CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the investigation into the factors that affect reading levels among grade 3 pupils from selected schools in Livingstone and Kazungula districts. The chapter begins with background information on reading under which the importance of reading and goals of reading are discussed. It also involves a discussion of the importance of third grade reading, skills development, the importance of reading in the mother tongue, reading difficulties and interventions on literacy in Zambia. Further, the chapter gives a brief description of the purpose of the study, the specific objectives and research questions which guided the focus of the study. In addition, this introductory chapter highlights the rationale, limitations and delimitations, as well as operational definitions of the key terms used in the study. It ends by summarising all issues discussed in the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

Reading is a deliberate process of looking at and understanding written language (Williams, 1998). Reading should be a primary school's biggest priority, and goes on to say that the most important skill any child can leave primary school with is the ability to read independently and effectively for meaning. When a child starts school, reading becomes the primary way of learning. It is a means to understanding the world and a fundamental skill required to succeed in various aspects of both school and ordinary life, (Maynard, 2007).

1.1.1 The Benefits of Knowing How to Read.

The benefits of knowing how to read are varied and come in different forms. Some of the aspects have already been mentioned in the last comments of the immediate preceding paragraph or section. A child who is able to read at school is likely to perform well academically because whatever task is given requires the child to read and understand what is expected of him/her. Reading a story book or text, for instance,

develops a pupil's creativity by imagining what a particular character mentioned in the story looks like or imagining how a scene of the story is played out, thus, exercising and cultivating thinking skills. As a child practices reading, he/she develops good reading skills which can improve the ability to comprehend concepts and ideas in the texts being read. It also enhances the development of critical thinking that will enable the child to think and make good personal decisions in life. Reading also introduces children to new things and this broadens their interest in further reading. For instance, a pupil who reads a biography of Albert Einstein may be inspired to take Science lessons more seriously because he/she wants to be like the character he /she reads in the story.

Reading regularly increases learners' vocabulary especially where the children are oriented on the use of the dictionary whenever they meet a new or difficult word in the text. Another benefit, as stated by one of the studies conducted in the United States, is that reading can develop positive values in children (National Reading Panel, (NRP) 2000). The study stated that children who learn to read by the time they are in third grade are less likely to drop out of school or engage in different vices such as drugs, or end up in prison. The same research further revealed that reading increases a student's ability to concentrate, which can enhance some degree of comprehension and this is the vital goal of reading for school children.

Developing reading and comprehension skills early on in pupils is not only for passing school subjects but also a means of preparing them for the 'real world.' If pupils are able to read well they will not have problems understanding manuals, guides or contracts, vital documents and papers they would encounter when they join the world of work.

In terms of mastering the spellings of various types of vocabulary, especially during the formative years such as grades one to four, it requires regular reading of different materials containing words of new vocabulary. This means therefore that, learners' ability to improve their spelling skills and the ability to read them correctly depends partly on how often they see the same words in print.

Another benefit of reading regularly is the improvement of the students' writing skills. As they read different texts written in various forms they also learn different types of writing styles.

Reading is an active mental process where children use their brain. By reading regularly, their brain is trained to think more and become smarter. It is a fundamental skill builder for children because reading a lot of different subject materials helps clarify difficult subjects since the information provided goes deeper than just classroom discussion, (Isaac, 2007).

He also pointed out that reading improves children's vocabulary. In elementary school or early grades children learn how to infer the meaning of one word by reading the context of the other words in the sentence. The same principle applies and they get the same benefit from reading different materials.

In terms of improving concentration, this happens as learners focus their mind on the text being read for a long time. As this is done regularly, the brain gets used to concentrating on any materials being read resulting in learners understanding what they are reading.

Reading builds self-esteem. As children read different kinds of materials, they become better informed and more of experts on the topics they read about. This expertise translates into higher self esteem. Since they are so well read, peers look to them for answers and their feelings about themselves get better. Reading also improves creativity. Exposing a child to more new reading materials can enhance that child's creativity.

Reading is very important, which is not only about enjoyment but a necessity because it is the basic tool of education (Makotsi, 2005). Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exciting voyage to self discovery. It is the art of interpreting printed and written words, the most effective process of conscious learning which influences the extent and accuracy of information as well as the attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgement and action of readers (Panigrahi and Panda, 1996).

Learning to read is a sequential process where different skills are learned and each new skill builds on the mastery of previously learned skills. Each step in the process relates to one of the three components of reading, which are decoding, comprehension, and retention. These are the component tasks of reading and also in a general view, they are

progressive steps in learning to read, which move from sounds, to words, to sentences and paragraphs.

Beginning readers must also understand the concept of the alphabetic principle (the whole English alphabet and Chitonga alphabet) in order to master basic reading skills. The awareness of the alphabetic principle enables children to know that letters of the alphabet coupled with the understanding that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and the correspondence of spoken sounds to written language can make them attempt reading new words each time they encounter such words.

The points raised above show different benefits children can enjoy while still in school and also the benefits that they can utilize in later life of adulthood. They clarify the reasons for undertaking this particular study.

1.1.2 Goals of Reading in general

There are multiple principle goals of reading. The first general goal of reading is the acquisition of meaning from the ordered arrangement of symbols. In an alphabet writing system, for instance, each word is a collection of symbols that expresses a term or some meaning, which, when taken in conjunction with other words ordered to each other in a predetermined syntax, conveys some general meaning that the author intends the reader to acquire.

The second goal of reading is the reading to obtain understanding. Here the reader wishes to receive illumination of some discipline or set of facts from the author. He wishes to increase his understanding by coming to terms with the author of a given text or book, and subsequently reach an equal level of understanding.

The final goal of reading is reading to obtain information. The reader attempts to gain knowledge of facts or knowledge about the author himself, a reader may not be as concerned with understanding the arguments and parts of the book and the way these parts relate to the whole, but simply systematically inspects a book in order to obtain knowledge.

All these points above are very vital for the learner, especially if it is in the language that he/she understands competently and more relevant to his/her daily life encounters. The issue of mother tongue here plays a vital role in enhancing children's reading ability in order to obtain information, to gain understanding and finally to acquire meaning from what is being read.

1.1.3   Importance of Third Grade Reading

From early grades until third grade, children are learning to read. After third grade, they are reading to learn. From that point on, all their learning depends heavily on how well they can read. Those not ready by fourth grade are likely to struggle throughout their school years and are more likely to drop out, (Morgan 2010). The end of the third grade is a major milestone in child development. If transitioning from 'learning to read' to 'reading to learn' is unsuccessful, children are at risk of being left behind. According to the Children's Reading Foundation, up to half of the printed fourth grade curriculum is incomprehensible to students who read below that grade level.

Statistics show that nearly three out of four children in fourth grade with below-level reading skills never catch up (Powell 2007). For many of these kids, high school graduation becomes unlikely, as it, (high school graduation), can be predicted by third grade reading proficiency.

According to the National Research Council, (1998) 'academic success', high school graduation can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone's reading skill at the end of third grade. A person who is not at least a modestly skilled reader by that time is unlikely to graduate from high school. Without early reading success, even students who eventually graduate from high school are unlikely to gain the skills they need to qualify for tomorrow's high-tech employment opportunities.

1.1.4 Skills Development

According to the report by the United States National Reading Panel (NRP) carried out in 2000, some of the skills required for proficient reading were outlined as phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, phonology (sound-symbol correspondence), fluency,

vocabulary, and text comprehension including rapid automatized naming (RAN) of letters.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to distinguish and manipulate the individual sounds of language. This skill is critical for children who are still learning how to read.

Reading Comprehension is a complex cognitive process in which a reader intentionally and interactively engages with the text. It is heavily dependent on skilled word recognition and decoding, oral reading fluency, a well-developed vocabulary and active engagement with the text. If a learner has not yet reached this stage mentioned above, then, he/she may encounter difficulties in reading and comprehending a text.

One of the aspects of reading comprehension is fluency. The ability to read fluently is one of several critical factors necessary for reading comprehension. If a reader is not fluent, it may be difficult to remember what she/he has read and to relate the ideas expressed in the text to his or her background knowledge. This accuracy and automaticity of reading serves as a bridge between decoding and comprehension.

Another critical aspect of reading comprehension is vocabulary development. When a reader encounters an unfamiliar word in print and decodes it to derive its spoken pronunciation, the reader understands the word better, especially if it is in the reader's mother tongue or familiar language. Otherwise, the reader must derive the meaning of the word using another strategy, such as context, which is still very remote for most grade three readers. (Even to university students)

Rapid automatized naming is the ability to quickly recognise and say out the names of letters, objects and colours, and this predicts an individual's ability to read. It might be linked to the importance of quick retrieval of phonological representations from long term memory in reading.

Phonics is a teaching method that stresses the acquisition of letter-sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling. It helps beginning readers understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes), patterns of letter-sound correspondences and spelling, and how to apply this knowledge when they read. Although phonic work is necessary it is important to note that on its own it is not

sufficient to assist children to acquire the necessary skills. For children to acquire wider knowledge and adequate skills and understanding that they need to become skilled readers and writers, and be capable of comprehending and composing text, phonics needs to be combined with many other pre-reading skills. (Armbruster et al**.** 2003).

1.1.5   Importance of Mother Tongue

The importance of mother tongue in learning how to read is varied and contextual. Mother Tongue is a common language that is freely and comfortably spoken by adult generation both at home and outside to their successors in a community, and, it reflects one's culture and ethnic background. It is the means by which different groups within the society maintain their identities by using the language in a way which is specifically characteristic of their group and by which they can be identified.

When children are able to communicate in their mother tongue, either verbally or through written communication, they are able to express their inner thoughts, ideas and experiences competently. It is through language that we develop our thoughts, shape our experiences, explore our customs, structure our communities, construct our laws, articulate our values and give expression to our hopes and ideas in our lives.

Encouraging young children to learn their Mother Tongue helps them to develop self confidence, develop a sense of belonging, self-esteem and also enhances their unique identity within a multicultural society. This can be enhanced when adults give explicit explanations in mother tongue to situations or actions that children encounter in life but do not understand them. Some of their questions could be: 'Why do I have brown skin?' 'Why do we clap our hands when greeting elderly people?' and many others. When reasons for performing such actions are explained to children they will have a better understanding of their culture, appreciate it and defend their cultural identity.

Culture and traditions essentially go hand in hand with language, (Senadeera, 2006). When the language of instruction is not the mother tongue, it places double demands on the learner; the first one is the demand of language acquisition, and the second is that of literacy learning.   Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), affirms this when he states that

instruction through a language that learners do not speak has been called "submersion" because it is analogous to holding learners under water without teaching them how to swim.

The Quality Imperative - The Paper Commissioned for the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report, of 2005, points out language as one of the factors involved in delivering quality basic education as it is the key to communication and understanding in the classroom. Meaning, therefore that, if children are submersed in a situation where both language of instruction and the content itself are new, they cannot grasp anything from the learning experience that they are exposed to because the work load for the brain becomes more than what can be accommodated.

Ball, (2010), in Analytical Review commissioned by UNESCO, states that UNESCO has long recognized that the language of instruction as well as knowledge of languages play key roles in learning. In order to promote quality in children's opportunities to learn, UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report (2008a) points out there is need to recognize the importance of mother tongue instruction in early childhood and the first years of primary school.

It is important that children continue their development of mother language/tongue to a high level in all the skills of language: speaking, listening and understanding reading and writing. Additionally, maintaining and developing all aspects of the mother tongue also has a number of benefits. Firstly, it enables learners to remain in touch with the language and literature of their home culture, which gives them a strong cultural foundation on which to build other languages and experiences along the line of life. Secondly, it ensures continuous cognitive development while children learn the new language. Thirdly, it makes a positive contribution to the learning of the second language as they already have some skills that can be transferred and applied in learning the second language. It also allows children to participate in the life of their mother tongue community activities such as religious observance, celebrating cultural festivals and taking part in social activities.

Senadeera, (2006) points out that learning mother tongue and being able to read in mother tongue have a number of benefits, apart from what has been mentioned above. He explains that in terms of communication, by participating in activities organized

around the use of the mother tongue, learners acquire communication skills in the language that will enable them to widen their networks of interpersonal relations. It also enables the learners to use their mother tongue to establish and maintain good relationships with family members, especially grandparents and other relatives. With the use of mother tongue in a school environment, it is easy for learners to consult with the community on education and other problems faced in learning.

For cultural identity, Reed (2004), says that learners develop an understanding of the culture of their mother tongue language and they can use it as base for comparison with other cultures. They also develop an appreciation of the validity of different ways of perceiving and encoding experiences and of organising interpersonal relations to reach a deeper appreciation of their own personal identity and values. They also learn the everyday life patterns of their contemporary age-group, cultural traditional social conventions, historical roots, relationships with other cultures, cultural achievements, current events and regional and geographical concepts, historical evidence of civilisation in different countries including their own. The children who have a strong cultural identity learn to stand the pressure from peer group of different cultures in schools, and when they grow up, in work places and society at large.

Cultural heritage - Language is a means of transmitting the cultural traditions of ethnic groups to the second and later generations. Therefore, by learning to read in the mother tongue the total disappearance of certain language and cultures is prevented. The children gain knowledge and understanding of a range of subject matter related to their needs, interest and aspirations, as well as to other areas of their formal learning.

To strengthen the point above, one of the prominent statements from the conference on World Declaration on Education for All; Jomtien, (1990) states that literacy programmes are indispensable because literacy is a necessary skill in itself and the foundation of other life skills. Literacy in the mother tongue strengthens cultural identity and heritage.

The benefit of learning in mother tongue to the individual is that it provides the right to study his/her mother tongue and culture. This also preserves family bonds and lessening of cultural conflicts between generations. Learning mother tongue may be an avenue for occupation of translator, interpreter, or similar occupational pursuit, as well as useful in

trade and commerce. To the society, learning mother tongue is a means of increasing appreciation of the multi-cultural nature of the present countries or societies, and maintains linguistic and cultural diversity.

The objective of learning mother tongue should be to promote, foster and propagate the cultural heritage, within the framework of multiculturalism with a view to achieve the goal of unity in diversity in a more cohesive, equitable and harmonious way. Post, (1995), states that the great and the most powerful gift parents can give their child is to pass their language and their culture.

1.1.6 Reading

Despite the benefits outlined above that children might gain from reading, there are still a number of difficulties that they encounter in reading. Some of the difficulties have been discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Helping a child who is struggling with reading begins with understanding the difficulties the child encounters. In general, a reading difficulty represents a breakdown somewhere in the process of learning to read. However, individual difficulties are as individual as the child, and other factors may be related.

 Basic reading problems occur when it is difficult to understand the relationship between sounds, letters and words. Reading comprehension problems occur when there is an inability to grasp the meaning of words, phrases, and paragraphs. Signs of reading difficulty include problems with letter and word recognition; understanding words and ideas; reading speed and fluency; and, general vocabulary skills. Although problems may occur in any area, decoding, comprehension, and retention play a sign

1.1.6.1 Decoding

Decoding is the ability to translate print into language, a process often referred to as "using phonics." It is the process by which a word is broken into individual phonemes and recognized based on those phonemes.

Signs of decoding difficulty are problems in sounding out words and recognizing words out of context; confusing letters and the sounds they represent; slow oral reading rate – that is, reading word-by-word; reading without expression; and, ignoring punctuation while reading.

Reading requires the ability to map the phonemes heard to letters, and vice versa. When decoding skill doesn't come automatically the reader who is still learning how to read struggles to sound out every word because he/she cannot distinguish differences among phonemes.

1.1.6.2 Comprehension

Comprehension relies on mastery of decoding. Comprehension is important because it is the reason for reading. Readers who have strong comprehension are able to draw conclusions about what they read. Children who struggle to decode find it difficult to understand and remember what has been read. Since their efforts to grasp individual words are so exhausting, they have no resources left for understanding.

Grossen, (1997) in his paper 'THE RESEARCH BASE FOR *READING MASTERY*, SRA' explains that to gain meaning from text, comprehension, is the purpose of reading, but gaining meaning is not possible unless a reader can translate the printed words into the language they represent - which is decoding. Reading comprehension assumes decoding ability.

Difficulties in comprehension usually manifest by confusing the meaning of words and sentences; the inability to connect ideas in a passage; omission of, or glossing over detail; difficulty in distinguishing significant information from minor details and lack of concentration during reading. Children who have limited ability to read for meaning or comprehension may read more slowly, have a hard time following a text or story, have a hard time picking out important events, and usually feel frustrated. They may also have problems mastering new concepts in their content-area classes or completing given tasks and assessments because they cannot comprehend the texts and tests for these subjects.

1.1.6.3 Retention

Retention requires both decoding and comprehending what is written. This task relies on high level cognitive skills, including memory and the ability to group and retrieve related ideas. As students progress through grade levels, they are expected to retain more and more of what they read. From third grade on, **reading to learn** is central to classroom work. By high school it is an essential task.

Children who have retention difficulty are unable to remember or summarize what is read, difficulty in connecting what is read to prior knowledge, and, difficulty applying content of a text to personal experience.

1.1.6.4 Fluency

Meyer and Felton (1999) define fluency as the ability to read text rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (source) defines fluency as the ease or "naturalness" of reading.

Readers who are fluent recognize words automatically as they read silently. They can group words quickly in ways that help them gain meaning from what they read. Fluent readers read aloud effortlessly and with expression. Their reading sounds natural, as if they are speaking.

Fluent readers have the ability to read text accurately, quickly and with confidence. Fluency can be considered a bridge between the act of decoding words and the development of reading comprehension. They are also able to read quickly, know what the words are and what they mean, and properly expressing certain words, that is, putting the right feeling, emotion, or emphasis on the right word or phrase. As children become fluent readers, they begin to think less about the words and more about the meaning of the sentences they're reading and are able to respond to the material with emotion and thought.

1.1.6.4.1 The Importance of Fluency in Reading

Ehri (1998) notes that being able to read words by sight automatically is the key to skilled reading of text as it allows readers to process words in text quickly, without attention directed to the word itself. A first benchmark for fluency is being able to "sight read" some words. The idea is that children recognize at sight the most common words in written language, and, that instant reading of these words allows them to read and understand text more quickly.

Rasinski (2009) states that reading fluency has been identified as a key component in reading and in learning to read. A significantly large number of students who experience difficulty in reading manifest difficulties in reading fluency, this contributes to their overall struggles in reading.

1.1.6.5 Other Factors Affecting Reading Levels from other Studies

A number of researchers have ventured into finding out the factors that affect reading levels in children. Tytler (2010) identifies lack of fluency in the language the child is learning, and, reading skill that is below the material to be read, as some of the contributing factors to low reading levels in children.

Bus, points out that many plausible explanations for delay in reading shown by Zambian children is due to lack of reading material at home and in the surroundings; scarcity of books; absence of or failing preschool education; up to 80 pupils per classroom (over enrolment); loss of teachers because of HIV/AIDS (under staffed schools); a whole-language method that did not pay systematic attention to phonics; and, initial reading in and through English, a language that is unfamiliar to the majority of children.

Another group of poor readers is composed largely of children from families of lower socio-economic or minority status groups who enter school significantly delayed in a much broader range of pre-reading skills such as awareness of alphabet sounds and letters (Torgesen, 2002). Other factors associated with reading failure are more to do with the condition of the pupils, for instance high absenteeism rate, poor motivation, low self-esteem and hunger, tiredness and mistreatment of pupils by the caregivers -

teachers or parents. Scarborough (1991), found that if there is a history of reading difficulties in the family then there is a higher chance of a child having reading difficulties.

Halaar et al. (2008) carried out a study which pointed to the importance of early childhood language development as a strong foundation in later reading competence. They also found that nearly 60% of the relationship between early language ability and later reading ability was a result of shared environmental factors. That is, much of the environment of children that affects that competence in the syntactic-semantic realm also affects their reading competence. They concluded that the reasons children who have better language skills also have better reading outcomes are that the same environmental factors influence both language and reading; the family environment influences both; and, the family environment influences performance at both the pre-school and school ages.

1.1.7 Interventions on Literacy in Zambia

The National Assessment report of 2007, conducted by Examination Council of Zambia, (ECZ), revealed that the pupils' overall performance in mathematics was better on non-verbal items compared to verbal items, and worse of all on fractions. Most pupils could not read in English at the desired levels, this led the government to change the language policy.

The low literacy levels in both Zambian languages and English among primary school pupils in Zambia have been a concern of the government, particularly the Ministry of Education. Strives to address the problem have been undertaken and one of them was the change of national language policy in relation to literacy, where the initial literacy should be taught in a familiar language. A program called Primary Reading Program (PRP) was developed and adopted as teaching methodologies at Lower and Middle Basic Education levels. The main aim was to improve literacy levels among Zambian school children by using the mother tongue or familiar language of a particular area as medium of instruction in early grades of schooling. The argument behind this intervention and the language policy was that pupils learn to read and write more easily

in the familiar (Zambian) languages, and that they can more easily generalise the ability to read and write once learnt, to English and other subjects, (Examinations Council of Zambia, 2007).

The first pilot reading program was the Breakthrough To Literacy (BTL) course which was undertaken in 1998. It was developed by a South African NGO, called Molteno Project. The Zambian Ministry of Education piloted it in Kasama in Northern Province for one year and produced successful results. Children in Grade 2 were able to read and write equivalent to Grade 4 level or above. These results motivated the policy makers. They updated and Zambianised the course by working with the Molteno Project, and re-named the modified program, Zambian New Breakthrough To Literacy, (MoE, 2001).

The first phase of the Zambian New Breakthrough To Literacy was developed in 2000, and it was implemented in some districts of Western Province using Silozi, and some districts in Eastern Province using Chinyanja. The approach still produced favourable results in terms of reading levels.

The Primary Reading Programme (PRP), which consists of three components; New Breakthrough To Literacy (NBTL) for Grade 1 with emphasis on medium of instruction to be in mother tongue; Step In To English (SITE) for Grade 2, and Read On Course (ROC), for Grades 3 to 7, was adopted.

The effective use of PRP methodologies can ensure that learners acquire enough vocabulary in the initial literacy by the time they complete Grade 2 with the use of mother tongue. This can be the springboard to the learning of second language(s) in grades that follow. However, despite PRP interventions, and that the programme has been imbedded in the Ministry of Education curriculum reading levels in early grades are still low. The results do not seem to be as pleasing as the results during the pilot stage hence the study to determine factors affecting reading levels among grade 3 pupils in Livingstone and Kazungula districts.

1. 2 Statement of the Problem

Reading skills are the cornerstone for children's success in all other subjects along their line of education. Despite implementation of primary reading programme (PRP) in Zambia, pupils in lower grades of many schools still encounter challenges in reading in their local languages. Therefore, failure to acquire these reading skills at this stage of their education is an impediment to all other learning experiences for pupils. Specifically, the skills of reading in the local languages are taught in grades one to three.   This study, therefore, endeavoured to investigate factors that affect reading levels in Chitonga among grade 3 pupils in selected schools of Livingstone and Kazungula districts since this was their most familiar language.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study intended to find out factors affecting reading levels in Chitonga among grade 3 pupils in Livingstone and Kazungula districts.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study addressed the following objectives:

1.4.1   To find out factors affecting reading levels in Chitonga among Grade 3 pupils in Livingstone and Kazungula districts

1.4.2   To identify specific difficulties learners encounter in reading Chitonga.

1.4.3   To establish reading materials which are available in Chitonga for grade 3 pupils.

1.4.4   To identify strategies teachers use in teaching reading in Chitonga to grade 3 pupils.

1.5   Research Questions

In order to achieve the above objectives the study had the following specific research questions:

1.5.1   What are the factors that affect reading levels in Chitonga among grade 3 pupils in Livingstone and Kazungula districts?

1.5.2   What specific difficulties do learners encounter in reading Chitonga?

1.5.3   What kinds of reading materials are available in Chitonga for grade 3 pupils?

1.5.4   What strategies do teachers use in teaching reading in Chitonga to grade 3 pupils?

1.6 Significance of the Study

There are so many interventions that the Ministry of Education has been undertaking to address the problem of pupils' low reading levels especially at lower grades 1 to 4, and middle basic grades 5 to 7. However , there has not been any significant improvement in reading levels in the afore mentioned sections of the primary education.

The other reason this study had to be undertaken was that a number of researches have been carried out in other parts of the country as already stated above, but none has been directed at the grades and the areas this particular research is focusing on. This study, therefore, endeavoured to investigate factors that contribute to low reading levels among grade 3 pupils in selected schools of Livingstone and Kazungula districts.

The significance of this study is that since the generated findings will be availed to the schools under study and other stakeholders in the provision of education, it   will provide new knowledge and understanding to school administrators, grade 3 teachers and to other stakeholders about the kind of challenges grade 3 pupils encountered in reading. This can lead to some useful change in best practical application of the new knowledge by putting teaching strategies that can enhance acquisition of reading skills among pupils. Consequently, the school administrators will also have a clear focus on which to emphasize when monitoring their teachers, and finally other stakeholders will have a better understanding of challenges pupils face in reading, some may begin rendering support and for those who have been doing so may increase the support.

 Furthermore the findings may open more areas for other researchers to carry out more studies in areas that are not covered by this study.

1.7 Challenges faced during Data collection

The first challenge the researcher faced was that since she was one of the supervisors at the district level, teachers tended to behave as if the researcher went to monitor them. The researcher addressed this challenge by first explaining to the teachers and school managers that she was purely there to research and not to find faults in any one. The researcher also emphasized that the information being collected would be for academic purposes only.

Another challenge was absenteeism by pupils especially in Kazungula district. This was a challenge due a long distance from where the researcher came from as she had to go back to the same schools in order to administer both Tests and Interview Guides to pupils who had been absent the previous day.

Lastly, in some schools there was only one Grade 3 class and consequently, one Grade 3 teacher, but, the researcher required (4) four Grade 3 teachers per school as respondents. In such cases, the researcher requested the school management to involve teachers who had been teaching grade 3 within the last four terms and this worked well. Teachers who had been teaching grade 3 within the last four terms still had the vivid experience of teaching reading in Chitonga to grade 3 pupils.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

This study was confined to Livingstone and Kazungula districts only due to limited time within which to complete it, and concentrated specifically on grade 3 pupils in four selected schools of the two districts.

1.9 Operational Definition of terms:

> **1.9.1 Alphabetic Principle (Awareness) –** the pupils were exposed to both Chitonga and English Alphabet. Alphabetic awareness is the knowledge of letters of the alphabet coupled with the understanding that the alphabet represents the sounds of spoken language and the correspondence of spoken sounds to written language.

1.9.2 Alphabetic Understanding - the understanding that the left-to-right spellings of printed words represent their phonemes from first to last.

Decoding: The process of using letter-sound correspondences to recognize words.

1.9.3 Decoding Skill – the ability to decipher words represented by print

1.9.4 Language of instruction - The language of instruction in or out of school refers to the language used for teaching the basic curriculum of the educational system.

1.9.5 **Letter Combination:** A group of consecutive letters that represents a particular sound(s) in the majority of words in which it appears.

1.9.6 **Letter-Sound Correspondence:** A phoneme (sound) associated with a letter.

1.9.7 Local Language - the language spoken in the homes and marketplaces of a community, as distinguished from a regional, national or international language. (UNESCO, 2008)

1.9.8 Mother tongue instruction - the use of the learners' mother tongue as the medium of instruction. It can refer to L1 as a subject of instruction.

1.9.9 Mother tongue or mother language - a child's first language, language learned in the home from older family members. (UNESCO, 2003)

1.9.10 Phoneme blending – It is blending letter sounds

1.9.11 Phonemes – these are smallest meaningful units of speech sounds

1.9.12 Phonological awareness - an individual's awareness of the phonological structure, or sound structure, of spoken words. It is an important and reliable predictor of later reading ability in children.

1.9.13 Phonological segmentation – Analysis of words into phoneme sized units.

1.9.14 Poor readers – pupils who have not made satisfactory progress even after being given literacy instruction under New Primary Reading Programme

1.9.15 Reading – is a deliberate process of looking at and understanding written language (Williams, 1998).

1.9.16 Reading comprehension – This involves reading words from a text and having a clear understanding of what is written

1.9.17 Reading fluency - the ability to read phrases and sentences smoothly and quickly, while understanding them as expressions of complete ideas.

1.9.18 Reading problems – the initial difficulties children encounter in phonetic decoding and fluency in word identification as they learn to read.

1.9.19 Reading skills acquisition is the process of acquiring the basic skills necessary for learning to read; that is, the ability to acquire meaning from print.

1.10 Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into six chapters each focusing on a specific aspect of the whole research. The opening chapter is on background information to the research covering statement of the problem - a component that highlights the gravity of the problem; the purpose and objectives of the research.

Chapter two is concerned with reviewing different pieces of literature that are related to the topic under study. In this study the chapter starts with reviewing the literature concerning reading performance of third graders from a global perspective then to Africa and finally to the Zambian situation where findings from different studies are discussed.

The Third chapter deals with the methodology that was applied, the approaches, site where the research was conducted, population and sample size, sampling techniques, instruments used and procedures followed in collecting data. Lastly, how data was analysed is discussed.

Chapter four is mainly the presentation of findings while chapter five is where the findings are discussed in detail to give a picture of what has been taking place. The last chapter concludes the findings and makes recommendations to the appropriate stakeholders.

1.11 Summary of Chapter One

The chapter began with the background of reading which included the importance of reading and goals of reading. The next component looked at (i) the importance of acquiring reading skills in third grade, (ii) the importance of being able to read in

mother tongue, (iii) how children can be assisted to acquire reading skills and (iv) also examined the difficulties that children usually encounter in reading. Further, through a detailed discussion, the chapter highlighted the intervention that Zambia, through the Ministry of Education and other cooperating partners, has undertaken to address the challenges of literacy among school going children.

The chapter also gave a brief description of the purpose of the study, an outline of the specific objectives and research questions which guided the focus of the study. Finally, there was a discussion on the significance of the study, challenges faced during data collection and delimitations, and, operational definition of terms used in the study.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two discusses relevant literature on performance of pupils in reading from different countries, including Zambia, with the main focus on third graders. To have a broader perspective of different groups of pupils' performance in reading, the chapter opens with review of general performance of children in reading at global level then goes down to reading performance of children in Africa focusing on Nigeria, Malawi, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and lastly Zambia. In the case of Zambia, it examines reading levels in Zambia as revealed by Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SAQMEQ), Ministry of Education and many other local and international researchers. Finally, a concluding summary of the chapter will be presented at the end to draw attention to the important issues discussed.

2.1 Reading Performance at Global level

Acquiring competences in reading has been a big challenge in most parts of the world. Many studies, for instance, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) of 2009 have revealed that globally, reading levels by learners in early grades of school, especially at grade 3 level, are low and this is a big challenge in many countries. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) that was carried out in America in 2009 reports that 'millions of American children reach fourth grade without learning to read proficiently. It further comments that reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a crucial marker in a child's educational development.'

The National Adults Literacy Survey (NALS), (1992), which was carried out in the United States, indicated that one out of every four children grows up not knowing how to read. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) indicated that 44 percent of American 4th grade students could not read fluently, even when they read grade level stories aloud under supportive testing conditions.

Pinnell et al., (1995) indicated that 44 percent of American 4th grade students could not read fluently , even when they read grade level stories aloud under supportive testing conditions.

Another assessment carried out in the United States of America in 2003 found out that 37 percent of fourth graders and 26 percent of eighth graders could not read at the basic level. The National Assessment of Educational Progress of 2002, discovered that 26 percent of twelfth graders could not read at the basic level. This means, when reading grade appropriate text, these students could not extract the general meaning or make obvious connections between the text and their own experiences or make simple inferences from the text. In other words, they could not understand what they had read.

Learning to read is one of the most important skills learned during the elementary school years. Reading represents the major foundational skill for school-based learning, and reading ability is strongly related to opportunities for academic and vocational success. A critical transition takes place during elementary school—from *learning to read* up to third grade to *reading to learn* in fourth grade. Pupils who are not reading at grade level in third grade begin having difficulty comprehending the written material, which is a central part of the educational process in the grades that follow.

Researchers at Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago used longitudinal administrative data to examine the relationship between third-grade reading level and educational outcomes. They found evidence that students who were *at* and *above* grade level in third grade graduated from high school and attended college at higher rates than their peers who were *below* grade level.

Approximately 45 percent of students whose third-grade reading scores were *below* grade level graduated from high school in five years, compared to more than 60 percent of students who read *at* grade level in third grade and nearly 80 percent of students who read *above* grade level in third grade. In other words, nearly 55 percent of *below-grade-level* students, 38 percent of *at-grade-level students*, and 20 percent of *above-grade-level* students did not graduate from high school.

Learning to read is a necessity in these increasingly literate societies. For children, it is also a critical skill for success in school. Gwynne et al (2010), conducted a study where they examined whether third-grade reading level could be used as an indicator of

potential performance on four future educational outcome measures: that's, eighth-grade reading level, ninth-grade course performance, high school graduation, and college attendance.

Findings from the above study were consistent with existed literature that emphasized the importance of early reading ability for future educational success. Third-grade reading level was shown to be significant predictor of eighth-grade reading level and ninth-grade course performance even after accounting for demographic characteristics and how a child's school influences their individual performance. Third-grade reading level was also shown to be a predictor of graduation and college attendance, even when demographic characteristics were included as controls.

2.1.1 Third Grade Reading Skills – A Benchmark Gaining Ground

Third-grade reading skills are becoming an educational benchmark in Indiana State and around the nation, and it is in light of numerous studies that linked the proficiency to the likelihood of high school graduation, (Dashwood, 2003).

Smith, Dashwood's partner in a grade-level reading campaign, explains that 75 percent of children who fail to reach this benchmark 'third grade reading', will never catch up, and are on a pathway to dropping out of high school. Margaret Blood, founder and president of *Strategies for Children*, has been working to raise awareness about the importance of reading skills by the end of third grade. Blood notes that it almost makes no sense to look at high school graduation if one is not also focusing on what's happening in third grade, because that third-grade test score is going to be a key predictor for how likely that child is to graduate.

Having looked at different performances in reading at global level, the next component examines the situation within Africa.

2.2 Reading Performance in Africa

Children go through certain phases of reading development from preschool through third grade, and from exploration of books to independent reading. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), (1998) postulated that, in

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third grade, children continue to extend and refine their reading and writing to suit varying purposes and audiences. If the children have been acquiring reading skills at appropriate grade levels, third graders should be able to read fluently and enjoy reading. They should be able to use a range of strategies such as word identification appropriately and automatically when encountering unknown words when drawing meaning from the text. They should also be able to recognize and discuss elements of different text structures and make critical connections between texts. They can write expressively in many different forms such as simple stories, short poems and simple reports. They can use a rich variety of vocabulary and sentences appropriate to text forms. They can revise and edit their own writing during and after composing and also spell words at their level correctly in final writing drafts.

Reading is recognized as an art capable of transforming man's life and his entire society, (Tella and Akande, 2007). However, in the World Children Report by UNICEF, (1999), it was stated that nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or write their names. This is also found in a study conducted during 1995-1998 by the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) which measured primary school students' reading literacy against standard established by national reading experts and sixth grade teachers. It was reported that, in four out of seven countries, fewer than half the six graders achieved minimum competence in reading. Additionally, this study was compared with another done by the same SACMEQ two years later in (2000), which saw literacy scores falling even further in five out of six countries (UNESCO, 2004).

In the African continent, the reading habit of children is waning due to poor reading cultures of Africans generally, and other notable factors like non-availability of reading materials (books). Choudhung (1990:87) says that the reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed, it can last one's life. Young children acquire reading literacy through a variety of activities and experiences within different contexts. According to Sharma (1978), to know about the world and its environment, a child helps him/herself through reading books, newspapers, and other magazines. Based on this fact, Panagrahi and Panda (1996) explain that once the child has been taught to read and develop a love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experience and knowledge. These authors further said that children

missing the opportunity of getting in touch with books at this stage, find it difficult to acquire reading habits in their later years. Dave, (1977), asserts that reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a man has formed a habit of reading and practicing it since childhood.

One of the most important topics addressed in the *Proceedings of the 1ˢᵗ Pan-African Reading for All Conference, (*1999) was the role that language plays in early literacy development. More prominent were issues involving mother-tongue literacy, biliteracy, and the formation of practical national language education policies. The interest of this study concerning the statement above is the use of mother tongue in literacy.

In one of the papers, Afolayan (1999) presented evidence to support the adoption of the government's Six-Year Primary Project, a prototype for solving Africa's early literacy problems. As a review of previous evaluation reports of the Western Nigerian project, Afolayan's paper advocated the use of Yoruba, the mother tongue in the region, as the medium of instruction for the first six years of a child's education and the use of English thereafter. He added that the project also showed that the mother tongue was a more effective medium of instruction when compared to English. In terms of learning, literacy was more easily acquired through Yoruba than through English.

The Zambian and Nigerian situation - The Molteno Project, Duncan, (1995), another program for teaching initial literacy using the mother tongue, was examined in the Pan-African Conference papers, (Tambulukani et al., 1999). The project examined the use of Icibemba as a language of instruction in 25 primary schools in the Northern Province of Zambia. One component of the program, Breakthrough to Literacy, is child-centred and capitalized on authentic instructional practices such as the Language Experience Approach (LEA), a literature-based method that uses children's own dictated stories as the basic text for the children's reading and writing (Stauffer, 1970).

It was reported that the pupils involved in this program made substantive progress in their literacy abilities when compared to children receiving more traditional instruction. Umolu, (1999) report on the benefits of this approach with Nigerian students with special needs and with those who were non-readers after their primary school education.

The Malawian situation - Mchazime's paper about Malawi's early literacy also suggested the advantages of bilingual literacy instruction using the mother tongue while acknowledging the need for English as a language of literacy in the region. Their study investigated reading proficiency in English and ChiChewa, the mother tongue, in primary schools. The study also found that reading, listening comprehension, and speaking in the mother tongue were much easier for students who participated in the study than were the same activities when conducted in English (Mchazime, 1999).

Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland situations - In Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, the implementation of bilingual programs has been reported, addressing the advantages of biliteracy programs in African schools. For example, the Namibia Early Language and Literacy Project was designed primarily to support the development of materials for lower primary classes in all African languages in Namibia, while the Namibia Teacher Development Project worked to increase the language proficiency of junior- and primary-level teachers. In addition, the Secondary Education Project in Lesotho supported the production of bilingual reading materials for remote highland schools. A similar project in Botswana was producing reading materials in both English and Setswana in remote rural junior secondary schools. Again, these bilingual projects were reported to be beneficial to the pupils involved.

In summarizing his International Research Correspondent report during the 1st Pan – African Reading for All Conference: 'Focus on Africa', Arua (1999) asserted that what was required for African literacy education was an integrated national program through the use of mother tongues and English.

The discussion above shows how different countries are striving to put language policies that might enhance literacy and finally reading skills among pupils.

2.3 Reading Performance in Zambia

The findings from the 'Report on reading in English in primary schools in Zambia, by Williams, (1993), indicated that reading ability of year 3 and year 4 pupils gave particular cause for concern. Although year 6 pupils had for the most part adequate comprehension of texts from year 3 and 4 levels, it was difficult to see how such limited ability could enable them to 'read to learn' in other subject areas. The report added that the findings were in line with earlier research by Sharma (1973) who found that on a

recognition test of 40 words taken from course books for grades 1, 2 and 3, only 4.5 percent of grade 3 pupils were able to read all the words correctly, while only 7.2 percent of grade 3 pupils could read all the grade 1 and 2 words correctly.

The Ministry of Education, (Zambia), estimates that only six per cent of pupils have desirable levels of performance in literacy, and about 10 per cent have desirable levels in numeracy (MOE, 2010). This in part accounts for the failure by an average Zambian pupil to read or write irrespective of the level of education.

The results of various scheduled educational assessments and examinations confirm this dismal picture. With the high numbers of school dropouts, poor school attendance and the general lack of a literate environment, the once literate society risks losing even the initial literacy they had. Children do not read for knowledge, the reading that is common is specific, short term and often examination focused. This has led to underdeveloped literacy abilities among children and youths. But even those that are able to read progressively read less and less.

Zambia has not been spared from the problem. In fact a study by Matafwali (2010) revealed that 'reading levels of majority of Zambian children were regrettably still low and that there was a downward performance even for children who had shown an initial boost at reading in grade one. These results suggested that the majority of pupils at Grades 3 and 4 were weak in reading in Nyanja. Grade 6 pupils too were not on the whole very proficient enough to warrant any positive performance. The apparent weakness of the pupils in reading Nyanja merited further investigation.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed relevant literature on performance of pupils in reading from different countries, including Zambia. It began with looking at reading performance from a global level followed by reading performance in Africa focusing on a number of countries and finally examined reading levels in Zambia. The revelations were from Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring of Education Quality (SAQMEQ) studies, Ministry of Education and many other international researchers.

The following chapter brings out a number of aspects of how the study was conducted. It covers the methodology that was used in the study, the design, the site, the population and sample size, sampling techniques, instruments used and procedures followed in collecting data, and how data were analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with methodology used in the study, the design, the site where the study was undertaken, and the population and sample size that were involved in the study. It also highlights the types of techniques that were used in sampling, the instruments that were implored and the procedures followed in collecting data, and how data were analysed. It will end with a summary of the points discussed in the chapter.

3.1 Methodology

The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods. This is justified based on the assertion by Silverman (1995:2) that "depending on theories, hypothesis and research questions, methods from both approaches can be used in the same research project." Quantitative method was used because most of the data collected from pupils needed analysis using numbers. While qualitative was used because of the data collected from Grade 3 Teachers, School Insert Coordinators, and also some of the responses from pupils. The Interview Guide for pupils was tagged, 'Reading Behaviour.'

3.2 Research Design

In the context of this study both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. Qualitative approach was applied on some of the responses from semi-structured interviews. The quantitative approach was used on data that were collected from the tests using Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT), and on some responses from the interviews.

3.3 Research site

The research was conducted in four selected schools from two districts, that's, two schools from Livingstone district and two schools from Kazungula district.

3.4 Population

The population of this study comprised of Grade 3 primary school children from government regular schools in Livingstone (urban) and Kazungula (rural) districts of Southern Province, Zambia. The Informants were all grade 3 teachers and all the School In-service Coordinators in the four selected schools in the two districts.

3.5 Sample Size

A sample is a carefully selected subgroup of the main population which is representative enough because it bears the same characteristics as the main population from which it is drawn. In this study the sample size was eighty (80) grade 3 pupils. The informants comprised of sixteen (16) grade 3 teachers, that is, four (04) teachers from each school. School In-service Coordinators (SICs) were four (04), that is, one SIC from each school. The SICs were vital in this study since they were trainers in professional activities and coordinators of in-service activities at school level. Grade 3 teachers were also important because they had the experience of both challenges and successes in teaching reading in Chitonga to grade 3 pupils. They also had the experience of what children encountered in reading Chitonga in grade three. In all, the sample size was 80 grade 3 pupils and 20 respondents.

Note: It should be noted that in some instances both Grade 3 Teachers and SICs will be addressed as Grade 3 teachers only.

3.6 Sampling techniques

Sampling is a way of selecting people, events or objects for study in research. Four schools were purposively selected, two from Livingstone district and the other two from Kazungula district. The schools were selected because of their location for easy accessibility since the researcher had no reliable transport. For the classes to be included in the study the researcher used random sampling so that each class had the probability of being picked. This was applicable in schools where there were more than one grade three classes. One pupil was chosen from each class and were given pieces of papers which were folded. Only one paper had a number on and the pupil who got the

one where there was a number was the class to be included on the sample. This was done in all the schools where there were more than one grade 3 classes.

For pupils in individual classes, initially, purposive sampling was used in order to get only those who had been learning Chitonga and being instructed in Chitonga from grade I to grade 3 at the same school to avoid distortion of the findings. Purposive sampling was used to avoid distortion of results as others could have been exposed to different factors in the different environments where they started school from that could have contributed to either their ability to read or inability to read.

In cases where pupils in class were more than twenty, the researcher first used purposive sampling then random sampling to get relevant pupils and required number of pupils who started grade one (1) at the school and/or in the same class.

Twenty pupils, ten boys and ten girls, were selected from each school. All boys who started grade one (1) at the same school were put on their own and asked to pick pieces of paper where only ten of them had numbers on, 1 to 10. Those who picked where there were numbers were the ones who were taken as the sample. The same happened with girls and the same procedure was followed at all schools under study. This gave a total of 80 grade 3 pupils that took part in the study. Their age range was from 08 to 12 years. In terms of gender distribution, 42 of the participants were girls while 38 were boys.

Regarding grade 3 teachers, in schools where there were less than four Grade 3 Teachers, the researcher included those who were teaching grade 3 the last four terms so that the number could come to four. In terms of School In-service Coordinators (SICs) it was easy because each school had only one SIC.

3.7 Research Instruments

In terms of instrumentation, there were Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT) and Interview Guide. The BASAT sub-tests were administered to Grade 3 pupils only. From the BASAT, the researcher utilized some subtests and these were: letter knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, phonological tasks (such as- syllable segmentation,

initial/ending sound identification, sound blending), reading, writing (spelling dictation) and reading comprehension (picture).

The Interview Guide was for Grade 3 pupils only. Although Grade 3 teachers and SICs had different questionnaires, some questions were either similar or the same.   The Interview Guide for pupils was administered as one-to-one Interview. It was written in Chitonga, so as to give chance to everyone to be able to read and understand the questions. Another reason was that Chitonga was the language being researched about and also the official local language in the area.

The questionnaires for Grade 3 teachers and SICs were written in English. Both groups were given to fill in the questionnaires on their own but advised to ask where they were not clear.

3.8 Data collection procedures

To obtain the needed data from the sample, the researcher administered a number of subtests to pupils in different areas of reading skills. The tests were derived from Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT). The researcher also administered Interview Guide to Grade 3 Pupils, whereas for Grade 3 Teachers and School In-Service Coordinators (SICs) they filled in the questionnaires independently.

3.8.1 Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT) Tests - The subtests from BASAT included alphabetic principle - letter knowledge, letter-sound knowledge, phonological tasks, reading (one, two and three syllable words, four sentences, and reading comprehension (picture), writing (spelling dictation of one, two syllable words and two short sentences).

3.8.1.1 The Alphabetic Principle consisted of two sub-tests of **Letter knowledge** and **Letter-sound knowledge.**

3.8.1.1.1 Letter knowledge (identifying and naming the letters) - the children were asked to name the letters of the alphabet which were mixed up, not in their usual order. The marks were dependent upon the number of letters a child was able to identify and name correctly. The marks were out of twenty-six (26).

3.8.1.1.2 Letter-sound knowledge –in this test the letters were mixed up and children were asked to give the correct sound of each letter. The same principle was also applied in letter-sound knowledge. The marks were dependent upon the number of letter-sound relations a child knew, and marks were also out of twenty – six (26).

3.8.1.2 Phonological Awareness task had a number of components and these were: **syllable segmentation, initial and ending sound identification, and sound blending.**

3.8.1.2.1 Syllable segmentation this is where children were required to segment words into correct number of syllables, for instance, the word "buzuba" could be segmented into three syllables "bu-zu-ba."

3.8.1.2.2 Initial and ending sound identification was where the children were asked to identify and write down either initial or ending sounds of words that were read out to them. Some of the words were '**s**amba' ; '**j**ula'. For ending sounds 'imu**bwa**'; 'ndamu**pa**'

3.8.1.2.3 Sound blending, for example, the sounds /o/ /k/ /u/ can be blended into a word 'oku.'

3.8.1.3 Reading task - The first part of the **reading task** involved three sets of words and each set had four words. The second part had four sentences. The first set consisted of four - one syllable words such as "cu", the second set had four -two syllable words like "jika, lila, " and the third set had four - three syllable words such as "ndamana." Each child had to read the four words in each set, and a mark was given for each correct reading. The reading was done one by one. The second part of the reading task was about **reading comprehension** which had four pictures and each picture had four sentences. Children had to choose from each of the four sentences the one that matched in meaning with the given picture. Each correct matching was given a mark.

The last part had four sentences and each child had to read all of them. Two marks were given for each correct reading of the whole sentence. One mark was awarded if a child managed to read half of the number of words in the sentence.

3.8.1.4 Writing task was in terms of **spelling dictation.** This task had three sets; four two-letter words, two four-syllable words and the last part consisted of two short

sentences. Each child had to write all the three sets and marks were given for each correctly written word or short sentence.

3.8.1.5 Questionnaires – There were three types of questionnaires, one for Grade 3 Pupils, one for Grade 3 Teachers and the other one for School In-service Coordinators (SICs). The questionnaire for Grade 3 pupils was in form of Interview Guide and had 80 copies. Each pupil had to have a copy because responses for individual pupils had to be written separately. The Interview Guide was written in Chitonga, their medium of instruction and official local language.

There were 16 Questionnaires for Grade 3 teachers and 04 for SICs. These two categories of questionnaires were written in English. The total number of copies of questionnaires for all categories was 100. Questionnaires were administered to all participants in their respective schools for a period of four weeks or 20 working days. All the respondents were assured that their responses were going to be kept with confidentiality.

3.9 Data Analysis

The purpose of data analysis is to process raw data for interpretation.
Pupils' results from Basic Skills Assessment Tool subtests were analysed using the frequency tables and graphs using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis tool as they were quantitative in nature.. The responses from the Grade 3 Interview Guide were qualitative data and were categorized in common themes and then analyzed by narration. Grade 3 Teachers and School In-service Coordinators' responses were also categorised and analysed by narration.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter was mainly on methodology used in the study and the accompanying areas such as the design - which dealt with how the study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, the site, the population and sample size, sampling techniques, instruments used and procedures followed in collecting data in order to address the problem at hand. It also dealt with how collected data was analysed.

The following chapter is mainly the presentation of findings in relation to the three objectives outlined in chapter one. The findings were based on the pupils' responses from both the Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT) tasks and from the interview guide. Some of the responses were from the questionnaires administered to Grade 3 teachers and School In-service Coordinators.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This chapter, basically, looks at the findings gathered from the responses of both respondents and informants. Pupils' responses   were from interview guide and BASAT subtests, while questionnaires were administered to Grade 3 Teachers and School In-service Coordinators.

 *Note: The four Schools involved in this study were from two different localities: **School A** and **School B** were from **urban area**, while **School C** and **School D** were from **rural area**.*

The chapter is in three parts and each part represents an objective. The first focuses on the specific difficulties children face in their pursuit to read, the second brings out findings on availability of reading materials in Chitonga, while the third presents the strategies that teachers use to assist children in reading in Chitonga.

4.1 DIFFICULTIES LEARNERS ENCOUNTER IN READING CHITONGA.

4.1.1   DATA FROM THE BASIC SKILLS ASSESSMENT TOOL (BASAT)

4.1.1.1 The Alphabetic Principle.

To find out difficulties pupils encountered in reading Chitonga, a number of tests were carried out and one of them was in alphabetic principle. The Tables below show the results for the pupils in some areas of alphabetic principle that they were tested in. The first task was on letter identification and naming, the second was on recognition of initial and ending sounds in words that were read to them. Table 1 below shows how pupils performed in letter identification and naming, and it is accompanied by an explanation.

Table 1: Respondents' ability to 'correctly identify and name letters of the alphabet' per school

		Respondents' ability to 'correctly identify letters of the alphabet'						
	School	Absent	26-22 Letters	21-17 Letters	16-12 Letters	11-7 Letters	6-0 Letters	**Total**
Name Of school	School A.	2	3	2	3	4	6	**20**
	School B.	0	11	4	1	4	0	**20**
	School C.	0	10	3	1	2	4	**20**
	School D.	0	9	3	2	1	5	**20**
	Total	2	**41.25%** 33	**15%** 12	**8.75%** 7	**13.75%** 11	**18.75%** 15	**80**

The requirement here was for each pupil to correctly identify and name all the 26 letters of the English alphabet and the summary of the results is displayed in Table 1 above. The results were categorised in groups of five intervals for easy analysis. The results indicate that 41.25 percent of the pupils was able to correctly identify between 22 and 26 letters of the alphabet; 15 percent identified between 17 and 21 letters; 8.75 percent between 12 and 16 letters; 13.75 percent between 7 and 11 letters and 18.75 percent got between 0 and 6. Those who were absent represented 2.5 percent.

The next test-item under alphabetic principle was letter-sound identification or association, and Table 2 below displays the pupils' results for the same test.

Table 2: Respondents' ability to 'correctly give correct sounds of letters of the alphabet' per sch

			Respondents' ability to 'correctly give sounds of letters of the alphabet'					
		Absent	26-22 Letters	21-17 Letters	16-12 Letters	11-7 Letters	6-0 Letters	**Total**
Name of school	School A.	0	0	0	2	4	14	**20**
	School B.	0	3	4	4	7	2	**20**
	School C.	0	2	2	0	0	16	**20**
	School D.	0	1	3	2	4	10	**20**
	Total	**0**	**6** 7.5 %	**9** 11.25 %	**8** 10 %	**15** 18.75 %	**42** 52.5 %	**80** **100%**

Table 2 above displays results of test items in Phonemic awareness and they consisted of twenty-six letters of the alphabet. The exercise demanded that each pupil gave a correct sound for each of the 26 letters of the alphabet. The test was administered to all pupils under study, one pupil at a time until everyone had done it. Each pupil was asked to give a sound of each letter and a mark was awarded for every correct sound.

Pupils who gave correct sounds between 22 and 26 letters were 6 (7.5 percent), between 17 and 21 letters were 9 (11.25 percent), between 12 and 16 letters were 8 (10 percent), between 7 and 11 letters were 15 (18.75 percent) while those who gave correct sounds between 0 and 6 letters were 42 (52.5 percent).

4.1.1.2   Phonological Awareness

The components of phonological awareness that pupils were tested on were syllable segmentation, discrimination of initial and ending sounds in words and sound blending to form words.

The first task under phonological awareness was Syllable Segmentation. In this component, there were four words, 'bayi' 'boonse' 'buzuba' and ' kwiingula' which were to be segmented according to their syllables. From the results, 3.75 percent were able to correctly segment all the four words, 7.5 percent got 3 correct, 25 percent got 2 right, 35 percent   got one correct each, while 28.75 percent did not manage to segment any of the four words into correct syllables.

Table 3a below is a display of pupils' performance in recognizing 'initial sounds' in 10 words that were read to them. Each correct answer was awarded a mark and the summary of marks is tabulated below.

Table 3a : **Respondents' ability to recognize 'initial sounds' in 10 given words**

Respondents' ability to recognize 'initial sounds' in 10 given words

	Respondents' ability to recognise initial sounds in given words												
	Absent	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
Respondents' phonological awareness	5	13	6	7	6	9	9	4	4	5	5	7	80
Total	5	13	6	7	6	9	9	4	4	5	5	7	80

This exercise in Table 3a above required that pupils first listened carefully to the initial sounds in words that were read to them before they wrote anything down. The words were read one at a time and pupils were asked to write the initial sound they heard at the beginning of each word, this was repeated until all the 10 words were done. According to the results in the table, 16.25 percent correctly recognized all the 10 sounds, 7.5 percent got 9 marks, 8.75 percent got 8 marks, 7.5 percent got 7 marks, 11.25 percent got 6 marks, the other 11.25 percent got 5 marks, 5 percent got 4 marks, another 5 percent got 3 marks, 6.25 got 2 marks, another 6.25 got 1 mark each, and 8.75 pupils could not get anything correct, while 6.25 was absent.

The scores in Table 3b below show pupils' performance in the recognition of ending sounds in words that were provided. The number of words from which sounds were extracted was also 10 just like in initial sounds and the summary of pupils' performance is displayed below.

Table 3b: Respondents' ability to recognize 'ending sounds' in 10 given words.
Respondents' ability to recognise 'ending sounds' in 10 given words

	Respondents' ability to recognise 'ending sounds' in 10 given words												
	Absent	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Total
Respondents' phonological awareness	5	6	8	3	3	1	4	9	1	5	7	28	80
Total	5	6	8	3	3	1	4	9	1	5	7	28	80

Just like it was with initial sounds , the same procedure was applied in administering ending sounds sub-test. From what has been presented in Table 3b above, 7.5 percent recognized all the 10 ending sounds correctly, 10 percent recognized 9 sounds out of 10, 3.75 percent got 8 marks, another 3.75 percent got 7 marks, only one got 6 marks, 5 percent got 5 marks, 11.25 percent got 4, one pupil got 3, 6.25 percent got 2; 8.75 percent got 1, and 35 percent could not recognize any ending sound from the words read to them.

Sound blending was the last test under phonological awareness. There were four sets of sounds from which words were to be formed: o/k/u = (oku); o/y/u = (oyu); i/m/a = (ima) and a/t/o = (ato). The phonemes were sounded while pupils were listening to recognize the sounds, combine and write them as words. The results indicate that 10 percent managed to combine the sounds in each of the four sets and wrote words correctly; 12.5 percent correctly combined three of them; 25 percent combined two correctly; 15 percent combined only one set correctly while 37.5 percent could not manage to combine any set.

4.1.1.3 Reading

Reading tasks were in five categories - reading two-letter words; two-syllable words; reading three-syllable words; reading sentences and picture reading comprehension. In all the reading tasks mentioned above, pupils were tested individually and each pupil was required to read all the items. The following tables show pupils' results for all the reading tests mentioned above.

4.1.1.3.1 Reading One - Syllable (two-letter) Words

The tables below have displayed pupils' reading results of two-letter words. The procedure for testing 'reading words' was the same in all the five areas mentioned above. Each pupil had to read all the test items individually because marks were given for each item.

Table 4a shows results for reading test on the word 'me' and a narration for the same is done immediately after the table. There were only two options of either getting it correct or wrong.

Table 4a: Respondents' ability to read two-letter words - 'me'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'me'		
		Correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read two-letter words	4	17	0	**17**
	3	12	1	**13**
	2	4	2	**6**
	1	9	4	**13**
	0	0	23	**23**
Total		**(52.5 %) 42**	**(37.5 %) 30**	**90% 72**

Pupils were tested on the ability to read the word 'me.' The indication from the results in Table 4a above is that 52.5 percent was able to read the word 'me' correctly but 37.5 could not, while 10 percent was absent.

One of the words pupils were tested on was 'pa'. Table 4b below shows their summary performance followed by an explanation.

Table 4b :**Respondents' ability to read two-letter words - 'pa'**

Respondents' ability to read two-letter words - Respondent's ability to read 'pa'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'pa'		
		Correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read two-letter words		0	1	**1**
	4	17	0	**17**
	3	12	1	**13**
	2	3	3	**6**
	1	1	12	**13**
	0	0	23	**23**
Total		**(41.25%) 33**	**(50%) 40**	**91.25% 73**

The testing procedure is as explained in the preceding table.   From what has been displayed in Table 4b above,   41.25 percent was able to read 'pa' correctly but 50 percent of the pupils could not, while 8.75 was absent.

The third word on the test of two-letter words was 'so.' Pupils' performance has been summarised in **Table 4c** below, and an explanation concerning the results has also been given.

Table 4c : R**espondents' ability to read two-letter words - 'so'**

	Absent	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'so'		
			Correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read two-letter words			0	1	**1**
		4	17	0	**17**
		3	13	0	**13**
		2	4	2	**6**
		1	2	11	**13**
	7	0	0	23	**23**
Total			**(45%) 36**	**(46.25%) 37**	**91.25% 73**

The   pupils   performance in reading 'so' has been tabulated above in Table 4c. According to the results, 45 percent of the pupils read the word correctly while 46.25 failed to read it and 8.75 percent of them was absent.

The test on the word 'cu' was done on 73 pupils out of 80, and 7 were absent. Table 4d below shows the results for the exercise.

Table 4d : **Respondents' ability to read two-letter words - 'cu'**

| | No. of words | Respondents' ability read 'cu' | | **Total** |
		Correct	wrong	
Respondents' ability to read two-letter words		0	1	**1**
	4	17	0	**17**
	3	1	12	**13**
	2	1	5	**6**
	1	1	12	**13**
	0	0	23	**23**
Total		**(25%) 20**	**(66.25%) 53**	**91.25% 73**

The fourth item on reading two-letter words was on 'cu.' Table 4d above shows that 25 percent of them read the word correctly, 66.25 percent did not manage to read it, and 8.75 percent was absent.

4.1.1.3.2 Reading Two Syllable Words

The reading performance of pupils in two-syllable words is presented in the next four tables . The procedure of doing the exercise was just like the previous one on two-letter words. For a respondent to get a mark, she/he had to read the whole word correctly otherwise it wouldn't attract any mark.   Although the aspect of syllables comes out prominently in the table-headings, the main idea was the pupils' ability to correctly read the words that were given. The syllable aspect was for categorising the words to be tested on.

'Kala' was one of the two-syllable words to be read by pupils and their performance is displayed in **Table 5a** below. An explanation concerning the performance has been given just below the table.

Table 5a: Respondents' ability to read two syllable words - 'kala'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'kala'		
		Correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words'	4	18	0	**18**
	3	2	1	**3**
	2	1	1	**2**
	1	1	0	**1**
	0	0	48	**48**
Total		**(27.5%) 22**	**(62.5%) 50**	**(90%) 72**

Table 5a above presents pupils' results on reading the word 'kala.' Out of the number that undertook the test 27.5 percent read 'kala' correctly while 62.5 percent failed to read, and 10 percent was absent.

The results displayed in **Table 5b** below show pupils' ability to read the word 'jika' and it was the second item on two-syllable words. A detailed account of what the table is about has been given below it.

Table 5b: R**espondents' ability to read 'two syllable words' - 'jika'**

Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words' -		Respondents' ability to read 'jika'		
	No. of words	correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words'	4	18	0	**18**
	3	2	1	**3**
	2	1	1	**2**
	1	0	1	**1**
	0	0	48	**48**
Total		**(26.25%) 21**	**(63.75%) 51**	**(90%) 72**

The results in Table 5b above show pupils' reading ability of the word 'jika.' From the 90 percent of the respondents that attended the test, the results indicate that 26.25 percent read 'jika' correctly while 63.75 percent got it wrong, 10 percent was absent.

Reading of two-syllable words continued with the word 'mebo' as the third one. Pupils performed as shown in Table 5c below and it is accompanied by an explanation.

Table 5c: Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words' - 'mebo'

Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words' - 'mebo'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'mebo'		
		Correct	Wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words'		0	1	**1**
	4	18	0	**18**
	3	2	1	**3**
	2	1	1	**2**
	1	0	1	**1**
	0	1	47	**48**
Total		**(27.5%) 22**	**(63.75%) 51**	**91.25% 73**

Pupils here were tested on reading the word 'mebo,' the results are as shown in Table 5c above. The results show that 8.75 percent was absent, 27.5 percent read it correctly while 63.75 percent failed to read.

The word 'sala' was the last item in reading two-syllable words. The results of the pupils are displayed in Table 5d below with an explanation immediately below the table.

Table 5d: Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words'   - 'sala'

	Absent	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'sala'		
			Correct	wrong	**Total**
Respondents' ability to read 'two syllable words'		4	18	0	**18**
		3	3	0	**3**
		2	1	1	**2**
		1	0	1	**1**
	8	0	0	48	**48**
Total			**(27.5%) 22**	**(62.5%) 50**	**(90%) 72**

The reading ability of pupils in a word that has two syllables is shown in Table 5d above. From the table, it can be deduced that 8.75 percent was absent, 27.5 percent of the respondents correctly read the word 'sala' while 62.5 percent of them could not.

4.1.1.3.3   Reading Three Syllable Words

The attendance for reading three-syllable words was the same for all the four items because they were undertaken on the same day. The test on reading words that had three syllables consisted of four items and 'kobala' was the first one. The results are shown in Table 6a below and an explanation concerning the displayed data is given immediately after the table.

Table 6a: **Respondents' ability to read 'three syllable words' - 'kobala'**

Respondents' ability to read three syllable words - 'kobala'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'kobala'		
		Correct	Wrong	**Total**
Respondents'	4	12	0	**12**
ability to read	3	4	0	**4**
three syllable	2	1	1	**2**
words	1	0	4	**4**
	0	0	50	**50**
Total		**(21.25%)** 17	**(68.75%)** 55	**90%** 72

The respondents' attendance for this exercise was 90 percent. According to the results in Table 6a, 21.25 percent managed to read the word correctly, while 68.75 percent failed to read it, 10 percent was absent.

The following table, 6b, is about the pupils results on reading a three-syllable word 'kojika.' A description of what is tabulated on the table has been given below the table.

Table 6b: **Respondents' ability to read 'three syllable words' - 'kojika'**

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'kojika'		
		Correct	wrong	Total
Respondents'	4	12	0	12
ability to read three	3	3	1	4
syllable words	2	2	0	2
	1	4	0	4
	0	0	50	50
Total		(26.25%) 21	(63.75%) 51	(90%) 72

From the total sample, 90 percent of them attended this test item. Those who managed to read the word correctly amounted to 26.25 percent and those who could not read represented 63.75 percent. 10 percent of the respondents was absent.

The next item was reading the word 'mabisi' and **Table 6c** shows how pupils performed. It displays those who read it correctly and those who could not as it has been explained below the table.

Table 6c: Respondents' ability to read three syllable words - 'mabisi'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'mabisi'		
		Correct	Wrong	Total
Respondents' ability to read three syllable words	4	12	0	12
	3	4	0	4
	2	1	1	2
	1	0	4	4
	0	0	50	50
Total		(21.25%) 17	(68.75%) 55	72

The results presented in Table 6c above are for reading 'mabisi.' From the number that attended 21.25 percent read it without difficulties but 68.75 percent had challenges in reading. 10 percent of them was absent.

The word 'ndamana' was the last item in reading words with three syllables. The results are tabulated in **Table 6d** below with a brief narration of the results.

Table 6d: **Respondents' ability to read three-syllable words - 'ndamana'**

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to read 'ndamana'		
		Correct	Wrong	Total
Respondents' ability to read three syllable words	4	12	0	12
	3	1	3	4
	2	1	1	2
	1	0	4	4
	0	0	50	50
Total		**(17.5%) 14**	**(72.5%) 58**	**(90%) 72**

The data displayed above on Table 6d indicates pupils' reading ability of the word 'ndamana.' Their performance was as follows: 10 percent was absent, 17.5 percent of them read the word with ease while 72.5 percent failed to read it.

4.1.1.4 **Reading Sentences**.

 In this section there were four sentences that were to be read by pupils, and these were: **'**Musa a Maliya baya kucikolo' (*Musa and Maliya are going to school*), 'Musa usamide cibaki cisiyasiya' (*Musa is wearing a black shirt*), 'Maliya wasama cibaki cituba amabbusu amukuba' (*Maliya is wearing a white blouse and .... shoes*), and 'Boonse banyamwide mabbuku a mpesulo zyabo' (*Both of them have carried their books and pencils*).

Those who were able to read correctly all the four sentences represented 11.25 percent, 3.75 percent read three sentences correctly, those who read two correctly were 5 percent, and 73.75 percent could not read anything from the four sentences. 6.25 percent was absent.

4.1.1.5   Reading Comprehension (Sentence-Picture matching)

The display on Table 7 is for the results of sentence-picture matching test and the results have been explained just below the table.

Table 7: Respondents' ability to 'correctly match sentences with given pictures'   per school

 Name of school – Respondents' ability to 'correctly match sentences with given picture'

		Respondents' ability to 'correctly match sentences with given pictures'						
		absent	4	3	2	1	0	**Total**
Name of school	School A.	4	5	2	5	4	0	**20**
	School B.	0	9	5	3	0	3	**20**
	School C.	0	6	6	4	3	1	**20**
	School D.	0	14	4	2	0	0	**20**
Total		**4**	**34**	**17**	**14**	**7**	**4**	**80**

Table 7 above is about Pictorial reading comprehension. There were four pictures and each picture had three sentences and only one of them explained what was happening in the picture. Each pupil was required to read all the three sentences to get the meaning and then chose one sentence that matched with the picture.

From the total sample, 5 percent did not attend the test. Those who attended the test 42.5 percent managed to correctly match all the 4 sentences with pictures, those who matched 3 sentences to their correct pictures was 21.25 percent, 17.5 percent got 2 correct out of 4, those who got 1 represented 8.75 percent and those who did not match anything correctly was 5 percent.

4.1.1.6 Writing Spelling Dictation

This section of the test, required pupils to write correct spellings of words and sentences that were carefully dictated to them. The section had three parts, the first was spelling dictation for two-letter words; the second was on two-syllable words and the last part was about spelling dictation for short sentences.

The procedure for testing in spelling dictation was the same in all the three parts. Pupils had to listen carefully to what was being read to them and then wrote the spelling. This was done one item at a time until they all finished.

4.1.1.6.1 Writing Spellings for two-letter words

Spelling dictation for two-letter words started with the word 'pe' and the pupils' performance on the same has been displayed in **Table 8a** below. The performance has been shown by sex and per school.

Table 8a: Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'pe' by sex and school.

Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'pe'			Sex of the respondent		Total
			Male	Female	
Correct	Name of school	School A.	1	1	2
		School B.	3	6	9
		School C.	6	3	9
		School D.	6	7	13
	Total		16	17	(41.25%) 33
Wrong	Name of school	School A.	6	8	14
		School B.	7	4	11
		School C.	4	7	11
		School D.	3	3	6
	Total		20	22	(52.5%) 42

The results in Table 8a above are for spelling dictation for the word 'pe'. They indicate that 20 percent male and 21.25 percent female respondents managed to write the correct spelling of the word 'pe' while 25 percent male and 27.5 percent female respondents failed to write the correct spelling. In all 41.25 percent of the respondents wrote correct spelling, while 52.5 percent wrote wrong spelling. 6.25 percent was absent. In terms of locality, rural schools performed slightly better than urban ones.

The spelling items continued with 'tu' being the second and the marks are exhibited below in Table 8b. A description of the marks has also been given.

Table 8b: **Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'tu'**
Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'tu' by sex and per school

			Sex of the respondent			
Respondents' ability to spell 'tu'			Male	female	**Total**	
Correct	Name of school	School A.	1	1		**2**
		School B.	7	9		**16**
		School C.	3	3		**6**
		School D.	5	7		**12**
	Total		**16**	**20**	**45%**	**36**
Wrong	Name of school	School A.	6	8		**14**
		School B.	3	1		**4**
		School C.	7	7		**14**
		School D.	4	3		**7**
	Total		**20**	**19**	**48.75%**	**39**

Table 8b above exhibits pupils' results in writing the spelling of 'tu.' The table shows that 20 percent male and 25 percent female respondents wrote the word 'tu' correctly while 25 percent male and 23.75 percent female respondents could not. 2.5 percent male and 3.75 percent female respondents did not attend the test.

Overall, 45 percent of the respondents spelt the word 'tu' correctly, while 48.75 percent failed

The performance on the word 'de' by sex and by school has been presented below on Table 8c. Just below the table there is a description of the performance.

Table 8c: Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'de'

Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'de' by sex and per school

Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'de'			Sex of the respondent		Total	
			Male	female		
Correct	Name of school	School A.	0	1		1
		School B.	4	6		10
		School C.	3	4		7
		School D.	3	6		9
		Total	**10**	**17**	**(33.75%)**	**27**
Wrong	Name Of school	School A.	7	8		15
		School B.	6	4		10
		School C.	7	6		13
		School D.	6	4		10
		Total	**26**	**22**	**(60%)**	**48**

The display in Table 8c above shows pupils' ability to write the correct spelling of the word 'de'. From the above table, 12.5 percent male and 21.25 percent female - representing 33.75 percent of the respondents wrote the correct spelling of 'de', 32.5 percent male and 27.5 percent female or 60 percent of the respondents could not, and 6.25 percent was absent. The attendance of respondents was 93.75 percent of the total sample.

Table 8d is a presentation of results on 'zo' and this was the last item in spelling for two-letter words. A brief explanation of the results is found immediately below the table.

Table 8d: Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'zo'

Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'zo' by sex and per school

			Sex of the respondent		
Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'zo'			Male	female	**Total**
Correct	Name of school	School A.	1	1	**2**
		School B.	4	6	**10**
		School C.	5	4	**9**
		School D.	6	6	**12**
		Total	**16**	**17**	**33**
Wrong	Name of school	School A.	6	8	**14**
		School B.	6	4	**10**
		School C.	5	6	**11**
		School D.	3	4	**7**
		Total	**20**	**22**	**42**

The data above on Table 8d shows how pupils performed in writing the spelling of the word 'zo'.   From what has been exhibited it shows that 20 percent male and 21.25 percent female pupils wrote the word correctly, 25 percent male and 27.5 percent female pupils could not write the correct spelling for the same word. Examining results per school, the highest number of pupils who spelt "zo" correctly were from School D with 15 percent, followed by School B with 12.5 percent then School C which had 11.25 percent and lastly School A which had 2.5 percent who managed to get it right. The percent that was absent was 6.25.

4.1.1.6.2 Write Spelling for Two-Syllable Words

Spelling items continued to two-syllable words. The first word in this section was 'lila' and Table 9a below presents the marks.

Table 9a: Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'two syllable word'- 'lila'

	No. of words	Respondents' ability to spell 'lila'		Total
		correct	wrong	
Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'two-syllable words'	4	25	1	**26**
	3	9	1	**10**
	2	8	0	**8**
	1	6	0	**6**
	0	2	23	**25**
Total		**(62.5%) 50**	**(31.25%) 25**	**75**

Basing the argument on what has been displayed on Table 9a above, 62.5 percent of the respondents spelt the word 'lila' correctly, 31.25 percent failed to write it correctly while 6.25 percent was absent.

The second word on spelling dictation was 'bila' and how pupils performed has been shown in Table 9b below. An explanation concerning the display has also been given after the table.
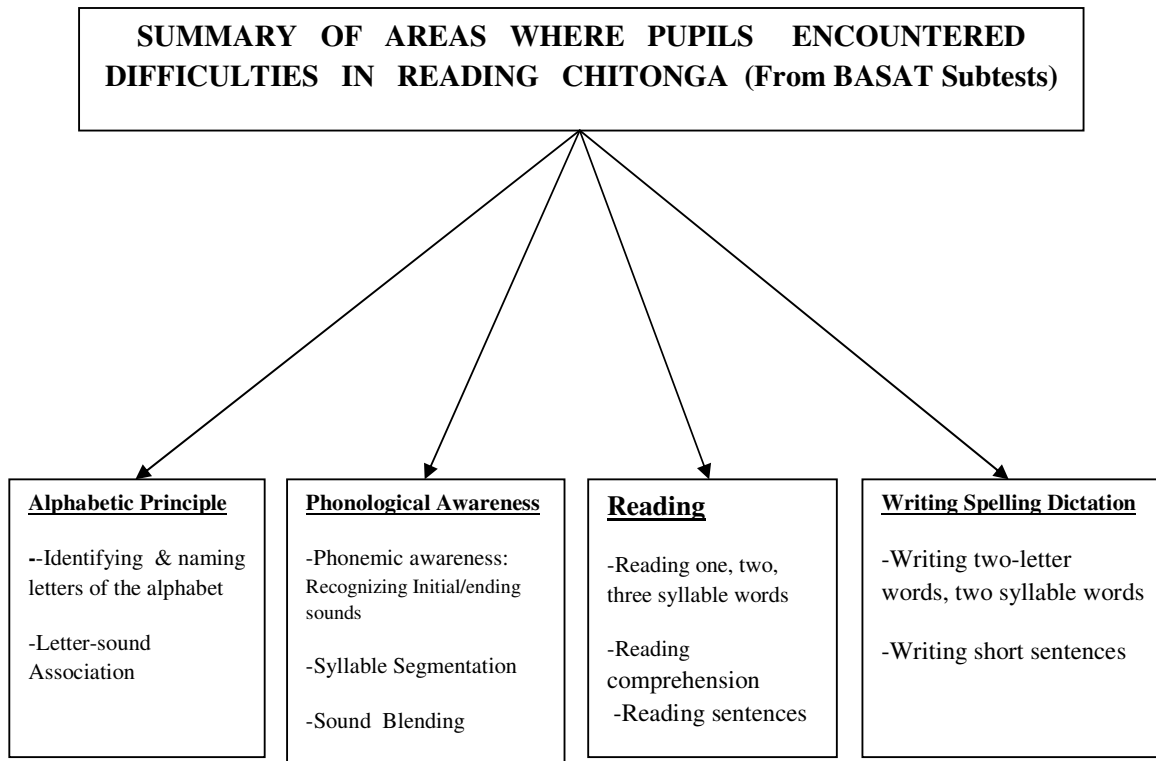
Table 9b: Respondents' ability to write correct spellings for 'two-syllable words' - 'bila'

Respondents' ability to write correct spelling for 'bila			Sex of the respondent		Total
			Male	female	
Correct	Name of school	School B	3	8	**11**
		School C	8	7	**15**
		School D	4	6	**10**
	Total		**15**	**21**	**(45%) 36**
Wrong	Name of school	School A	7	9	**16**
		School B	7	2	**9**
		School C	2	3	**5**
		School D	5	4	**9**
	Total		**21**	**18**	**(48.75%) 39**

According to what has been presented in Table 9b above, 18.75 percent male and 26.25 percent female respondents spelt it correctly, 26.25 percent male and 22.5 percent female respondents did not know the spelling of 'bila.' 6.25 percent was absent. In total those who spelt it correctly represented 45 percent while those who failed were 48.75 percent.

4.1.1.6.3. Writing Dictation for two Short Sentences:

This was the last part of writing spelling dictation. There were two short sentences- **'Langa mubwa'** (*Look at the dog*) and **'Usobanya bbola'** (He is playing with a ball). Each sentence was awarded two marks signifying that each word in the sentence carried a mark. If a pupil got one word correct she/he was given a mark . For this test item the attendance was 100 percent and marks were as follows: 3.75 percent wrote correct spelling of both sentences – that is, 4 marks, 7.5 percent managed one and half sentences, 25 percent got two marks, 35 percent got one mark, and 28.75 did not manage to get anything correct.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   SUMMARY  OF  AREAS  WHERE  PUPILS   ENCOUNTERED        │
│  DIFFICULTIES  IN  READING  CHITONGA  (From BASAT Subtests)│
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Alphabetic Principle	**Phonological Awareness**	**Reading**	**Writing Spelling Dictation**
--Identifying & naming letters of the alphabet	-Phonemic awareness: Recognizing Initial/ending sounds	-Reading one, two, three syllable words	-Writing two-letter words, two syllable words
-Letter-sound Association	-Syllable Segmentation	-Reading comprehension -Reading sentences	-Writing short sentences
	-Sound Blending		

4.1.2 PUPILS' VIEWS ON DIFFICULTIES THEY ENCOUNTRED IN READING CHITONGA

Apart from the Basic Skills Assessment Tool subtests that were undertaken, pupils were also interviewed to get their views on the challenges they encountered in reading Chitonga. One of the questions in the interview was to ask whether pupils liked reading or not and they gave reasons for their responses. Table 10 below gives a summary of pupils' views concerning reading.

Table 10: Respondents' Attitude towards Reading in relation to challenges they encountered

Attitude towards Reading	Reason(s)	Number gave reason(s)
I like reading:	-To pass	23
	-To be intelligent and to look after my family	12
	-So that I complete school, work and help my parents or family	8
	- Because I enjoy stories	5
	-So that I become - a teacher	1
	- a policeman	1
	- a boss	1
	- I go to school in town	1
	But - I make a lot of mistakes when reading	8
	- I don't understand what I am reading	3
	- I don't read as fast as my friends	1
	TOTAL	**64**
I don't like reading:	**Because**: - I don't understand what I am reading	4
	- I make a lot of mistakes as I read and my friends laugh at me.	10
	- I read very slowly and sometimes my friends laugh at me	2
	TOTAL	**16**
	GRAND TOTAL	**80**

After the subtests of naming the letters, giving correct sounds for each letter, reading and writing different items that have been explained earlier on in this document, pupils were also subjected to interviews to consolidate what has been brought out in the tests. From the responses the following challenges were highlighted: not understanding what they read, making a lot of mistakes when reading and reading very slowly. They further explained that whenever they made mistakes their collegues laughed at them a situation that discouraged them more.

Despite the challenges they faced, pupils had interest in reading and reasons were also given. For instance, 65 percent confirmed that they liked reading because they wanted to be intelligent, pass examinations, progress to secondary level and complete school, finally get employment and look after their families. Some of them said they liked reading because they enjoyed stories. Another 15 percent liked reading but cited same challenges as in those in the preceding paragraph. Those who bluntly said they did not like reading amounted to 20 percent and it was due to the same challenges.

4.2   AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIALS IN CHITONGA

4.2.1 Teachers' Views

Teachers were also interviewed on the availability of reading materials in their classes. From the 17 teachers that were available as informants, 07 of them said there were enough reading materials in Chitonga, while 10 said there were very few. In terms of relevance and appropriateness of the said reading materials to grade 3 pupils, 12 teachers said they were relevant while 5 said only some were relevant. When asked about which group used the materials most, 13 teachers said only the High Performers used them because they were able to read and understand the stories, while 4 said all pupils used them.

4.2.2 Pupils' Views

Availability of teaching and learning materials is viewed differently by teachers and pupils. This component was specifically to tease out pupils' views on the same issue by posing a number of questions, and their responses are displayed in the tables that follow. The main idea was to find out whether they had enough books to read, to find out the type of books they read most, and how often and where they read those books.

The responses to whether pupils felt they had enough reading materials in Chitonga or not are shown in Table 11a below. They are displayed according to schools with an explanation after the table.

Table 11a: Does respondent feel the class has enough books to read all of them at once

Name of school - Does the respondent feel the class has enough books to read at once

		Absent	No answer	yes	No	Total
Name of school	School A.	0	2	18	0	20
	School B.	0	0	9	11	20
	School C.	0	0	20	0	20
	School D.	5	0	0	15	20
Total		5	2	(58.75%) 47	(32.5%) 26	100% 80

The illustration shown in Table 11a above are responses to one of the key questions concerning availability of reading materials in Chitonga. From the table, 58.75 percent said there were enough reading materials in Chitonga, while those who said they were not enough represented 32.5 percent. 2.5 percent were present but did not give any answer, while the percent that was absent was 6.25. When responses are examined in terms of locality, pupils from two schools - one urban and one rural, said they had enough materials whereas the other two said they were not.

Pupils' responses on the type of books pupils read most are displayed in Table 11b below. They are given according to schools and below the table there is a narration of the data.

Table 11b: Type of books respondents read most per school

		Absent	No answer	Chitonga	English	"both"	Total
Name of school	School A.	0	0	4	2	14	20
	School B.	0	2	0	5	13	20
	School C.	0	0	0	0	20	20
	School D.	5	0	2	2	11	20
Total		5	2	6	9	58	80

The question on the type of books respondents read most was to find out if Chitonga was among the priority areas. The responses are in Table 11b above. Examining what has been presented 6.25 percent did not attend the test session while 2.5 percent did

not give any response. The percent of those who read Chitonga books most of the time was 7.5, those who said read English books most was 11.25 percent, 72.5 percent said they read both Chitonga and English most of the time. The lowest percent is for those who said read Chitonga most of the time.

Examining the responses according to schools, four pupils from an urban school and two from a rural one said they read Chitonga books most of the time.

Table 11c below presents responses on number of times each pupil read different types of books in a week. An explanation of what has been exhibited in the table is given immediately after the table.

Table 11c: **Number of times respondents read different types of books in a week**

		Number of times respondents read different types of books in a week					
		Daily	1-2 times	3-4 times	5-6 times	Never	**Total**
Type of books respondents read	No answer	0	0	0	0	2	**2**
	Chitonga	1	1	0	1	3	**6**
	English	6	3	0	0	0	**9**
	"both"	28	22	5	0	2	**57**
Total		**35**	**26**	**5**	**1**	**7**	**74**

The responses in Table 11c above indicate that one pupil read Chitonga on a daily basis, another read it 1-2 times in a week, the third one said 5-6 times a week, and three said they never read Chitonga on their own. According to this revelation only three pupils really read Chitonga.

When it comes to English, six pupils said they read it daily and three read it 1-2 times in a week. Those who read both Chitonga and English on daily basis were 28,   1-2 times in a week were 22, five said 3-4 times in a week, and two said they never read any books. Two did not say anything while four were absent.

The responses showing places where respondents read different kinds of books and number of times they read them are presented in Table 11d below. There is a brief narration of the display just below the table.

Table 11d: Place where respondents read different types of books and number of times read in a week

Type of books respondents read - Number of times respondents read different types of books in a week - Place where respondents read most

Place where respondents read different types of books in a week			Number of times respondents read different types of books in a week					
Place	**Type of books respondents Read**		**Daily**	**1-2 times**	**3-4 times**	**5-6 times**	**Never**	**Total**
School	Type of books respondents read	**Chitonga**	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
		English	3	2	0	0	0	**5**
		"both"	4	4	1	0	0	**9**
	Total		**7**	**6**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**15**
Home	Type of books respondents read	**Chitonga**	0	1	0	0	2	**3**
		English	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
		"both"	12	10	0	0	2	**24**
	Total		**13**	**11**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**28**
Library	Type of books respondents read	**-**	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
		"both"	1	3	0	0	0	**4**
	Total		**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**5**
School & home	Type of books respondents read	**Chitonga**	1	0	0	1	0	**2**
		English	2	1	0	0	0	**3**
		"both"	10	5	4	0	0	**19**
	Total		**13**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**24**
School /home/ Library	Type of books respondents read	**"both"**	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Total		**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	1

The question on where a pupil read any type of book has a bearing on the reading habit. If it is at home then factors such as home chores, either family disturbance or support also come in; if it is at school then some conducive environment can be considered; and at the library the issue of time when to go there and the time the library is open comes in.

At School reading English - Table 11d shows that those who read English at school on daily basis are 3, those who read it 1-2 times at school are 2, total 5. Reading both

English and Chitonga at school daily are 4, reading both 1-2 times in a week are also 4, only 1 said read both 3-4 times in a week, total 9. One said never read any of the two subjects. In summary, those who read different kinds of books on daily basis were 7, 1-2 times were 6, 3-4 times 1. Only 1 said never read any of the two subjects.

Reading Chitonga at Home: - No one read Chitonga at home daily. One read Chitonga at home 1-2 times a week, and 2 said never read Chitonga at home. For English, only 1 said read it daily at home. Reading both Chitonga and English at home daily were 12, reading both at home 1-2 times a week were 10, never read any of the two were 2.

Reading in the library: 1 pupil said he read both subjects in the library daily, reading in the library 1-2 times a week were 3, never read in library 1, total is 5.

Reading both at school and home: Reading Chitonga both at home and at school daily only 1, reading at home/school 5-6 times a week also 1, total 2. Reading English both at school and at home daily were 2, reading English both at school and at home 1-2 times a week was only 1, total 3. Reading both English and Chitonga at school and at home daily were 10, reading both Chitonga and English at school and at home 1-2 times a week were 5, and 4 said they read both subjects at school and at home 3-4 times a week, total 19.

Reading home/school/library: Only 1 pupil said read both Chitonga and English daily at school, at home and at the library. (When asked how he managed he said he lived near a church library).

NOTE: The term 'a bit' among the responses in relation to understanding Chitonga means that pupils could understand some words, and could respond to a greeting in Chitonga but not conversing or constructing sentences.

The next table is on responses to whether pupils understood Chitonga in relation to their efforts to learning how to read. The responses are presented according to schools.

Table 12a: **Respondents' ability to understand Chitonga per School**

		Respondents' ability to understand Chitonga				
		absent/no answer	Yes	no	"a bit"	**Total**
Name of school	School A.	0	9	3	8	**20**
	School B.	0	9	7	4	**20**
	School C.	0	3	12	5	**20**
	School D.	5	6	9	0	**20**
Total		(6.2%) **5**	(33.8%) **27**	(38.8%) **31**	(21.2%) **17**	**80**

Pupils were asked if they understood Chitonga and their responses are in Table 12a above. The display shows that 38.8 percent of the pupils did not understand Chitonga - most of them were from rural schools, and 33.8 percent said they understood Chitonga. The percent that said understood Chitonga 'a bit' was 21.2. The biggest percent is for those who did not understand Chitonga.

The question to find out the relationship between language respondents used at home and their ability to understand Chitonga was asked and the responses are in Table 12b below.

Table 12b: **Language respondents use at home   and   respondents' ability to understand Chitonga**

Language respondents use at home and ability to understand Chitonga						
	Language used at home	Respondents' ability to understand Chitonga				**Total**
		absent/no answer	Yes	no	a bit	
Language respondents use at home		5	0	0	2	**7**
	Chitonga	0	12	0	0	**12**
	Lozi	0	5	13	7	**25**
	Toka- Leya	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Ila	0	1	0	0	**1**
	Bemba	0	3	9	4	**16**
	Nyanja	0	5	9	4	**18**
Total		**5**	**27**	**31**	**17**	**80**

The data on **Table 12b** were to the question on whether those who used different home languages were able to understand Chitonga. This part was vital since the language they were supposed to read at school as their local language was Chitonga. The question was trying to find out if there was a relationship between using a different home language and the ability to read Chitonga.

Logically, all the twelve who used Chitonga at home understood it well. Among the 25 who used Lozi at home, only 5 understood Chitonga, 13 did not understand it while 7 understood a bit of Chitonga. There was only one pupil using Toka-Leya and one using Ila and both understood Chitonga. From the 16 using Bemba at home, 3 understood Chitonga but 9 did not, while 4 understood a bit of Chitonga. For the 18 using Nyanja, 5 understood Chitonga, 9 did not and 4 understood a bit.

 To summarise, 6.25 percent was absent, 38.75 percent did not understand Chitonga while 33.75 percent understood it and 21.25 percent understood it 'a bit.' Adding all the numbers of those who used other languages at home, 51 percent did not understand Chitonga and combining those who understood and those who understood just a bit comes to 49 percent. The percentage for those who did not understood Chitonga is more than those who understood it.

The presentation in Table 12c below is on language pupils used at home and their ability to understand Chitonga. The responses are grouped according to sex. Table 12c below is almost like Table 12b above, but the aspect of sex has been added to Table 12c so as to find out the sex group that has a separate home language from Chitonga and ability to understand it. A description of the data has been given below the table.

Table 12c: Language respondents use at home and ability to understand Chitonga by gender

Sex of the respondent			Language respondents use at home							
			Other	Chitonga	Lozi	Toka Leya	Ila	Bemba	Nyanja	Total
Male	Respondents' ability to understand Tonga	No answer	5	0	0			0	0	**5**
		Yes	0	5	2			1	1	**9**
		No	0	0	4			6	3	**13**
		"a bit"	1	0	5			4	1	**11**
	Total		**6**	**5**	**11**			**11**	**5**	**38**
Female	Respondents' ability to understand Tonga	Yes	0	7	3	1	1	2	4	**18**
		No	0	0	9	0	0	3	6	**18**
		"a bit"	1	0	2	0	0	0	3	**6**
	Total		**1**	**7**	**14**	**1**	**1**	**5**	**13**	**42**

The data displayed on Table 12c above are pupils' responses on home language and ability to understand Chitonga by sex. According to the responses 5 male pupils and 7 female (total 12) pupils used Chitonga at home and understood it well. Two (2) male and 3 female pupils indicated that they used Lozi at home and they also understood Chitonga well. One female pupil used Toka-Leya and the other one used Ila and both of them understood Chitonga. One male and 2 female pupils used Bemba at home and understood Chitonga. One male and 4 female pupils used Nyanja and understood Chitonga.

To summarise the above points, 9 male and 18 female pupils understood Chitonga well, while 13 male and 18 female pupils did not understand Chitonga. 9 male and 18 female pupils understood Chitonga well - more girls understood Chitonga than boys. 11 males and 6 females understood Chitonga just 'a bit.'

4.3 STRATEGIES TEACHERS USED IN TEACHING READING IN CHITONGA TO GRADE 3 PUPILS.

Among the questions that teachers were asked was one on strategies they used in teaching reading and how they helped struggling readers to catch up with the rest. Teaching children how to read requires a lot of commitment and expertise on the part of teachers.   Bearing the above point in mind, teachers revealed that there were a number of strategies that they used depending on the component that needed emphasis. In terms of phonemes, they devised practical exercises for learners using songs about the alphabet, games of letter-sounds and rhymes. Class competitions in reading using word cards, retelling a Chitonga story after reading were also implored.   They also revealed that practice in reading Chitonga books was encouraged by giving them more homework in reading. The other strategy was revision of phonemes, phonics and syllables by giving more class exercises and homework on almost daily basis. Teacher to teacher consultation and improvisation of different kinds of readers were some of the strategies they used.

At school level, teachers of the same grade organized lesson demonstrations through the Zonal In-service Coordinators (ZICs) so as to be oriented in some of the methodologies in reading where they felt they were not competent enough.

Despite the efforts teachers put in, there were some challenges that they faced. The first thing they observed was that pupils lacked interest in learning Chitonga, had negative attitude towards Chitonga consequently did not know how to read in the same language. They also noticed that most pupils forgot what learnt easily especially letter-sounds.

On the part of teachers they realized that some of the challenges they faced was because they were not conversant with some words, structures and word syllables in Chitonga. They also revealed that some teachers had negative attitude towards Chitonga and Zambian languages in general hence lack of effort to teach it.

The importance of teaching phoneme awareness cannot be overstated. Hundreds of studies of phoneme awareness conducted indicate that phoneme awareness is essential to the process of learning to read. Explicit teaching of phoneme awareness facilitates

acquisition of reading skills. Some reading failures that have been experienced in this study are partly due to lack of phoneme awareness.

It is important for the teacher to realize that a child needs to demonstrate knowledge of the fact that spoken words are made up of phonemes and that phonemes can be rearranged and manipulated to make different words. Once a child attains that level of awareness then the understanding of the alphabetic principle becomes easy.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapter Four was displaying the findings of the study which were presented according to the three research objectives. The first objective focused on the difficulties pupils encountered in reading Chitonga, the second was availability of reading materials in Chitonga and the third was about the strategies teachers used in teaching reading to grade 3 pupils.

To investigate the specific difficulties they encountered, pupils were tested on alphabetic principle, phonological awareness, reading and writing spelling dictation. Apart from the test items, pupils were also interviewed to give their views concerning the challenges they faced. On availability of reading materials in Chitonga, pupils were asked on the type of books they read most and number of times they read those books. The other questions were on places they read those books, language they used at home and their ability to understand Chitonga. On materials, both teachers and pupils were asked, although separately, if they felt their classes had enough reading materials that would allow every pupil to read a Chitonga book if each of them desired to read at the same time. Concerning strategies teachers used to teach reading skills to pupils, they gave different responses according to how each individual teacher handled the lessons.

The next chapter is a discussion of the same findings under the headings of the objectives. The discussion will end with a summary of the whole chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0   General Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study presented from different instruments. The first part consists of sub-tests from BASAT which had the following components, the Alphabetic Principle, Phonological awareness, Reading (one, two, and three syllable words and reading sentences), Reading comprehension and Writing spelling dictation.

The second part of the findings was based on one-to-one Interview with pupils. The questions in the interview looked at the Language respondents used at home, respondents ability to understand Chitonga, type of books respondents read most, number of times respondents read different kinds of books in a week, place where respondents read from, and finding out whether respondents felt their class had enough reading materials in Chitonga.

The discussion of findings followed the same sequence they tasks were presented in Chapter Four.

5.1   Basic Skills Assessment Tool sub-tests

5.1.1   The Alphabetic Principle

The Alphabetic principle consisted of two subtests of letter knowledge and letter-sound knowledge. In letter knowledge children were required to identify and name all the 26 letters of the alphabet whereas in letter-sound knowledge they were asked to relate and give correct sounds of the letters. The letters in both tasks were mixed up or in random sequence to avoid them using the memorised order of the alphabet.

In terms of letter knowledge the performance of most children indicated that they had mastered the shapes and names of the letters. The results on Table 1 signified that a good number of the children were able to identify the letters and named them correctly despite the letters being mixed up. The findings indicate that by the end of second grade some children are able to identify and name letters of the alphabet even if they are not in their usual order. Their ability to recall the shapes of the letters as visual

symbols, and correctly naming them from their memory suggested that they had mastered them. One point to emphasize here is that although the percent for those who scored high marks was slightly higher than for those who did not perform well, it still shows that there is a challenge because the performance was below the expected level.

Learning letters of the alphabet, that is, shapes and names, is one of the initial skills children learn in early grades before they even begin preparing for reading tasks. In cases where early childhood education is provided or readily available, children start learning the shapes and names of the alphabet including phonemes at that stage. When they enrol in grade 1 they already have the knowledge of the letters and their sounds. But in situations where facilities of early education is not available teachers at grade 1 level have to work hard to impart such skills in children before they can embark on other skills in relation to reading.

Another point worth noting is the performance of children from the two localities, rural and urban. The findings signify that none of the two localities performed better than the other in this task. The two schools whose pupils performed well in alphabetic principle were from different localities, one was from rural setting while the other was from urban area. The influence of either rural or urban has been eliminated, (see the results per school Table 1).

The performance in letter-sound knowledge was poorer than in the task where they were to name the letters. In this task their performance indicated that they had challenges in associating letters with their sounds, as it can be seen from the results, Table 2, only 7.5 percent scored above 22 out of 26, while the largest number represented by 52.5 percent got between 0 (zero) and 6. Sounds (phonemes) are the key elements a child should master in learning to read. If they are lacking then reading difficulties in such children should be expected even in their advanced grades.
The findings still indicate that there is no significant difference between children from rural and urban schools, the same pattern still emerged that some children from both areas performed better while others failed to associate even one letter to its sound.

Knowledge of the alphabetic principle refers to an understanding that spoken words are made up of phonemes which is phoneme awareness, and that those phonemes are represented in text as letters. An understanding of the alphabetic principle is the

cornerstone on which literacy is built. Meaning therefore that the children in this study had not yet grasped the above concept because they lacked phoneme awareness, and therefore, did not understand what letters in text represented.

To master decoding, and to make sense of letter-sound relationships, a child must first make the connection between the symbols on the page and the sounds in speech. To be specific, the child needs to understand that the letters in written words correspond to the phonemes in spoken words.

Some children are able to demonstrate a knowledge of letter-sound relationships without actually understanding the alphabetic principle. These are situations where children are able to recognize that the letter "s" makes an /s/ sound, but they really do not understand that "samba," 'sola,' 'fast' and "seat" all have an /s/ sound in them, and that the /s/ sound is represented by a letter when they write the word.

The letter is the basic unit of reading and writing, and letter knowledge has consistently been shown to be one of the best predictors of later reading success. A child beginning to read should be familiar with these elements of text, but simple knowledge of the alphabet is not enough, it has to be learnt in context.

Before they can read, children must be comfortable and familiar with the letters of the alphabet. They should be able to identify the letters in different fonts and type case, and they should be comfortable with handwritten letters as well as letters embedded within words, as opposed to presented in isolation. Most importantly, they should be able to discriminate one letter from the other letters of the alphabet, for instance, identifying the different features between the letters *p* and *q,* between *b* and *d,* between *n* and *h* in their lowercase form.

Some children find it easy to learn about the shapes of the letters, before learning letter names. Once they are able to sort the letters into different categories such as: letters with curved parts, letters with straight parts, letters that stick up, letters that hang down, and letters with almost all the features mentioned above, then they are able to attach names to the different letters. Additionally, after children have grasped the concept that some letters are similar, but still different in some way such as the *u* and *n,* or the *n* and *h,* they will be less likely to confuse them later. This means the adults, both teachers

and some parents, involved in assisting children to learn reading skills, need to emphasize the above points for the children to notice the differences.

5.1.2   Phonological awareness

The test items in this task were on segmenting words into correct syllables, discriminating initial and end sounds in words that were read to them and blending sounds into recognizable words.

Segmenting words into syllables posed a challenge to children, very few of them managed to give correct syllables for the given words. The largest percent was for those who either got 1 correct or did not manage anything at all. They had not mastered any skill on how to segment words in syllables. This skill assists children to attack new words in reading, but if it is lacking it means that they will not attempt to read new words by separating them into manageable small portions.

Regarding initial sounds, children's performance was poor. It was thinly spread, almost the same marks, from those who got all the items correct to those who did not identify anything at all, (Table 3a). They had difficulties in identifying initial sounds. In terms of end sounds the performance was worse than in initial sound. The largest percent was for those who could not detect any sound at the end of the words read to them. The findings suggested that children had difficulties in identifying and writing down both initial and end sounds in words that were read to them.

Sound blending findings indicated that the majority of pupils could not blend any sounds together to form recognizable words. From these findings it can be deduced that they had not yet mastered the skill of blending sounds to form words. The challenge emanates from their inability to recognize and associate letters with their sounds - letter-sound knowledge, and all the other aspects of phonological awareness.

5.1.3   Reading Tasks

In this sub-test, pupils were tasked to read different groups of words such as two-letter words, two-syllable words, three-syllable words, short sentences including pictorial reading comprehension. This test was assessing children's ability to read those groups of words and sentences and also assess their comprehension ability.

On two-letter words, (me, pa, so, cu) the performance revealed that they had difficulties in reading those words. They only performed well on the first word but on the rest the proportion for those who failed to read was much higher than the ones who managed to read (Tables 4a, 4b, 4c and 4d).

Concerning two-syllable words, their performance reduced further as the differences between those who read them correctly and those who did not attempt at all was widening. For instance, the first one was 27.5 percent read it correctly against 62.5 percent who failed to read it. The trend continued for all the words in this group as it can be deduced from Tables 5a, 5b, 5c and 5d. The performance kept on worsening as the syllables increased. For three-syllable words, the differences in performance between those who did better and those who failed to read even one word became more pronounced where only 17.5 percent was able to read the three-syllable word correctly while 72.5 percent could not manage, see Table 6d.

When examining the results for reading sentences the same pattern of performance still emerged, 11.25 percent managed to read all of them while 73.75 percent could not read anything from the four sentences.

In Pictorial reading comprehension (Table 7), the trend changed, 42.5 percent managed to correctly match all the 4 sentences with pictures, while 5 percent did not manage to match anything correctly while the rest lay in between the two margins. Although the percent for those who did well was higher than those who performed poorly, it still raises a concern because it was below 50 percent. Failing to match sentences with pictures was a demonstration of not understanding what they were reading since the actions in the pictures were clear. It can be concluded that the challenge was on understanding what the sentences meant, which is comprehension.

In conclusion children had difficulties in reading different words deemed to be appropriate to their grade level. In all the reading tasks , there is a clear evidence of children not having acquired adequate reading skills.

5.1.4   Writing Spelling Dictation

The exercise consisted of writing dictated two-letter words, two-syllable words and two short sentences. Children's performance in this task exhibited poor spelling skills and kept on worsening as the items became more complex. In terms of spelling of two-letter words the general performance was poor even when analysed according to sex. By locality, the rural schools did better than the urban ones. As the test items progressed to a bit complex levels the skill for spelling also continued to diminish. A good example was their results on sentences where only 3.75 percent wrote the sentences correctly, 35 percent managed only one correct while those who could not attempt anything amounted to 28.75 percent.

These results revealed that grade 3 pupils had a challenge in writing correct spellings in Chitonga of two-letter words, two-syllable words and short sentences appropriate to their grade level.

5.2 DIFFICULTIES THEY ENCOUNTRED IN READING CHITONGA

5.2.1 Pupils' Views

Not to depend on one aspect of data collection children were also exposed to interview to get what they felt about their situation in reading and spell out the challenges they faced. The responses were in three categories – 65 percent liked reading and had no challenges, 15 percent liked reading however, they cited some challenges, and 20 percent did not like reading due to the same challenges expressed by others. The difficulties were highlighted as follows - they did not understand what they were reading, they also made a lot of mistakes as they were reading, and they always read very slowly. The other aspect brought out was of being laughed at by collegues whenever they made mistakes during reading and explained that it usually demoralised

them. To conclude this component, children had interest in reading but had a number of challenges as they struggled to read and they need the attention of the teachers to address them, otherwise children will continue with those difficulties in reading as they progress in higher grades.

5.2.2 Teachers' Views.

From the teachers' perspective through experience in teaching reading in Chitonga to Grade 3 Pupils, they brought out a number of observations as contributing factors to children' poor reading levels. They mentioned that pupils lacked interest in reading Chitonga and Zambian Languages in general, they also said most pupils did not know (understand or speak) Chitonga and could not read in Chitonga. The other observation was that most pupils forgot easily what they learnt especially sounds (phonemes).

5.2.3 Understanding Chitonga

According to the responses given by the pupils most of them did not understand Chitonga. The larger percent of those who did not understand Chitonga were from rural schools. From the total sample, only 15 percent were Tonga speakers and used Chitonga at home, while 78.75 percent used other languages. Among the 78.75 percent that used other languages only 18.75 percent understood Chitonga. The conclusion on this point is that most pupils were not Tonga speakers and did not understand the language.

5.3   AVAILABILITY OF READING MATERIALS IN CHITONGA.

In terms of availability of materials, most of the pupils said there were adequate reading materials for them to use while most teachers said they were very few. Although the pupils said there were adequate materials to read only a very small number said they usually read Chitonga books. This could be attributed to a small number of pupils who understood Chitonga. Availability of books here means children accessing the books and having time to read them. If books are available but they are not utilized then the concept of being available loses meaning. There are two different understandings here – pupils said there were enough books while teachers said books were not enough

5.4 STRATEGIES TEACHERS USED

In trying to understand the situation of reading difficulties faced by children, teachers were asked to give their views specifically on what they did to assist children gain reading skills. From what the teachers' responses these were the strategies they instituted: they involved learners in a lot of practical class exercises and activities, they gave them a lot of homework in reading Chitonga books, they also encouraged them to be practicing reading Chitonga books whenever they had chance, and most of them introduced reading competitions in Chitonga. The other aspect was of revising phonemes, phonics and syllables and any other components they felt needed more attention. The School In-service Coordinators (SICs) intensified internal monitoring, they also strengthened Teachers' Group Meetings (TGMs) where lesson demonstrations on teaching phonemes, phonics and syllables were done.

5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

From the findings it can be concluded that 50% of the pupils could not recognize and name letters of the Chitonga alphabet. On the issue of phonemic awareness - letter-sound knowledge, pupils could not give correct sounds of the letters showing that they had not yet mastered the skill of associating letters with their sounds (phonemes). This performance was an indication that pupils were lacking skills in alphabetic principle.

One other exercise that was closer to the above was identification of initial and ending sounds in words that were read to them. Although here the performance in initial sounds was better than in identifying end sounds it was still not good as most of them failed to identify both initial and ending sounds.   They also had difficulties in segmenting given words in their correct syllables. Reading 'two-letter words,' 'two syllable words,' 'three syllable words,'   reading sentences and comprehending text was also a challenge.

The other challenge they faced was on spelling dictation such as writing correct spellings for two-letter words, two-syllable words and short sentences dictated to them in Chitonga.

Concerning the attitude of pupils towards reading, most of them indicated that they liked reading and did not face any challenges, while a few said they encountered some difficulties during reading. Another aspect that was brought out by pupils was that most of them did not understand Chitonga and very few pupils read Chitonga books. In terms of type of books they read, only 3.75 percent indicated that they had interest in reading Chitonga books without being told by anyone.

Findings from the Grade 3 Pupils' Interview revealed that classes had enough reading materials in Chitonga but 64.7 percent of the teachers said the materials were not enough.

The strategies teachers used to teach reading was involving learners in a lot of practical activities in class; encouraging them to be practicing reading Chitonga books and giving them more homework in reading, doing a lot of revision in phonemes, phonics and syllables. The School In-service Coordinators also intensified their internal monitoring and strengthened Teachers' Group Meetings where lesson demonstrations were carried out on phonemes, phonics and syllables.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter was a discussion of the findings of the study. From these findings it has been concluded that pupils had not yet mastered the alphabetic principle both Chitonga and the English one, the phonological awareness, reading skills for ordinary words and reading for comprehension. They had not yet grasped the spellings of Chitonga words at their appropriate grade level. Another challenge was that most pupils under study did not speak Chitonga and had other languages as their home languages.

The next chapter is a conclusion of the findings of the research. It also deals with the recommendations to different key stakeholders which were based on the findings.

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 General Introduction

This chapter is about the conclusion of the research findings. It also deals with the recommendations to different key stakeholders which are based on the findings.

It is prudent to remind ourselves that the study was focusing on the factors that affected reading levels in Chitonga among Grade 3 pupils in selected schools of Livingstone and Kazungula districts of Southern Province. The research addressed the laid down objectives and the process for collecting data was also followed.

The research process went well although there was a problem of absenteeism among pupils which delayed the progress of the research because same schools had to be visited more than once or twice in order to capture those who were absent. There was one situation where the designated number of respondents could not be met because they were combined with another class since one of the grade 3 teachers was absent. That meant a different time of reporting which disturbed the researcher's schedule of activities.

The aim of the study was to investigate factors affecting reading levels in Chitonga among grade 3 pupils in the areas mentioned above. The study endeavored to address all the three research objectives that were stated through administering tests in reading, through interviewing pupils and also questionnaires which were administered to grade 3 teachers. The gathered findings revealed that pupils had challenges in identifying and naming letters of the alphabet, in letter-sound association, phoneme segmentation and phoneme blending, reading vocabulary and sentences deemed to be of their appropriate grade level. They also had challenges in writing spelling dictations of words and sentences at their grade level.

The results from this study were that pupils had challenges in all the areas that they were tested in and this has given the researcher a clearer perspective of the real challenges encountered by these grade 3 pupils in reading Chitonga. Considering what has come out of the study there is need to undertake a cross-sectional study of grades 1 to 3 in the same schools to assess the stage at which children miss the skills mentioned above. Although it will not be the same pupils and teachers, since it will be in the same area the

study will be able to give an idea at which level the progression in acquiring reading skills and mastering spellings is left loose.

For pupils in early grades to have difficulties in the areas mentioned above becomes a big challenge in modern world where information dissemination and exchange are almost entirely dependent on reading.

6.1 CONCLUSION

According to what has been revealed through their performance, Grade three pupils in the schools under study had difficulties in reading and spelling Chitonga words and sentences. They also showed serious weaknesses in segmenting words into correct syllables. Proving that they had not yet adequately mastered the skills of reading, spelling and syllable segmentation. At the end of grade 2 pupils are supposed to automatically recognize frequently encountered words in print with the number of words that can be read fluently increasing steadily across the school year.

Another finding from this study was that 60 percent of the sample did not understand Chitonga consequently did not read Chitonga materials. Most of the pupils who said did not understand Chitonga were from rural schools. In terms of languages that pupils used at home 78.75 percent used other languages and only 15 percent used Chitonga. Most pupils under study were not Chitonga speakers.

Among the challenges that pupils encountered were in reading Chitonga making a lot of mistakes when reading; not understanding what they were reading; and reading very slowly.

The fact that children learn to read depends heavily on their early experience with language, the language spoken at home, and how language is used, are important factors in reading literacy. Children whose knowledge of the language used in formal reading instruction is substantially below the expected level then such children are likely to be at an initial disadvantage. Use of different languages or dialects at home and school may cause problems for young pupils who are still learning how to read.

6.2   RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 To Ministry of Education:

6.2.1.1 Ministry of Education to replace Primary Reading Programme Kit as often as possible to ensure continuity of the methodology.

6.2.1.2   To furnish primary schools with recent books and other interesting literature such as story books.

6.2.1.3   Library facilities should be provided in all schools and an official hour should be allocated for reading in the daily school timetable.

6.2.1.4   The implementation of Language policy on the use of mother tongue in early grades to be enhanced in schools.

6.2.2 To District Education Office:

6.2.2.1 To intensify monitoring of lesson delivery as often as possible especially in reading.

6.2.2.2 To ensure that during monitoring, records of assessment in reading and other areas become integral part of documents to be presented to monitors by class teachers.

6.2.2.3 To regularly sensitize both communities (parents), teachers and pupils that Zambian Languages are now passing subjects.

6.2.3   To Headteachers (Schools)

6.2.3.1 Where possible, Head Teachers to allocate Lower Basic classes to teachers who:
- are conversant with new reading methodologies.
- are competent in Chitonga to apply Primary Reading Programme methodology effectively.

6.2.3.2 Head Teachers to make reading materials in Chitonga as part of the school priority areas when procuring books.

6.2.3.3   Intensifying monitoring of lesson delivery especially in Chitonga.

6.2.3.4 To organize peer orientation meetings for the teachers who are not conversant with methodologies that develop reading competences in children.

6.2.3.5 To budget for NBTL kit in advance so that when funds are available they can procure it.

6.2.3.6 To organize reading competitions in Chitonga at both class and school levels.

6.2.4 To Teachers of Lower Basic Section

6.2.4.1 Teachers handling Lower Basic classes to emphasize on basic reading skills as early as Grade 1 so that at Grade 3 level they have acquired enough skills for reading to learn.

6.2.4.2 To start assessment in reading as early as possible so that remedies are sought to address any challenges pupils might encounter in reading Chitonga.

6.2.4.3 To be open and collaborate with other teachers where they 'know they don't know' so that they assist each other.

6.2.5 For Further Research

6.2.5.1 To carry out a comprehensive study to determine the level at which pupils acquire reading skills in both rural and urban schools.

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