

DECLARATION

I, Saasa Vivien Monde Mwaekwa, declare that this dissertation:

- (a) Represents my own work;
- (b) Has neither in any part nor in whole, been presented as a substance for award of any kind or degree at this University or any other University; and
- (c) Does not incorporate any published work of another dissertation, and, acknowledgements have been made where other people's ideas and work have been used.

Signed:

Date:

COPYRIGHT

All rights reserved. No part of this dissertation may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or means without prior permission in writing from the author or the University of Zambia.

APPROVAL

This thesis of SAASA VIVIEN MONDE MWAEKWA is approved as fulfilling the partial requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

Signed:

Date:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my children: Amukena, Manga, Nangana, Waluka, Monde and Masiye, and also to my brother Clement Saasa. My brother supported me both morally and financially throughout the time I was studying. My children kept on encouraging me and sometimes typing my work when I felt fatigued.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe the success of this study to my supervisor, Dr. J. Simwinga, for his unwavering support and invaluable guidance throughout the period I was under his supervision. Despite his numerous responsibilities as a Lecturer, Researcher, and Assistant Dean of School of Humanities, he still had time to accommodate and patiently guide me. Somebody who corrected and guided me as if I had just forgotten, I really learnt a lot from him.

I convey my gratitude to Mr. Chakanika Wanga and Dr. Sibalwa David, for their encouragement whenever I felt weary with work. They have been all weather friends.

I also want to thank all the respondents: teachers, School Insert Coordinators and pupils who took part in this research as either respondents or as subjects, for their patience and cooperation during the research process. It could have been time consuming for them. However, they accommodated me until I collected all the data that I needed.

Finally I would like to thank all the people who contributed to the success of this research in one way or another, especially Juliet Kotolo Phiri and Anthony Mulenga. These colleagues were ready and open to me whenever I consulted them.

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

BASAT	Basic Skills Assessment Tool
BTL	Breakthrough To Literacy
EFA	Education For A
ECZ	Examinations Council of Zambia
L1	Local Language or First Language
LEA	Language Experience Approach
MoE	Ministry of Education
NALS	National Adults Literacy Survey
NAEP	National Assessment of Education Progress
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NRC	National Research Council
NRP	National Reading Panel
NBTL	New Breakthrough To Literacy
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
RAN	Rapid Automatized Naming
ROC	Read On Course
SACMEQ	Southern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SIC	School In-service Coordinator
SITE	Step In To English
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
ZIC	Zonal In-Service Coordinator

ABSTRACT

The definition of reading adopted for this research is that it is a deliberate process of looking at and understanding written language. The focus of the research was to find out factors that affect reading levels in Chitonga among Grade 3 pupils in selected schools from Livingstone and Kazungula districts of Southern Province. This was basically to examine the extent to which pupils understood relatively simple texts (comprehension - whereby the reader obtains meaning from the text), letter identification and phonemic recognition and spellings. The Pupils were from government primary schools and Chitonga was used because it is the official Local language in the province.

The researcher chose Grade 3 pupils in Term 1 because they had just completed grade 2, meaning, they had learnt adequate reading skills in Chitonga. The investigation was done using three types of instruments, these were sub-tests derived from the Basic Skills Assessment Tool (BASAT), Interviews with Pupils and also from questionnaires which were administered to 14 Grade 3 Teachers and 3 School In-service Coordinators (SICS). Pupils were tested in letter naming, letter-sound association, phonological tasks (initial and ending sound identification, syllable segmentation), reading words, sentences and reading for comprehension – which was pictorial reading comprehension. The other sub-test was on writing spelling dictation of words and sentences. All the tests were in Chitonga and were administered to 80 pupils.

The children were subjected to naming all the letters of the alphabet and their phonemes, reading one, two, and three-syllable words, reading sentences, reading comprehension - where they were to match what they read with pictures, writing spelling dictation of one and two syllable words and writing dictation of short sentences. The results suggested that the majority of Grades 3 pupils, in both urban and rural schools, had difficulties with all the exercises. The biggest challenge was encountered in writing spelling where many of them could not manage to write any item correctly.

The study concluded that grade 3 pupils in the selected schools had challenges in letter identification, letter-sound association, phonological awareness, reading and writing spellings, and comprehending simple texts. In terms of preference on reading materials, results showed that grade 3 pupils read more English books than Chitonga ones. The reading habits indicated that they read more at school than any other place.

Based on these findings a number of recommendations were made to different levels of stakeholders so as to address the challenges raised from the findings.

Some of the recommendations made were to the Ministry of Education to enhance the implementation of Language Policy in institutions of Learning and to regularly provide the Primary Reading Programme Kits to Basic Schools to ensure continuity in teaching reading skills to pupils. The recommendation to the District Education Office is to intensify teacher monitoring and pupils' reading performance as often as possible. For Headteachers was to give priority to pupils' reading materials as they procure books for the school.

Table of Contents

Content	Page
Declaration.....	i
Copyright	ii
Approval.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgement.....	v
Acronyms/Abbreviations.....	vi
Key for School Names	vi
Abstract	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 General Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Problem.....	1
1.1.1 The Benefits of Knowing How to Read.....	1
1.1.2 Goals of Reading in General.....	4
1.1.3 Importance of Third Grade Reading	5
1.1.4 Skills Development	5
1.1.5 Importance of Mother Tongue	7
1.1.6 Reading	10
1.1.6.1 Decoding	10
1.1.6.2 Comprehension	11
1.1.6.3 Retention	11
1.1.6.4 Fluency	12
1.1.6.4.1 The Importance of Fluency in Reading	13
1.1.6.5 Other Factors Affecting Reading	13

1.1.7	Interventions on Literacy in Zambia	14
1.2	Statement of the Problem.....	16
1.3	Purpose of the Study.....	16
1.4	Objectives of the Study.....	16
1.5	Research Questions.....	16
1.6	Significance of the Study	17
1.7	Challenges Faced during Data Collection.....	18
1.8	Delimitations of the Study.....	18
1.9	Operational Definition of Terms.....	18
1.10	Structure of the Dissertation	20
1.11	Summary of Chapter One	20
 CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE		22
2.0	General Introduction.....	22
2.1	Reading Performance at Global Level	22
2.1.1	Third Grade Reading Skills – A Benchmark Gaining Ground.....	24
2.2	Reading Performance in Africa	24
2.3	Reading Performance in Zambia	27
2.4	Conclusion	28
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....		30
3.0	General Introduction	30
3.1	Methodology.....	30
3.2	Research Design.....	30
3.3	Research Site.....	30
3.4	Population.....	31
3.5	Sample Size.....	31
3.6	Sampling Techniques.....	31
3.7	Research Instruments.....	32

3.8	Data Collection Procedures.....	33
3.8.1	Basic Skills Assessment Tool Sub-tests	33
3.8.1.1	The Alphabetic Principle	33
3.8.1.2	Phonological Awareness Tasks	34
3.8.1.3	Reading Tasks	34
3.8.1.4	Writing Spelling Dictation Tasks.....	34
3.8.1.5	Questionnaires	35
3.9	Data Analysis	35
3.10	Conclusion	35

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS37

4.0	General Introduction	37
4.1	Difficulties Grade 3 Pupils Encountered in Reading Chitonga.....	37
4.1.1	Data From BASAT Sub-tests	37
4.1.1.1	The Alphabetic Principle	37
4.1.1.2	Phonological Awareness	39
4.1.1.3	Reading one, two, and three syllable words	41
4.1.1.4	Reading Sentences	48
4.1.1.5	Pictorial Reading Comprehension	48
4.1.1.6	Writing Spelling Dictation	49
4.1.2	Pupils' Views on Difficulties they encountered in reading Chitonga	55
4.2	Availability of Reading Materials in Chitonga	56
4.2.1	Teachers' Views	56
4.2.2	Pupils' Views	56
4.3	Strategies Teachers use in teaching reading to Grade 3 Pupils	64
4.4	Conclusion	65

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS 66

5.0	General Introduction	66
-----	----------------------------	----

5.1	Basic Skills Assessment Tool Sub-tests.....	66
5.1.1	The Alphabetic Principle	66
5.1.2	Phonological Awareness	69
5.1.3	Reading Tasks	70
5.1.4	Writing Spelling Dictation	71
5.2	Difficulties they encountered in reading Chitonga	71
5.2.1	Pupils' Views	71
5.2.2	Teachers' Views	72
5.2.3	Understanding Chitonga	72
5.3	Availability of Grade 3 Reading Materials in Chitonga	72
5.4	Strategies Teachers used to teach reading in Chitonga.....	73
5.5	Summary of Findings	73
5.6	Conclusion	74

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS75

6.0	General	75
6.1	Conclusions.....	76
6.2	Recommendations.....	77

REFERENCES and BIBLIOGRAPHY.....79 - 92

List of Tables	Page
Table 1: Respondents' ability to correctly identify and name letters of the alphabet	37
Table 2: Respondents' ability to give sounds of the letters of the alphabet	38
Table 3a: Respondents' ability to recognize' initial sounds' in given words	39
Table 3b: Respondents' ability to recognize' end sounds' in given words	40
Table 4a: Respondents' ability to read two-letter words – 'me'	41
Table 4b: Respondents' ability to read two-letter words – 'pa'	42
Table 4c: Respondents' ability to read two-letter words – 'so'	42
Table 4d: Respondents' ability to read two-letter words – 'cu'	43

Table 5a: Respondents’ ability to read two-syllable words – ‘kala’	44
Table 5b: Respondents’ ability to read two-syllable words – ‘jika’	44
Table 5c: Respondents’ ability to read two-syllable words – ‘mebo’	45
Table 5d: Respondents’ ability to read two-syllable words – ‘sala’	45
Table 6a: Respondents’ ability to read three-syllable words – ‘kobala’	46
Table 6b: Respondents’ ability to read three-syllable words – ‘kojika’	46
Table 6c: Respondents’ ability to read three-syllable words – ‘mabisi’	47
Table 6d: Respondents’ ability to read three-syllable words – ‘ndamana’	47
Table 7: Respondents’ ability to correctly match sentences with given pictures	48
Table 8a: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-letter words – ‘pe’	49
Table 8b: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-letter words – ‘tu’	50
Table 8c: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-letter words – ‘de’	51
Table 8d: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-letter words – ‘zo’	52
Table 9a: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-syllable words – ‘lila’	53
Table 9b: Respondents’ ability to write correct spelling for two-syllable words – ‘bila’	53
Table 10: Respondents’ attitude towards reading in relation to challenges they encountered.....	55
Table 11a: Does the respondent feel the class has enough books to read all of them at once	57
Table 11b: Type of books respondents read most	57
Table 11c: Number of times respondents read different types of books in a week	58
Table 11d: Place where respondents read different types of books and number of times read in a week.	59
Table 12a: Respondents’ ability to understand Chitonga	61
Table 12b: Language respondents use at home and ability to understand Chitonga	62
Table 12c: Language respondents use at home and ability to understand Chitonga by sex ..	63

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1a: *Summary of Basic Skills Assessment Tool Sub-tests*

Appendix 1b: *Alphabetic Principle and Phonological Awareness sub-tests*

Table A: *Chitonga Alphabet*

Table B: *English Alphabet*

Table C: *Phonemes: Letter (Consonant and Vowel) sounds*

Table D: *Syllable Segmentation, Initial/ End sound identification, Sound blending*

Appendix 1c: *Reading and Writing sub-tests*

i: Key for Reading Sub-tests

ii: Key for Writing Spelling Dictation sub-tests

Appendix 1d i: *Pictorial Reading Comprehension (English version)*

Appendix 1d ii: *Pictorial Reading Comprehension (Chitonga version)*

Appendix 2a: *Interview Schedule for Grade 3 Pupils –(English version)*

Appendix 2b: *Interview Schedule for Grade 3 Pupils –(Chitonga version)*

Appendix 3a: *Questionnaire for Grade 3 Teachers*

Appendix 3b: *Questionnaire for School In-service Coordinators*

Appendix 4: *Characteristics of Respondents*

Appendix 5: *Characteristics of Grade 3 Teachers and SICs*