	12. computer	12. route
13. comb	13. scarf	13. countryside	13. queue	13. package
14. handkerchief	14. slippers	14. moonlight	14. trolley	14. honesty
15. aeroplane	15. hippopotamus	15. wound	15. wrap	15. boutique
16. shopkeeper	16. stripes	16. fishmonger	16. receive	16. corrosion

17. giraffe	17. showers	17. parcel	17. paper	17. headgear
18. branch	18. weed	18. dial	18. punch	18. seal
19. fishermen	19. tractor	19. internet	19. athletics	19. culture
20. lake	20. gourd	20. inadequate	20. coach	20. sympathy

Number of words correct in   Level 1 _____, Level 2 _____, 3 _____,

Level 4 _____, Level 5 _____

Reading Passage Level 1

Words Omitted

_____

Child's Name: _____

LEVEL ONE

Substituted

_____

Reading

Yesterday was Saturday. In the morning it was warm and sunny. Chikondi

was in the field. He played with his friends.

Mis-
pronounced

_____

Later it was cold and windy. There were black clouds in the sky. It rained.

Chikondi and his friends ran home.

Added

_____

Chikondi was wet and cold. The sitting room was dry.

Mother gave Chikondi some milk. The milk was warm. Chikondi was very

happy.

Time taken in
reading

_____

In the afternoon the rain stopped. It was sunny. Chikondi and his friends

walked back to the field. They played hide-and-seek.

No. of correct

Answer these questions

1. Was it raining in the morning?

2. What did the friends do in the morning?

3. Why did Chikondi run home?

4. Was it sunny in the afternoon?

5. Was the milk cold?

6.The friends played………………-and-seek

Reading Passage Level 2

Child's Name: _____

	Words Omitted
LEVEL TWO	_____
Reading	Substituted
	_____

John, Peter, James and Andrew are walking in the park with Andrew's father. 'Look at this tree,' says Andrew's father. 'It is very old. It is two hundred years old.'

'Wow!' say the children. They look up at the tree. 'It has lovely red flowers,' says Peter. 'Yes, it has,' says Andrew's father. 'How many different flowers can you see on the tree?'

Mis-pronounced

_____

'I can see red and yellow flowers,' says Andrew.

'I can see some plastic bags,' says James.

Added

_____

'Plastic bags can stay on your trees and bushes for a long time. They make the place look very dirty. We must put plastic bags in bins,' says Andrew's father.

'I am good at climbing trees. Can I remove those plastic bags from the tree?' asks Andrew

Time taken in reading

_____

'No, we will do that on Saturday,' says Andrew's father.

Number of

Answer the questions

1. How many people are walking in the park?

2. How old is the tree?

3. Where should we put old plastic bags?

4. Who is good at climbing trees?

5. What will the friends do on Saturday?

6. Why is it good to put rubbish in a bin?

APPENDIX I

Child's Name: _____

Words Omitted

_____

LEVEL THREE

Mabvuto falls from a mango tree

Mabvuto and his friends climbed a mango tree. They had seen some rip Substituted

mangoes. They also wanted to look for eggs in a nest on one of the branche _____

They saw eggs. When Mabvuto was putting the eggs in his pocket, he fell ar

hurt himself. His friends called his parents.

Mis-
pronounced

His parents took him to hospital in an ambulance. They found a long queue _____

patients. They did not follow the queue. The nurses carried Mabvuto on

stretcher to the doctor's room. He was placed on a flat table.

Added

The doctor checked Mabvuto. She wrote everything about Mabvuto's injur _____

He had broken an arm and a leg.

He was placed on a wheelchair and taken to the injection room. They found

Time taken in
reading
nurse there. The nurse took a syringe and a needle from the cupboard. He gav

Mabvuto an injection. Mabvuto gave one loud yell when the needle touche _____

the skin.

The broken arm and leg were then dressed in a plaster. His wounds we

Number of
correct answers
dressed in a clean bandage. Mabvuto lost a lot of blood. Mabvuto was told out of **10**

_____

99

visit the hospital for dressing after four days. He was advised not to go to school for one week.

"Make sure you stay away from the birds and their eggs," the doctor told him.

Answer the following questions

1. Why is it not safe to climb trees?

2. What do you think happened to the eggs?

3. What happened to Mabvuto when he fell from the mango   tree?

4. Why did Mabvuto and his friends climb the mango tree?

5. Who took Mabvuto to the hospital?

6. What did the doctor do to Mabvuto?

7. What did the nurse take out of the cupboard?

8. What did the nurse do to Mabvuto?

9. Why did Mabvuto give 'one loud yell'?

10. What was done to Mabvuto's broken arm and leg?

Reading Passage Level 4

Child's Name: _____

	Words Omitted
	_____

LEVEL FOUR

	Substituted
	_____

It is a tyre burst

	Mis-pronounced

Taonga and Takondwa were delighted when they got on the beautiful sleek bus. It had side mirrors. There was a big colour television at the front and a toilet at the back. A courteous conductor checked their tickets and reminded them to fasten their seat belts.

_____

Added

_____

After watching TV for two hours, the boys fell asleep. They were woken by a loud bang. It sounded like a gunshot. The bus veered off the road and landed in a ditch. Everyone scrambled out in panic. 'It is a tyre burst,' the driver said when he got out of the bus.

Time taken in reading

_____

When the tyre was changed, everyone got on the bus again. It was only when everyone got into the bus again that Takondwa realized that his brother was missing.

Number of correct answers out of **10**

_____

'Conductor, please don't start the journey without my brother!' Takondwa called out.

Total no. of words missed

As they were all wondering what to do next, an elderly woman cried out. _____

'Help, there is a python here!' Everyone jumped up. 'I think someone is

Total no. of

transporting a snake on this bus,' she said, pointing at a sisal sack under the seat.

'I stepped on the sack and felt something warm wriggle. It must be a snake!' the woman shouted. 'Throw the sack outside!' someone said.

'Please don't harm me,' a voice said from inside the sack.

Taonga crawled out of the sack looking dusty and frightened.

'Isn't this the boy we were looking for?' someone asked.

'What were you doing in a sack under the seat, young man?' the conductor asked.

'I heard gunshots and thought we were being attacked. So I hid in the sack.' Everyone burst out laughing.

Questions

1. What three things show that the bus was modern?

2. What did the conductor ask them to do?

3. Why did the bus stop?

4. When did Takondwa realize that his brother was missing?

5. What made the woman think that there was a snake in the sack?

6. Why did Taonga hide in the sack?

7. What did Taonga do when the woman shouted?

8. What did the conductor ask Taonga?

9. What sounded like gunshots?

10. If you found a snake in a bus what would you do?