

**TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS FOR EARLY
LITERACY IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN KITWE AND LUASAKA
DISTRICTS**

BY:

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Zambia in Partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the award of the degree of Master of Education in
Literacy and Learning.**

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DECLARATION

I, Mulenga Constance, do declare that the work presented in this dissertation entitled “Training of Students in Oral Language Skills for Early Literacy in Colleges of Education in Kitwe and Lusaka Districts” is my own work and that it is original. The dissertation has not been submitted for an award of degree or diploma by the University of Zambia or any other University.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of **Mulenga Constance** has been approved as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Education in Literacy and Learning by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

Teacher training in oral language skills is very significant as it may lead to the improvement of reading and writing among grade one and two learners. The present study sought to establish whether students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy. The study employed the qualitative approach and a case study research design was utilised. A total of 63 respondents were drawn from four Colleges of Education and two primary schools. The data was obtained through interviews, focus discussions, observations and documentary analysis. Descriptive analysis was utilised to analyse the data. The findings revealed that students were not adequately trained in oral language skills. The four colleges of education were not using the same syllabus. Three colleges used the Zambia Primary Course syllabus of 2014 while one college utilised the literature and languages syllabus of 2013. The Zambia Primary Course comprised only two oral language skills; Phonology and Morphology and group/ pair discussions, rhymes, poems, debate, role play and game as the oral language activities. The literature and languages syllabus had phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and discourse analysis as oral language skills without any oral language activities. It was also established that lecturers employed eclectic methods to teach oral skills. Two colleges conducted formative and summative assessments. The other two colleges did not assess oral language skills due to lack of language laboratories, shortage of time and space. The study further established that lecturers needed to engage in continuous professional development in oral language skills. The colleges of education must have competent lecturers to handle oral language skills. The study recommended that, the colleges of education should strengthen teacher training in oral language skills by teaching all the components of oral language skills. The colleges of education should teach oral language skills as a subject on its own as it received little attention due to limited time. The Ministry of High and Tertiary Education should recruit competent personnel to handle oral language skills in some Colleges of Education. All colleges of education should conduct assessments in oral language skills and it should be systematic, extensive and regular.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband Joshua Zulu for the support he rendered to me during my studies at the University of Zambia. I further dedicate this report to my son Joshua Favour Zulu, my Father Mr. Godfrey Mulenga, my Mother Mrs. Elizabeth Mulenga and all my siblings.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACTE	American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
CEFR	Common European Framework Reference
CLA	Comprehensive Language Approach
CPD	Continuous Profession Development
DEBS	District Education Board Secretary
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELD	English Language Development
ESL	English as a Second Language
NBTL	New Breakthrough to Literacy
NCCA	National Council for Curriculum Assessment
NCLR	National Capital Language Resource
NEFEC	North East Florida Educational Consortium
PLP	Primary Literacy Programme
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
PSA	Phonological Sensitive Approach
PSU	Prince of Songkla University
ROC	Read on Course
UNS	University of Novi Sad
ZPC	Zambia Primary Course Syllabu

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework and conceptual framework. It further, gives the delimitation, limitations of the study and Operational definitions.

1.2 Background to the study

In Zambia the training of primary school teachers is placed under Teacher Education and Special Services (TESS) of the Ministry of Education. The Republic of Zambia attaches a lot of importance to both initial teacher training as well as in-service training. According to the Ministry of Education policy 'Educating Our Future' (1996:108) "training and professional development underpin what a teacher can accomplish in a school." The essential competences required in every teacher are mastery of the educational materials that are to be taught and skills in communicating that material to the learners. These simple formulations cover a great array of knowledge, understanding and skills that must become integral to every teacher. The preparation of teachers in the understanding of their field and how to teach require lengthy and careful attention.

The teacher's professional life revolves around two areas of never-ending growth and progression: knowledge, which is always increasing and changing; and learners who are unique and each one developing within a changing social environment. The Ministry of Education (1996) acknowledged that the quality and effectiveness of an education system depend heavily on the quality of its teachers. This entails that teachers are the key persons in determining success in meeting the system's goals. The educational and well-being of the learners in schools hinge crucially on the competence, commitment and resourcefulness of the teachers.

Tambulukani (2004) suggested that there was need for an effective training programme for teachers and school administrators. The officers should be oriented in the course material and the methodology used in the course books.

Teaching in this modern era had been described as a complex and challenging profession that involved a lot of professional skills, personal characteristics and specialized based knowledge (Cole & Chan, 1994). Teaching is a process of human interaction and an important aspect of

quality education. The role played by teachers in the education system is very significant because teachers are the custodians of knowledge and instructors of instructions. They are the key personnel in the education system as they are in the forefront of education, seriously engaged in various teaching and learning processes and the final personnel in the implementation of education principles and theories. The importance of teaching is not only appreciated by the educators and practitioners, but by the public at large (Smith, 1996) as cited by (Likando, 2013). Effective teaching is not an accident, but a planned activity that involves the learning of different teaching skills that need to be integrated so as to achieve the instructional goal of classroom teaching (Cole & Chan, 1994). Teaching skills refer to the skills that teachers use in class in order to enhance pupils' learning through teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Kyriacou, 2001) as cited by (Likando, 2013).

In addition, Bisat (1987) also looked at teaching skills to be a distinct set of identifiable capabilities or behaviours that a teacher uses in order to carry out the task of teaching. A skilled teacher provides an opportunity to develop the learners' thinking skills and strategies which are a foundation for thoughtful learning (Ministry of Education, 2009). One of the critical indicators of a skilled teacher is determined by the choice and usage of teaching skills. In this regard, primary school teachers must receive adequate training in oral language skills so as to effectively teach early literacy to grade one and two learners.

Oral language is the transfer of information and knowledge through the art of speaking and listening. In Africa, Oral language was the significant mode of communication through which knowledge was passed on from one person to the other and from one generation to the other. Knowledge on farming, iron smelting, use of tools for instance, was transmitted through word of mouth by elders or people who were more knowledgeable (Finnegan, 1970). Further, culture and tradition are handed down from person to person and generation to generation through oral language.

The key attribute of Oral language is that whatever information or knowledge that is disseminated or transmitted orally is not easily forgotten. Due to this attribute, Africans survived just by word of the mouth, no information or knowledge was passed on in a written form. It is imperative to note that, Oral language was accompanied by practice so as to imbed the information and knowledge that was handed over (George, 1995). Oral language had proved to be a feasible mode of communication among Africans even to the world at large.

Ultimately, the training of primary school teachers in oral language skills is essential as this could greatly enhance the teaching of reading and writing to grade one and two learners.

Primary school teachers have a mandate to teach reading and writing to the learners thus, if they receive adequate training in oral language skills at colleges of education, in turn this may greatly assist in the teaching of early literacy. Furthermore, research has indicated that cognitive development in children is closely linked to oral language development (Williams & Roberts, 2011). As such children must be extensively exposed to Oral language both in a home and at school. However, it was not known whether students were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy

Oral language skills play a significant role in the development of the four macro skills namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The Oral language skills form a solid foundation for listening, speaking, reading and writing in that speaking to learn is the vehicle for increasing and deepening knowledge. It is difficult to read a language that is incomprehensible to the ear (Brooke, 2001). Oral language skills form a base for the attainment of literacy. Once literacy has been attained, it could foster comprehension of other subjects that the learners are taught. Therefore, early literacy instructional priority should be dedicated to the development of Oral proficiency and concurrently supplemented with print materials to support the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment Report No.14, 2012).

However, if there is a deficiency in Oral language skills in early literacy this could result in learners having serious difficulties in reading and writing. Ultimately, if the problem is not rectified with time, it could cause learners to lag behind in word learning and hence, the gap with regards to reading and writing between them and their peers may widen substantially (Hart & Risley, 2003). Thus, it is imperative for primary school teachers to receive extensive preparation in Oral language skills as they are required to teach oral skills to learners for early literacy. The study wanted to establish whether or not focus was given to the teaching of oral language skills in colleges of education.

Primary school teachers needed to develop skills in the following six primary components of Oral language. Firstly, they needed to gain Oral language abilities in Semantics which is the study of meaning. It focuses on the relationship between words, phrases, signs and symbols and what they stand for (Beth, 1991). Secondly, teachers must gain competence in Syntax or

Grammar; this is the set of rules, principles and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language (Hargis, 2008). It is vital to state that, teachers must develop their oral language skills as they are required to teach the skills to grade one and learners so as to develop their understanding. Consequently, if primary school teachers do not receive adequate training in oral language skills, they may encounter challenges in teaching grammar. When the development of grammar is not attained this could greatly deter the acquisition of reading and writing skills in learners. Thus, great attention must be given to the training of teachers in oral language for early literacy.

In addition, primary school teachers also needed to gain competence in Morphology as it was one of the key components of oral language skills. Morphology is the identification, analysis and description of the structure of a given language's morphemes and linguistic units (Yoshimoto, 2009). When primary school teachers receive adequate training in Morphology it may greatly assist them in teaching listening and reading comprehension as well as reading and writing.

Furthermore, teachers must also be exposed to Phonology and Phonemic systems which refer to the organization of sounds within a word. Once the Phonological and Phonemic systems have been acquired for speaking and listening, primary school teachers may enhance the acquisition of Phonological and phonemic awareness of sounds or syllables within words in the learners (Hart and Risley, 2003). This study aimed at establishing whether or not teachers had the phonological and phonemic awareness which would aid learning to read and write.

Pragmatics is also a component of oral language skills. As such primary school teachers need to have proficiency in Pragmatics which was considered by some reading experts as the "hidden curriculum" in a classroom. This refers to the understanding of social use of language. This included the social norms regarding conversational turn-taking, personal space, appropriate behaviour with peers and authority figures in a variety of common social situations (Green, 1989).

Lastly, Discourse analysis is also a significant component of oral language skills. Discourse analysis is the use of spoken or written language in a social context. According to Renkema (2004) Discourse analysis refers to the discipline devoted to the investigation of the relationship between form and function in verbal communication. This skill is very critical as it plays a significant role in listening and reading comprehension.

Teachers play a very significant role in the learning process of learners, however, they are faced with an enormous task of imparting knowledge and skills on learners and Oral language skills are not an exception. Consequently, teachers must be knowledgeable about oral language skills failure to which may result in under performance or even ultimate failure by learners in reading and writing skills. As earlier indicated, oral language skills play a paramount role in the development of literacy. Therefore, teachers must receive adequate training in oral language skills. Once this has been achieved at tertiary level then the benefits will trickle down to the recipients of knowledge and skills who are the learners. Zambia is currently experiencing low literacy levels among primary school learners a number of studies have indicated so. However, once the magnitude of Oral proficiency is realized it could assist in improving the literacy levels among primary school learners. This is the case even in driving, one had to do the oral test first and missing this oral part could cause serious accidents on the roads.

A number of studies have been carried out globally; however, the present study had only highlighted a few that could be of relevance to the study. Prestwich (2012) of the United States of America carried out a study on ‘measuring Pre-school teachers’ perceived competence and knowledge of Oral language development’. This study was conducted using a descriptive, cross-sectional design. The findings of the study indicated that Pre-school teachers’ knowledge of promoting extended discourse for development of Oral language literacy foundations was low. Furthermore, the findings showed that there was need to focus on professional development for pre-school teachers. She recommended that, the information realized from her study could be used to improve Pre-service training and In-service professional development provided to pre-school teachers. This study was very significant to the present study because it was looking at Oral language development strategies among Pre-school teachers and their perceptions. However, it is vital to note that her study did not look at the training of primary teachers in Oral language skills for early literacy.

A report was also written on Oral language in Early Childhood and Primary Education by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment of Australia (NCCA, 2012). The report examined ways in which Oral language could support literacy development. The report indicated that Oral language as a skill was a strong base for future reading and writing. The report was of great significance to the present study because it illuminated the importance of Oral language in early childhood and Primary education from three (3) to eight (8) years. However, the report

under discussion did not indicate anything on the training of teachers to teach Oral language skills for early literacy.

Another research was conducted by Williams & Roberts (2011) of the United States of America. The study was investigating the strategic oral language instruction in English language development; teaching oracy to develop literacy. The quantitative approach was used to carry out the research. The study indicated some of the factors affecting the time dedicated to the teaching of Oral language skills as being: student variables, teacher training background, school priorities and emphasis. The research further concluded that Oral language provided to most English Language Development programmes (ELD) was insufficient because emphasis was on Oracy and not literacy. The present study sought to establish whether or not students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.

In Zambia a study was conducted by Matafwali (2010) on the 'Role of Oral Language in the acquisition of reading'. She used the cross-sectional and longitudinal research methodologies. The findings of the study indicated that Oral language was vital as it was a predictor for reading and established that oral language measures significantly predicted literacy outcomes beyond grade one. Her study was of great significance to the current study because it indicated the importance of Oral language in reading. However, she did not mention anything about the training of teachers in Oral language skills for early literacy, although she recommended that the Ministry of Education should strengthen teacher training for early literacy. With this said teacher training in Oral language skills was very critical because teachers were faced with a serious task of teaching learners reading and writing.

Another study was carried out by Likando (2013) focusing on primary teachers' training in classroom questioning skills in primary teachers colleges of education. His study sought to find out perceptions that primary school teachers have on their training and preparation in classroom questioning skills in primary teachers' colleges of education. A descriptive survey research design was deployed in the study. The findings of the study indicated that serving primary school teachers were of the view that; they were not well trained in classroom questioning skills during their pre-service training. The findings further, reviewed that the type of classroom questioning skills that primary school teachers used in their classes had a bearing on the way they were trained and prepared in primary teachers' colleges of education. However, it should be noted the likando's study did not look at primary school teachers' training in oral language skills for early

literacy. In addition, his study deployed the survey research design whereas the present study utilized the case study research design so as to have an in-depth of the problem at hand.

In addition, Kamangala (2010) also conducted a study which was looking at teacher preparedness to teach initial literacy in Zambian indigenous languages under the new breakthrough to literacy programmes. The study mainly focused on how pre-service teachers were prepared in primary teachers' colleges of education to handle initial literacy using Zambian local languages in the NBTL course. A case study research design was utilized at Solwezi College of education and a survey research design was also employed for the sampled basic schools in Solwezi. The findings of the study showed that respondents expressed varying opinions regarding the teaching of initial literacy in a local language. Some respondents strongly felt that, they were not well prepared through pre-service training in the college and in-service training in basic schools. This study was of great relevance to the current study as it highlighted how primary school teachers were trained to teach initial literacy in Zambian languages. Conversely, it should be noted that the study did not focus on teacher training in oral language skills for early literacy.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Oral language skills play an important role in the process of learning to read and write. Studies have shown that oral language skills play a significant role in the attainment of reading and writing skills. Proficiency in Oral language skills leads to proficiency in learning to read and write (Cummins, 1979). Nevertheless, it was not known whether students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The study intended to establish whether students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.

Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1.5 Main Objective

To establish the extent to which Oral language skills are taught to students for early literacy in Colleges of Education.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

1. To identify the Oral language skills and activities, if any, covered in the College of Education Syllabus.
2. To establish how Oral language skills are taught in Colleges of Education.
3. To establish how Oral language skills are assessed in Colleges of Education.
4. To establish the challenges lecturers encounter in assessing oral language skills.
5. To establish views of lecturers, teachers and students on teacher training in oral language skills for early literacy.

Questions of the study

1.6 Main Research Question

To what extent are students in colleges of education trained to teach Oral language skills for early literacy?

1.6.1 Specific Questions

1. What Oral language skills and activities, if any, are covered in the College of Education syllabus?
2. How are Oral language skills taught in Colleges of Education?
3. How are Oral language skills assessed in Colleges of Education?
4. What challenges do lecturers encounter in assessing oral language skills?
5. What views do lecturers, teachers and students have on teacher training in oral language skills?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is that it may contribute to the improvement of the low reading levels among Zambian primary school learners as Oral language skills form a strong foundation for reading and writing. The study generated new information pertaining to teacher training in Oral language skills in Colleges of Education and hence, could contribute to the body of knowledge with regard to teacher training in oral language skills. The findings may also assist the Ministry of Higher Education, Colleges of education and other stakeholders to invest in Oral language skills training.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

To underscore the importance of Oral language skills in the development of reading and writing, the present study applied the Phonological Sensitive Approach and the Comprehensive Language Approach. The Phonological Sensitive Approach posits that Phonemic awareness enhances the

process of learning to read (Lonigan, 2006). Phonemic awareness refers to the specific ability to focus on sounds and manipulate individual sounds in oral language. Acquiring phonemic awareness is important as it is the foundation for spelling and word recognition skills. In addition, phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of school instruction.

Phonological sensitive approach has long been seen as one aspect of language ability that is important to early reading, and a massive body of work established that it is a critical precursor, correlate and predictor of reading achievement (Bryant et.al, 1990). The strongest evidence bolstering the view that phonological awareness is important to early reading success came from training studies. The training studies had established that phonological awareness played a causal role in learning to read and had important implications for primary school education (Pressley et.al, 2001). Training children in phonological awareness had effectively boosted later reading achievements. In addition, the emergence of phonological awareness during early reading period have consistently indicated that phonological awareness played an important role in predicting early decoding(Thorndike et.al, 1986). Thus, it is imperative to note that, the PSA was appropriate to be used in this study as it contended that Phonological Sensitivity enhanced reading abilities and it was imbedded in Oral language. In this vain, adequate teacher training in phonology is very significant as it may foster reading among grade one and two learners.

On the other hand the Comprehension Language Approach postulates that varied Oral language skills interact with literacy knowledge to play a significant role in subsequent reading achievement (Dickinson et.al, 2003). This theory by Dickinson and colleagues clearly indicates that varied Oral language abilities are crucial in fostering reading among learners. The CLA assumes that Oral language has a direct impact on initial and later reading achievements.

A number of research paradigms posit that language acquisition is a complex French braid of abilities, including strands of phonology, semantics, syntax discourse, reading and writing are commenced at various times and woven in with other strands. Several studies have examined the long –term impact of a variety of oral language abilities on subsequent reading achievements and found substantial impact of many different abilities. Such predictive abilities include phonological awareness. Evidence of long-term contributions of oral language to early reading came from Chaney (1998) which found that overall language development at age three was as strongly correlated with reading at age seven. In addition, oral language skills and print

knowledge at age three made significant contributions to reading achievements above and beyond that provided by language development.

Furthermore, evidence of facilitative relationships between oral language skills and reading over the years came from Mason et al (1992) who administered a set of tasks that assessed a range of children's oral language and early print skills at the beginning of kindergarten. Assessment of these children through the third grade revealed that children's early oral language skills showed increasing power over time in predicting their reading comprehension. Researchers from a speech and language perspective accumulated mounting evidence of the key role of oral language in supporting reading during the early years of primary education. Cats et al (1999) conducted a large – scale study of children followed from kindergarten through second grade. It was found that over seventy percent (70%) of poor readers had a history of oral language deficits in kindergarten.

The two theories have lucidly expounded the significance of phonological sensitivity and comprehensive language in the acquisition of reading and writing among learners. Teachers play a pivotal role in the dissemination of knowledge and skills among learners. In this vein, it is necessary that teachers receive adequate training in phonological awareness as well as varied oral language skills. Insofar as phonological awareness and comprehensive language are vital in the process of learning to read and write, it should be noted that teachers are the main facilitators of the process learning to read and write. Thus it is imperative that, teachers undergo adequate training in oral language skills as they would be required to teach oral language to grade one and two learners. Based on the two theories the study anticipated that the Phonological Sensitive Approach and Comprehensive Language Approach would be the best predictor of reading and writing in grade one and two.

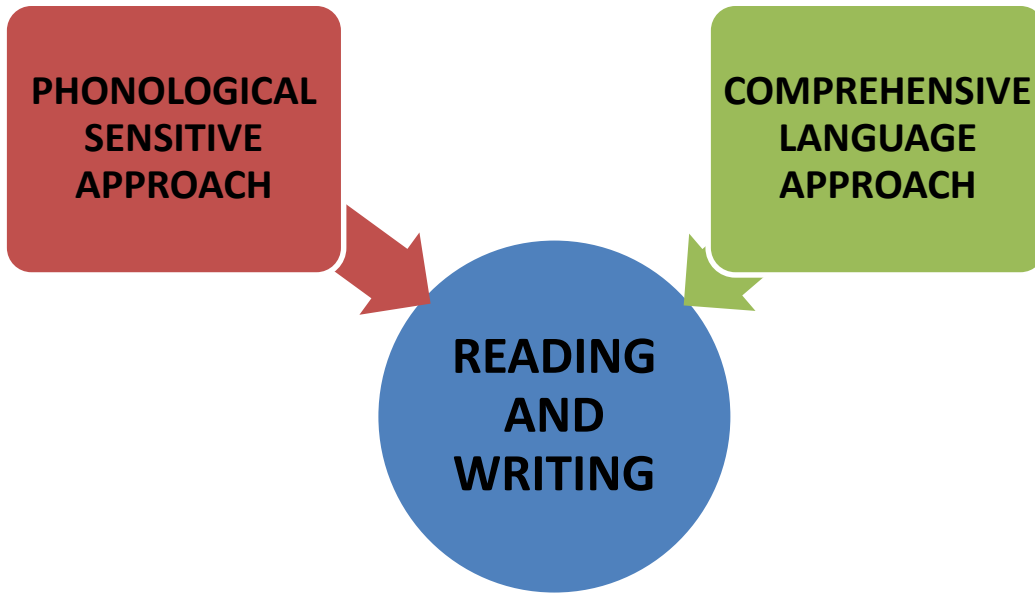


Figure 1.8.1 Adopted from Matafwali: 2010

1.9 Delimitation

The catchment areas for the study were Lusaka and Kitwe districts. The respondents were drawn from Government and private Colleges of Education. Furthermore, the study also drew respondents from Government and Private Primary Schools from Lusaka District, due to logistics convenience.

1.10 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted in four colleges of education in Lusaka and Kitwe districts, two from each district. The study was also carried out in two primary schools in Lusaka district, one government run and the other one private run. The findings of the study should not be generalized to the colleges of education and primary schools in other districts.

1.11 Operational definitions

Oral language: The language which is used verbally.

Oral language skills: This refers to the ability to speak and listen in different situations.

Oral language Activities: These are activities that are interactive or make learners to interact.

Early Literacy: The official start of learning how to read, write and speak in grade one (1)

1.12 Summary

This chapter has presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, theoretical framework,

delimitation, limitation of the study and operational definitions. The chapter has indicated that oral language skills play a significant role in the acquisition of reading and writing skills. In the next chapter, we present the literature reviewed in the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to the study and the review was categorized as follows: teacher training, the oral language skills that primary school teachers should be trained in, importance of oral language skills, how (strategies or methodology) the oral skills should be taught to the primary school teachers and how the oral skills should be assessed.

2.2 Teacher training

Teacher training is the primary indicator of quality education. It is the foundation of any education system (Isyaku, 2002). Teacher training involves the development of several abilities in the trainee teachers. Colleges of education are of great importance as they are meant to equip primary school teachers with habits of thought, dispositions, actions, skills, knowledge and attitudes that would make them effective teachers (Cruickshank & Metcalf, 1990). In addition, Davis (1998) looked at teacher training as a process through which skills are developed, information is provided and attitudes nurtured. Nevertheless, primary teacher education is a challenge not only in Zambia but also in many African countries. Kunje & Lewis (1999) conducted a study in Malawi on teacher training and preparedness. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of lecturers in primary teachers training colleges were either secondary school teachers or primary school teachers who had been seconded to the colleges to train primary school teachers without any training themselves. Kunje & Lewis (ibid) further added that it is the responsibility of the ministry of education in Malawi to identify a secondary school teacher or primary school teacher to become a lecturer in the colleges of education. These teachers joined the colleges of education without thorough comprehension of the oral language skills and pedagogical content.

Another study was conducted by Mutambwa, Takavarasha & kahari (2014) on the quality of education in tertiary institutions: a case of language skills and teaching in Zimbabwe's teacher education colleges; nine colleges of education were sampled. The paper argued for the formal and systematic teaching of oral language skills in colleges of education. It was indicated that there should be a systematic way of teaching oral skills in colleges of education and the content must be uniform throughout the colleges. The study further established that oral skills need to be taught in colleges of education. Oral language skills can be likened to a tool box that a motorist

takes with him/her on a journey. The reason for taking a tool box on a journey is because the vehicle can develop a fault that will need different spanners or screw drivers. Similarly, a student needs several oral language skills to manage through college as well as to teach reading and writing to the primary school learners. It was further highlighted that oral language skills is a wide subject that is not possible to be taught to students if it is not arranged into meaningful bodies of knowledge.

In addition, it was indicated that in all the nine colleges of education that were sampled during the study, there were no separate oral language skills course outlines approved by the department of teacher education at the University of Zimbabwe even where there were attempts to teach the course. In the majority cases, the course was embedded in language studies where only a few aspects of oral language skills were taught. Even then, the few aspects were overshadowed by what were regarded as 'important issues' in language studies. The colleges did not teach the course due to shortage of qualified lecturers. The argument in these colleges was that the ministry of high and tertiary education in Zimbabwe did not consider oral language skills when allocating staff to the colleges of education; yet the question that begged for answers was whether college administrators had sent proposals with the intention to have oral language skills as a course on its own.

It was further argued that in colleges of education where there were attempts to teach oral language skills, it was taught by any lecturer who also had an overload of courses to teach since oral language skills were to be taught by language lecturers that was English, Shona and Ndebele for obvious reasons. In terms of qualifications of lecturers, only one out of ten had a relevant Masters degree that qualified him/her to teach oral language skills. As such it had been argued that allowing lecturers who were not qualified to teach oral language skills at teacher training colleges had long-term implications not only on student teachers themselves, but also on their future learners in schools.

Furthermore, Canales (2013) conducted a study on 'Training and Research in Phonetics for Spanish as a Second Language with Technological Support.' It was highlighted that foreign language acquisition must inevitably start with phonetics, an aspect of language whose importance was matched only by its neglect. Nevertheless, phonetics practice took a back seat in foreign language teaching programmes, in teacher training, in teaching material and above all, in research work. In order to redress this situation, researchers from nine universities put together an oral corpus (collection of written and spoken text), developed a series of resources, tools and applications which could be accessed at a website for cooperative and interactive work. In

addition, the corpus availed data regarding oral production and auditory perception. This greatly assisted the teachers and researchers to handle and manage the speech extracts from the oral corpus, to carry out researches in the phonological errors data base, to obtain quantitative and statistical data, to interconnect text, sound and data, and to devise training exercises.

Baker (2012) from New York University did a study for the National Council of Teachers of English on 'Preparing Teachers for Effective Teaching of Oral Language'. The study indicated the importance of oral language to the social development of an individual. Any constraint or handicap in communicating orally in one's verbal world hindered the social relations of an individual and may contribute to one's isolation. It was further noted that, successful Oral language involved the establishment in the mind of the listeners' ideas, concepts, understanding and emotions which the speaker was motivated to create. Thus, it was necessary to teach the knowledge and skills which make oral language successful. Baker also indicated that children and adults use oral language in an attempt to get what they want. They may experience degrees of success. However, inescapable fact was that only a few fortunate individuals learnt to use oral communication skills well.

Consequently, discussion of public affairs was not flawed by common logical fallacies, unreasonable prejudices and excessive emotionality. Notably, it was rare for one to encounter good taste in the advertising of commerce and industry. Conversely, there were constant pleas of teachers in business, industry and other professions for personnel who could communicate effectively. Pervasions of the need in society for individuals who can communicate sensitively were readily appreciated. Thus, the development of oral communication abilities in speaking and reciprocally in listening must be a pre-eminent goal in the language art program in elementary schools. Teachers must be fully prepared to lay a formidable foundation for Oral skills in elementary schools. Biemiller (1990) also observed that there were a growing number of diverse profiles of learning needs; as such the classroom teacher faced the daunting task of being able to provide sufficient instructions to meet the needs of all learners including Oral language skills. Baker further pointed out that it was chiefly through speaking and listening that young children initially explored their environment which by and large was a verbal environment. It was by means of these oral communication activities that children asserted their individuality and on the other hand, they learnt to become social beings that learnt to weave endless webs of human relationship which form the structure of social living.

Baker's work had illuminated a number of important factors with regards to effective Oral communication at different levels. Her piece of work not only indicated the importance of oral language among children in elementary schools but also in the community at large. She further noted that oral skills were also vital in the cooperate world. Therefore, oral language should be accorded the importance that it deserves at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary level, because oral language skills form a foundation for ones communication skills throughout one's entire life. In this vain teachers must be adequately prepared to teach oral language skills in primary schools.

Cohen and Fass (2001) from the University of Minnesota also carried out a study on 'Teachers Attitudes, Beliefs and Expectations regarding English as Foreign Language and the Teaching and Learning of Oral Skills in (Aragón) a local Spanish based context'. The study concluded that there was an increasing demand in the assessment of Oral Skills in foreign languages and Oral competence in the teaching and learning process. The two scholars indicated that teachers engaged more in different conversational strategies in the classroom but admitted that Oral language was the least practiced skill in class. This meant that oral language skills were given little attention in classrooms.

The study further drew conclusions that the percentage of very poor performance in oral skills increased in inverse proportion to good performance in written skills. However, there should be a balance between student's competence in oral language skills and written skills as well as the implementation of sensible methods to assess the oral skills. Oral performance of learners must be improved by having smaller groups of students in class and promote the communicative methodology of teaching. Cohen and Fass furthermore, pointed out that Oral language skills were not sufficiently practiced and assessed as such students were reluctant to engage in oral activities and did not, therefore, reach required level in oral language skills.

Cohen and Fass'(2001) study was of great importance to the current study in that it highlighted the attitudes, beliefs and expectations of teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL). However, it should be noted that in as much as oral skills are quiet essential at primary and secondary level of education, these skills are also very significant at tertiary level. Once the teaching of oral skills has been sufficiently done at tertiary level the benefits will also be seen at primary and secondary levels of education. Thus, primary school teachers ought to receive adequate training in oral language skills so that they could successfully impart the oral language skills on learners.

Prestwich (2012) carried out a research on ‘Measuring Pre-School Teachers’ Perceived Competence and Knowledge of Oral Language Development’. This study was conducted using a descriptive, cross-sectional design. The findings of the study indicated that Pre-school teachers’ knowledge of promoting extended discourse for development of Oral language literacy foundations was low. Furthermore, the findings showed that there was need to focus on professional development for pre-school teachers. In addition, she recommended that, the information realized from her study could be used to improve Pre-service training and In-service professional development provided to Pre-school teachers.

This study was of great significant to the present study because it was looking at oral language development strategies among Pre-school teachers and their perceptions. The research demonstrated the impact of early oral language development on a child’s later reading. It further suggested that teachers’ knowledge of effective practices in literacy played an important role in students’ ability to learn to read. However, it is vital to note that her study did not look at the training of teachers in Oral language skills for early literacy. Yet in her findings it was indicated that there was need to also focus on professional development for pre-school teachers.

Furthermore, a study was carried out by Step-up Zambia, some University of Zambia Lectures from the School of Education and some Masters students in Literacy and Learning in 2014. The study was looking at the ‘Teacher Training to Improving Early Grade Literacy’. The findings were that teachers were not adequately trained to use local languages as a medium of instruction from grade one to four. This study was of relevance to the present study in that it was looking at Teacher Training. However, it should be noted that this research never looked at the training of teachers to teach Oral language skills for early literacy.

2.3 The oral language skills that should be taught to students in colleges of education

Oral language skills are comprised of six primary components which teachers must be competent in. Gritter (1977) as cited by Mbise (2013) identified six elements related to the development of reading skills namely: Semantics, Syntax, Morphology, Phonology, Pragmatics and Discourse analysis.

Firstly, teachers must be competent in Semantics. The term semantics is from a Greek ancient word which means significant. The word Semantics was first used by Micheal Breál a French

philologist in the early 1800s. Scott et.al (2003) stated that the basic study of Semantics is oriented to the examination of the meaning of signs. He further, added that Semantics shows the relationship between different linguistics units, for instance homonymy, synonymy, antonym and so on.

Secondly, Syntax is another component of oral language which is very important. The syntactic component consists of the rules that enable one to combine morphemes into sentences. As soon as a child uses two morphemes together, as in "more crackers," she is using a syntactic rule about how morphemes are combined to convey meaning. Durkin (1979) noted that like the rules making up the other components, syntactic rules become increasingly complex as the child develops. From combining two morphemes, the child goes on to combine words with suffixes or inflections (-s or -ing, as in papers and eating) and eventually creates questions, statements, commands and so on. The child also learns to combine two ideas into one complex sentence, as in "I'll share my crackers if you share your juice." Syntax is of great importance as it could assist learners in reading and listening comprehension.

Morphology is another key component of oral language and Christopher (2002) noted that it is a branch of linguistics that studies and describes patterns of words formation comprising of inflections, derivations and compounding of a language. Morphology is a word of Greek origin which combines "morph" meaning form and "ology" meaning study of. Henry (2003) further added that Morphology relates to the segmenting of words into affixes (prefix and suffixes), roots or base words and word origin. Henry further noted that students should be made to understand that words connected by meaning cannot be connected by spelling and this could assist to expand the students' vocabulary. Learners should be made aware that parts of words or affixes have separate meanings that can transform word meaning. Wilson (2005) further pointed out that the understanding of prefixes, suffixes and roots enhances the comprehension of text being read. The manipulation of affixes can have an impact on the part of speech that a word denotes. Having this knowledge enhances text comprehension as well. Carreker (2005) also indicated that once students are taught strategies to segment or manipulate words according to their affixes and roots, students may be able to recognize unfamiliar words simply by identifying the affixes and the base word or root.

Learners must also gain competence in Phonology which is also a component of oral language. Phonology is a branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic organization of sounds in language. The Phonological systems of a language include an inventory of sounds, their features

and rules which specify how sounds interact with each other (Peter, 1982). Jacobs et.al (2005) posits that Phonology has traditionally focused largely on the study of systems of phonemes in particular languages and therefore used to be called phonemics or phonematics. In addition, Morris (1968) further pointed out that Phonology may also cover any linguistics analysis either at a level beneath the word including syllables, onset and rimes. Phonology may also include the study of equivalent organizational systems in a sign language. Phonology is cardinal in that it deals with sounds of a language and this may greatly help learners in improving their reading skills.

Some language experts have identified Pragmatics as a component of oral language which is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker or writer and interpreted by a listener or reader (Davis, 1991). It has to do more with the analysis of what people mean by their utterances than what the words or phrases in the actual utterances might mean independently. Erlbaum (1989) added that Pragmatics involves the interpretations of what people mean in a particular context and how the context influences what is spoken. It requires a consideration of how speakers organize what they want to say in accordance with who they are speaking to, where, when and under what circumstances.

In addition, this approach necessarily explores how listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to arrive at an interpretation of the speaker's intended meaning. This component of oral language explores how a great deal of what is unsaid is recognized as part of what is communicated. In simple language it is an investigation of invisible meaning. Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than what is spoken. This perspective may then raise questions of what determines the choice between the spoken and unspoken words. The basic answer is tied to the notion distance. Leech (1993) stated that closeness, whether it is physical, social or conceptual implies a shared experience. Based on the assumption of how close or distant the listener is to the speaker, the speaker determine what and how much to speak. The advantage of exposing learners to Pragmatics is that they could have an understanding of people's intended meaning, assumptions, purpose or goals and the kind of actions, for instance requests.

Lastly, Discourse is also part of the oral language components and it deals with knowing how to interpret the larger context and how to construct longer stretches of sentences so that the parts make up a coherent whole (National Capital Language Resource Centre, 2004). Discourse is

concerned with how words, phrases and sentences when put together create speeches, articles and so on. Furthermore, Renkema (2004) also noted that Discourse refers to the discipline devoted to the investigation of the relationship between form and function in verbal communication. As such Discourse is very significant as it may greatly help learners in listening comprehension.

2.4 Importance of oral language skills

Matafwali (2010) also carried out a research that was looking at the 'Role of Oral Language in the Acquisition of Early Literacy Skills'. In her study she used the cross-sectional and longitudinal research methodologies. The findings of the study under the cross-sectional methodology revealed that oral language was a potential predictor of reading and writing outcomes in grade one even when the effects of alphabetic knowledge, cognitive processes and background variables were taken into account. From her longitudinal research methodology it was established that oral language measures significantly predicted literacy outcomes beyond grade one. The study further recommended that the Ministry of Education should strengthen the training of teachers in early literacy. The study was quite significant to the current research because it illuminated the importance of oral language in early literacy even beyond. It was clear from the findings of this study that oral language played an important role in the acquisition of early literacy. However, it was imperative to note that her study did not look at the training of students in oral language skills for early literacy, only a recommendation was given to the Ministry of Education to strengthen teacher training for early literacy, because teachers have a daunting task of teaching reading and writing in the early grades of primary education.

It was important to point out that the methodologies used in the study could affect the findings. The cross-sectional research design may not provide definite information for the study because it offers a snapshot of a single event in a moment of time. A longitudinal research design is conducted over a period of time and this may affect the validity of data gathered as things or people may change over time. In this light a case study was employed in the current research so as to have an understanding of the problem at hand.

Lastly, Mkandawire (2010) also noted that Oral language proficiency supported literacy activities in many ways. For example, at the level of decoding the written word either through phonics or word recognition strategies, and the use of semantics and other language skills to predict vocabulary in reading. This explained why children were advised or it was essential that

early reading or initial literacy in school was taught in the language that the child spoke in normal communication because of the role of oral language in developing literacy skills in children. Oral language skills are important to literacy development in the sense that Knowing words is key to learning to read and it is difficult to learn to read if one does not know the words, for instance what words mean and what they represent. Philips (2009) also noted that in most cases, reading-related Oral Language skills include: Vocabulary knowledge, Syntactic knowledge and Narrative understanding.

2.5 Strategies/methodologies of teaching oral language skills to students

Assel et.al (2007) argued that educators needed to intentionally plan language learning experiences that helped students go beyond what they already know and can do. Teachers needed to develop children's oral language, by creating conditions to learn through their everyday conversations and instructions that included guided participation, scaffolding and practice opportunities to use language effectively. He further indicated that when teachers plan and deliberately create environments for language learning that are rich, appropriate and enjoyable then all children could benefit. Teachers needed to be resourceful, purposeful and playful in their daily interaction with young children. When planning for children's Oral lessons, educators must take into consideration what children already know and are able to do then take strides to further their oral language comprehension. When teachers are purposeful they set clear teaching goals for learning and deliberately engage learners in activities that help them explore language and develop the necessary oral skills.

In addition, foreign language teacher education required microteaching practices carried out by trainee teachers for learning and assessment purposes (Hakki, 2013). During microteachings, trainee teachers may use teaching skills concurrently. Notably, inter language compatible teacher-talk in the target language was essential for the production of student talk at elementary and intermediate levels in English language teaching (ELT). It was a demanding task for ELT trainees to adjust the language level according to the learners' level. Such a mismatch could cause critical problems in the comprehension of the lesson. The recognition and discussion of the matter and the search for ways of teaching at the appropriate level played a big part in foreign language teacher education. Hakki's argument was mainly concerned with the use of compatible language during teacher training in English. This was very important as the trainee teachers were required to also use appropriate language during lessons in elementary schools. This may also apply to the teaching of oral language skills to learners.

The paper indicated that a strong oral language base must be built as a predictor of reading and writing during the English language development (ELD) oral language instruction. The fact that literacy was a functional oral language was a fundamental precept and a strong predictor of successful reading and writing abilities. However, oral language instructions provided to (ELD) programmes were insufficient since emphasis was on literacy and not Oracy. Teachers must be explicit with delivering oral language instructions. Too often oral language skills received the short end of the stick especially in (ELD) environments in an effort to develop literacy. Thus, bearing in mind that oracy or oral literacy was paramount in helping students achieve the full range of language proficiency oral practice commanded a significant place in daily (ELD) instruction.

In addition, Chunyan (2015) carried a study on the ‘cultivation of cross-cultural communication competence in oral English teaching practice’ in Canada. The paper analyzed the main problems and difficulties in current college oral English teaching practice, the relationship between oral English teaching and cross -cultural communication competence. The findings of the study indicated that on the one hand cross-cultural communication played an essential role in oral English teaching and on the other hand oral English teaching promoted cross-cultural communication competence. It was further, argued that the oral English concept should be consistent. There was need to lay equal stress on cross-cultural communication competence and oral English teaching for the purpose of improving the students’ cross-cultural communication ability.

To add on, Allen, Kemtong & Biljana (2015) carried out a study on ‘oral language communication teaching practices: a close look at University lecturers and students’ perspectives in Thailand and Serbia. The paper aimed at re-examining EFL oral communication teaching practices from the lecturers’ and students’ perspective at Prince of Songkla University (PSU) in Thailand and University of Novi Sad (UNS) in Serbia. The findings were that oral English communication classes at PSU embraced Communicative Language Teaching approach and that the majority of the students were frequently engaged in group activities rather than in individual and teacher-centered tasks. There was reliance on unrealistic, scripted role plays. Unlike the Serbian students, Thai students apparently needed to acquire more independent skills, become less passive learners, and interact more spontaneously in the target language. The researcher recommended that placement tests should be given to Thai students, choices of more advanced

elective courses, rigorous enforcement of upper enrollment limit, a balance between group and individual communicative tasks, and replacement of scripted with non-scripted role plays. This study was of great relevance to the present study as it had illuminated the appropriate methodology that should be utilized when training students in oral skills. The communicative language teaching approach must be used when training students to teach oral language skills for early literacy in colleges of education, in that it would foster students' participation in the teaching and learning process.

In addition, another study was carried out by Zhengdong (2012) in Hong Kong, the study aimed at identifying the problems encountered with oral English skills of ESL (English as a second language) students at a tertiary teacher training institution in Hong Kong. The paper by way of using of semi-structured interview, addressed the gap in the understanding of the difficulties ESL students encountered in their oral English development in the context of a Bachelor of Education (English Language) programme. The findings indicated that there were insufficient opportunities to speak English in lectures and tutorials, lack of a focus on language improvement in the curriculum and poor input environment for spoken communication in English outside class apparently contributed to a range of problems that closely related to the Sociocultural, institutional and interpersonal contexts in which individual ESL students found themselves in. The results of the study further prompted one to question the effectiveness of the knowledge and pedagogy-based ESL teacher training curriculum. As such it was recommended that there was need to incorporate a sufficiently intensive language improvement component in the current teacher preparation program. In addition, Duncan (2009) underscored the need for better assessments of the pedagogical skills of new teachers when he identified the efforts of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to improve student learning through developing a national assessment of teacher candidate readiness and a performance-based assessment model.

Christine & Federico (2011) argued that the development of oral language skills posed a challenge in language teaching whether this took place face-to-face, through distance education or in blended learning contexts. Two main problems arose; first of all students did not have enough opportunity to use their target language orally and secondly, students oral performance was mostly unrecorded and therefore there was little opportunity for the student to revise it or for the teacher to give detailed feedback and design post-task activities for raising language

awareness. This argument was similar to Yu & Min's (2015) who contended that under the constraint of classroom time, English as foreign language (EFL) learners usually did not have adequate opportunity to practice oral English in class nor receive individualized feedback from the instructor. After-class practice constitutes an essential component of foreign language learning, consequently, there was need to develop tools that could facilitate the practice of oral language skills within and outside classrooms. It was also important to find a way of managing the recordings efficiently within a classroom situation and to embed these oral activities within pedagogical tasks that would make the most out of the language learning potential. It was recommended that audio blogs could be a solution for these problems and offer a favourable environment for oral language skills tasks.

Students in colleges of education should be given time and opportunities within the classroom to practice oral language activities.

2.6 How oral language skills should be assessed

Adil (2015) conducted a study whose main purpose was to examine students and teachers outlook on the use of peer assessment criteria for oral presentation at Soran University. The strategy advocated for the enhancement of student's involvement in tutorial presentation and contributed to the development of students learning of peer assessment in their faculty. The findings from the study indicated that students view on peer assessment for presentation depended on the quality of peers language accuracy and competent background. Descriptive statistics showed that student's sentiment in peer assessment was believed to be uncertain due to problematic issues. However, the lecturers viewed peer assessment as involvement of learners in learning practices and social development. The findings also revealed that teachers disagreed with the idea of peer assessment for presentation as a result of inferior level of learners. As a proactive enforcer, peer assessment for presentation must always be conducted in higher education system to produce proactive approach.

In addition, Alzate & Andrea (2016) wrote an article which presented the results of an inter-institutional research study that assessed the impact of strategies instruction on students' preparation and performance in oral examinations. Two teacher-researchers at different universities trained 26 students in their respective first English-level courses in using language learning strategies. The study included pre and post-intervention tests and on-line questionnaires after each oral language examination. After comparing the test scores and analyzing the questionnaire responses, it was firstly; concluded that strategic instruction, especially in

combination with evaluation rubrics, promotes students' autonomy and enhances their oral language test performance. Secondly, students' use of language learning strategies was influenced by instructional variations tied to the relative importance that teachers ascribed to specific aspects of oral language communication.

Furthermore, Luisa and Ignacio (2013) examined some of the best known proficiency tests in English, with particular focus on the oral component. Attention was paid to the following issues: the weighting of oral elements in testing, the criteria used for the assessment of oral skills and the relation of these to the general guidelines in the "Common European Framework of Reference" (CEFR), and the kinds of tasks and marking systems used for assessment. The purpose of the paper was to evaluate the tests as a means of determining the extent to which they can be considered valid tools for the assessment of oral language performance. They contended that, there was need to continuously evaluate and reformulate assessment tools in oral language skills given the special nature of the spoken language.

Nguyeni (2014) of Tanzania did a study on Embracing Plurality through Oral language. Nguyeni noted that transmission and dissemination of knowledge in aboriginal societies in most cases occurred orally. However, whilst support was given to speaking skills in indigenous communities in the education systems there was less emphasis given to the development equivalent oral communication competence in English. Instead focus was given to the ongoing assessment of reading and writing skills and grammatical knowledge. He argued that there was need to nurture Oral language skills in English and provide learners with experience to develop their code-switching ability to maintain continuity with their first language or dialects. The paper highlighted the need for three fundamental changes to take place within language education namely: improving teacher training in the English language, enhancing oral language practice among learners and assessment of oral language in schools.

The researcher stated that teacher -training in the English language should be intensified, this was quite significant however, and one would hasten to note that Nguyeni's recommendation was entirely on the training of teachers in the English language without any specifications. Notably, the current study was focusing on teacher training in Oral language skills for early literacy. In addition, he also illuminated the enhancement of Oral language practice among learners, this was very important since learners must receive adequate exposure to oral language

skills in order for the skills to be embedded in the learners and oral practice should be accorded ample time in the classroom. Nyuyeni further pointed out that assessment of oral language in schools must be improved. This notion was supported by research as clearly indicated by Cohen and Fass (2001), who stated that Oral language skills were not sufficiently assessed, thus, students were reluctant to engage in oral activities and did not reach a refined level of knowledge in these skills. They further suggested that there was need to implement sensible methods of assessing the Oral language skills.

2.7 Summary

This chapter reviewed literature relevant to the study. It had been indicated that teacher training was the foundation of any education system and was the process through which skills were developed, information was provided and attitudes were nurtured (Davis, 1991). Literature had further revealed that there should be a formal and systematic way of teaching oral language skills in colleges of education. It had been noted that students in colleges of education must be taught the six components of oral language skills namely: semantics, syntax, morphology, phonology, pragmatics and discourse analysis (Gritter, 1977). Oral language skills play a significant role in the acquisition of early literacy. In addition, proficiency in oral language skills supports literacy activities in various ways, for instance; decoding written words through phonics, semantics and other language skills to predict vocabulary in reading (Mkhandawire, 2010). Literature had further indicated that there was need to plan language learning experiences that help students to go beyond what they already know and can do. Oral language skills should be taught through different methodologies by creating conditions that foster learning everyday conversations, the use of instructions that included guided participation, scaffolding and oral language practices to use language effectively. It had further been stated that oral language assessment should be conducted orally. There was need to implement sensible methods of assessing Oral language skills through the use of a standard and valid tool for assessment of oral language skills (Cohen & Fass, 2001). From the literature that was reviewed, it must be noted that there was a knowledge gap on student training in oral language skills for early literacy in colleges of education. In view of this knowledge gap the researcher embarked on the present study focusing on student training in oral language skills for early literacy in colleges of education. In the next chapter, we present the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

This chapter presents the methodology that was used. It discussed the research design, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, instruments and data collection procedure. It furthermore, indicated data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

Sim and Wright (2000) as cited by Mwanza (2012) defined a research design as an overall plan and structure of a piece of research. This view is also supported by Yin (2003:19) who stated that “a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there.” These definitions suggested that a research design acts as a guide through which a research is taken when conducting a study. A case study research design was utilised. According to Polit and Hungler (1995), case studies are detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. A case study could be of one person, family, class, district, country or continent; it is identified as one of the many. In this light, there are a number of Colleges of Education in Zambia but the study only focused on four Colleges from Lusaka and Kitwe Districts.

The study was qualitative; this approach was employed so as to enable the researcher to have a complete understanding of the phenomena by going in detail to examine from all angles the collected data in order to come up with a very clear picture (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). However, it should be noted that the researcher also employed some elements of quantitative approach. Quantitative elements were utilised in order to ensure validity, reliability and objectivity to the study.

3.3 Target Population

Population is defined by Best and Kahn (2006:13) as “any group that has one or more characteristics in common and is of interest to the researcher.” In addition, a target population is a specific group of entities necessary for a particular project. In this study, the target population constituted of all languages lecturers, heads of the language departments and all final year students from the four Colleges of Education in both Lusaka and Kitwe Districts. The target population further included all grade one and two teachers from two selected primary schools.

3.4 Sample Size

A sample size is a segment that is selected from the population for investigation (www.survey.system.com/design.com.html [10/07/15]). A total of sixty-three (63) respondents were sampled. From the four Colleges of education a total of fifteen (15) lecturers were sampled. Three colleges of education provided four lecturers from each institution and one college provided three lecturers due to shortage of staff. Furthermore, a total of thirty eight (38) students were also sampled from the four colleges of education. From the two primary schools a total of ten (10) grade one and two teachers were sampled.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The researcher used both simple random sampling and purposeful sampling techniques. According to White (2003), simple random technique is a selection technique that provides each population element an equal chance of being included in the sample. In addition, De Vos (2000) also indicated that in this situation, each individual case has an equal chance to be selected for the sample. In this study simple random technique was used to come up with the four colleges of Education and two primary schools. This was attained by collecting an inventory of the Colleges of Education in both Kitwe and Lusaka Districts; the same was done to come up with the primary schools. Furthermore, the simple random sampling technique was also used to come up with the thirty eight (38) students from the four Colleges of Education. In addition, the same technique was also used to come up with ten (10) grade one and two teachers from two primary schools.

The researcher also employed purposive sampling technique. This is a “feature of qualitative research where the researcher handpicks the case to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of the typically or possession of particular characteristics being sought” (Cohen & Manion: 2007:14). In this capacity the lecturers and heads of the language departments in the Colleges were selected using this technique.

3.6 Research instruments

The researcher used the following instruments: interview guides, focus group discussion guide and observation matrices. The researcher used the interview guides and focus group discussions guide so as to gather detailed information on the subject. This also greatly assisted the researcher to ask follow-up questions in order to get detailed clarification on the subject. The College syllabus was used so as to have a clear comparison of what was obtaining in the lecture rooms. The observation matrices provided a naturalistic way of data collection in which authentic data

was collected. Lastly, a voice recorder was utilised to record face to face interviews as well as focused group discussions.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

First and foremost in order for the researcher to conduct research in the four Colleges of education, permission was sought from the principals in the respective Colleges of Education. Furthermore, permission was also sought from the DEBS office so as to carry out research in the two primary schools. Data was collected within a period of four months because the data collection process was interrupted by the school holiday. Oral interviews were first conducted with lecturers from the four colleges of education. The interviews were conducted face to face; this was of great importance as it assisted the researcher to listen to the respondents' direct responses and to ask follow up questions for clarity. The interviews were recorded; this also allowed the researcher to listen to the interviews in her own free time so as to have a deeper understanding. Thereafter, Oral language skills lectures were observed in some institutions where it was possible. In addition, four focus group discussions were conducted with students and lastly the College syllabus was analyzed.

In primary schools oral interviews were conducted first with grade one and two teachers separately. Thereafter, observation of Oral language lessons for both grades one and two learners were carried out. According to Coolican (2009:123) "observational methods involve watching and being with the respondents.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is "a process of inspecting ,cleaning, transforming and modeling data with a goal of highlighting useful information, suggestions, conclusions and decision making"(Ader :2008:33). These views are further supported by Lewis and Micheal (1995) who stated that data analysis is done in a variety of ways depending on the instruments used to collect data and how the researcher wants data to be presented. The descriptive analysis approach was used to analyse verbal information that was gathered from interviews with lecturers, teachers and students. The information which was collected was put into identified themes and categories after which, interpretations and discussions were made. In order to attain authenticity, some direct quotations from respondents' responses were included in the text. In addition, the lessons/lectures observations and college syllabi were transcribed and presented verbatim.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher took into account ethical issues; therefore permission was sought from the College administrators and the District Educational Board Secretary so that the research could be carried out in the respective institutions. Any participant that refused to participate in the study was not forced to do so. No names of respondents and institutions were published in the findings. Sales and Folkman (2002) posited that sociologists need to take responsibility to secure the actual permission and interests of all those involved in the study. In addition, the researcher should not misuse any information discovered and there should be a certain moral responsibility maintained towards the participants.

3.10 Summary

The chapter presented the methodology of the study. The qualitative approach was employed and a case study research design was utilised so as have an in-depth of the problem at hand. Data was analysed using the descriptive analysis approach. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The findings are presented according in themes which emanated from the research questions. The questions were as follows:

Main question

To what extent are students in colleges of education trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy?

Specific questions

- 1) What Oral language skills and activities are covered, if any, in the College of Education syllabus?
- 2) How are Oral language skills taught in Colleges of Education?
- 3) How are Oral languages skills assessed in Colleges of Education?
- 4) What challenges do lecturers encounter in assessing oral language skills?
- 5) What views do lecturers, teachers and students have on teacher training in oral language skill?

The data was obtained through face-to-face interviews with lecturers, grade one and two teachers. The interview guides in Appendices A, B and C were used respectively. A number of questions were asked based on the research questions. Data was further obtained through focus group discussions with the students from the selected colleges of education and was guided by interview questions in Appendix I. Lessons for grades one and two were observed in order to establish the oral language skills taught to the learners as guided by Appendices D and E. Furthermore, oral language skills lessons were observed at the colleges of education and were guided by Appendix F.

The researcher also analysed the syllabus for colleges of education to establish the oral language skills taught to the students as guided by Appendix J.

4.2 Research question 1: What Oral language skills and activities are covered in the College of Education syllabus?

The researcher analysed the college syllabi in order to establish the oral language skills and activities found in the syllabus. The researchers analysed two syllabi used by the colleges;

namely, the Zambia Primary Course Syllabus of 2014 and the Literature and Languages Syllabus of 2013.

The Zambia Primary Course syllabus of 2014 clearly stated that:

It aimed at equipping student teachers with skills for building a strong foundation for teaching learners in primary schools to read in familiar Zambian languages before transitioning to learning to read the official language, English.

In addition, to strengthening the teaching of Early Grade Reading, the curriculum was designed to equip student teachers with teaching skills that would enable them to effectively inculcate the knowledge, skills and values into the learners. The key skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing were the basis for the syllabus. The syllabus was therefore; intended to equip student teachers with skills for teaching literacy and language that would help learners in schools to read fluently and write clearly in order to communicate, gain knowledge, interpret the world and make sense of their experiences through their own social and cultural traditions.

On the part of oral language skills found in the syllabus, it was observed that Phonology and Morphology are the main skills emphasized in the Zambia primary college syllabus for 2014. This was the syllabus used by three of the four colleges investigated. The syllabus stated the desired goals that the two components aimed to achieve. It indicated that Phonology should equip students with skills that will enable them to identify letter sounds of different languages. With regard Morphology, the syllabus indicated that it should equip learners with the ability to identify syllables. The other forms of oral language such as semantics, syntax, pragmatics and discourse analysis are not available in the syllabus. The syllabus further identified: riddles, proverbs, puzzles, poems, tongue twisters and songs as forms of oral language.

With regard to the oral language activities, the Zambia Primary College Syllabus indicated: role play, songs, rhymes, games, drama, debate, problem-solving, information transfer as the oral language activities. Apart from stating the oral language skills and the activities, the Zambia primary college syllabus stipulated that the expository method should be utilised when teaching Phonology, Morphology and other forms of oral language. However, time or duration of teaching Phonology, Morphology and the forms of oral language was not indicated in the syllabus and the

teaching materials were not indicated. The syllabus did not also guide on how oral language skills should be assessed and the assessment tools to be utilised were equally not indicated.

As earlier indicated, the researcher further analysed the Literature and Languages Syllabus of 2013 that was used by one private college of education. The literature and Languages syllabus of 2013 was aimed at equipping students with the basic communication skills such as how to use the library, search for information as well as citation and referencing. It was also stated that:

The syllabus was aimed at equipping the students with an overview of the methodology and approaches used and to be familiar with the materials used in teaching literacy at primary level.

The syllabus further aimed at equipping learners with the necessary skills and strategies to effectively teach listening and speaking in various situations.

The syllabus contained the following oral language components; Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics and Discourse analysis. Phonology was subdivided into the following sub topics: language and communication, organs of speech, types of articulation, vowels and consonants, consonant blends, some English consonants clusters, revised alphabet for the seven Zambian languages and the international Phonemic Alphabet (MOE, 2013).

Morphology was another oral language skill that was indicated in the syllabus. This topic had been delineated into sub topics which were: Derivations and inflections in English, types of affixes, types of morphemes, morphemes and allomorphs, paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations and root and affix.

Syntax was also one of the oral language skills that had been identified in the syllabus. It had been divided in sub topics notably: Tense and aspect one (1); present and past tenses, simple noun phrases, pre-modification and post-modifications, modification and concord, social uses of language(violation and suction) and result, cause and effects relations.

The researcher furthermore, identified Semantics in the syllabus as part of the oral language skills that were indicated. In the MOE (2013:203) Semantics was also divided into sub topics which were:

concept of Semantics, meaning of meaning, sentences, utterances and propositions, reference and sense, interpersonal meaning, speech acts, perlocutions and illocutions, felicity conditions, direct and indirect illocutions, propositions and illocutions, conversational implicature, modes of deriving meaning and predicates predicators.

Lastly, Discourse analysis was also identified as part of the oral language skills highlighted in the syllabus. It has also been divided in sub topics namely; Conversational analysis, textual structure and analysis, organization of information, cohesion and coherence.

In addition, it was revealed that three hours were allocated to literature and language per week; one hour was also allocated to tutorial sessions per week this was inclusive of oral language skills. However, no materials were stated in the syllabus to be utilized when teaching oral language skills to students. It was further noted that nothing was highlighted on how oral language skills should be assessed and no assessment instruments were mentioned to be used for assessment of oral language skills. Notably, no oral language activities were indicated in the syllabus.

The diagram below gives a summary of the findings on oral language skills and activities covered by the two syllabi:

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES COVERED IN THE COLLEGE SYLLABI

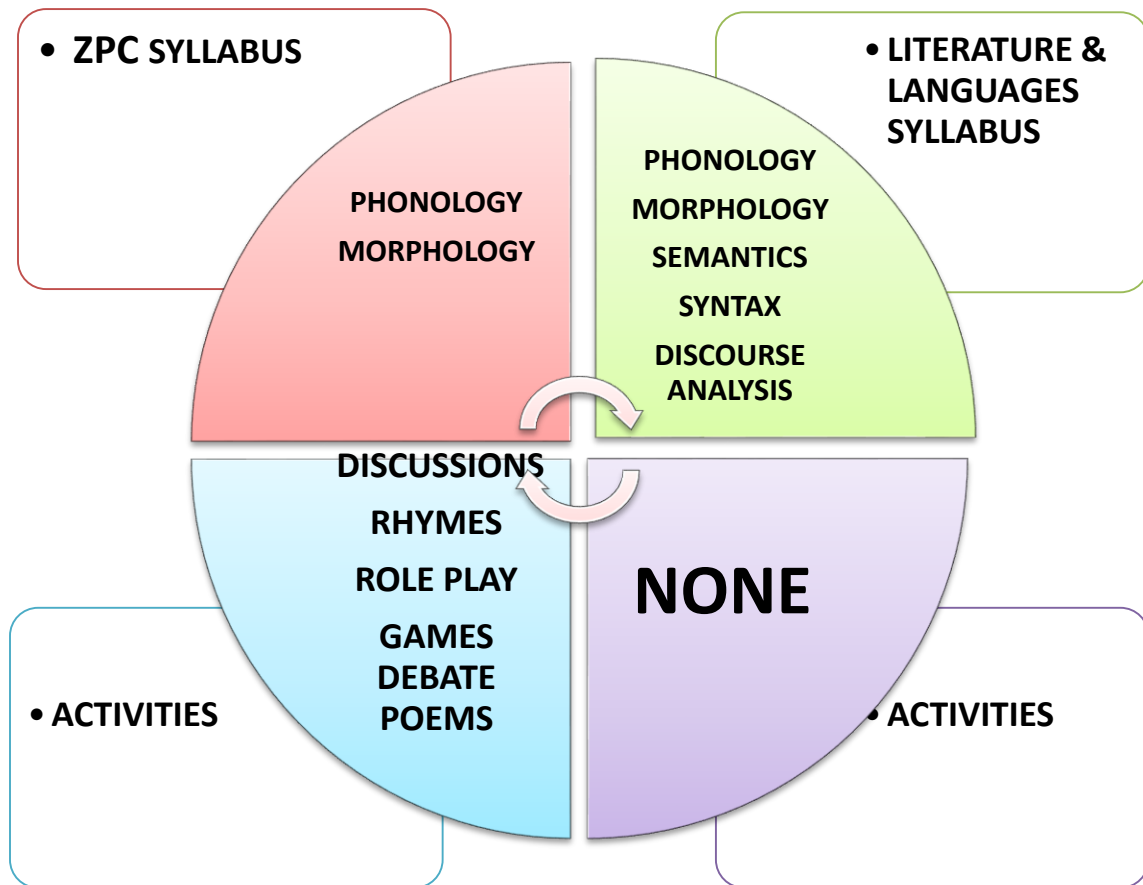


Figure 4.2.1

4.3 Research Question 2: How are Oral language skills taught in Colleges of Education?

Data to this question was collected through lesson observation and interviews. The lecturers were asked to state the methodology they used in teaching oral language skills to the learners, the materials they used in teaching and also whether the time allocated to oral language skills was adequate.

The researcher firstly sought to establish lecturers understanding of oral language. To achieve this, the lecturers were asked to define oral language, mention components of oral language and to state the importance of oral language.

When asked to define oral language, most lecturers gave the correct definition of oral language. Some mentioned that oral language is the component of language that had to do with listening

and speaking. Others said oral language was the language that used spoken medium- usually involving two participants; the speaker and the listener. One of the lecturers said that “oral language is the spoken language involving a listener and a speaker so that there is feedback.” In addition, some of them indicated that oral language was self expression in language orally. Further, others stated that it could also refer to the use of different languages for the purpose of communication. It was further defined as the production and communication by the spoken word. Lastly, some lecturers perceived oral language as the process by which an individual is able to communicate effectively by speaking and listening.

As regards the components of oral language, the lecturers’ responses are summarised in table 4.3.1 below:

LECTURERS’ RESPONSES ON COMPONENTS OF ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS

Components of oral language skills	No. Responses	Total No. Participants
Listening & speaking	2	15
Understanding	1	15
Morphology	4	15
Phonology	2	15
Syntax	2	15
Semantics	1	15
Production of voice/ words/sounds, transmission & reception	1	15
Pragmatics	1	15
Discourse analysis	1	15

Table 4.3.1

The researcher further asked lecturers to mention the importance of oral language skills. Most of them indicated that oral language skills help learners and students to communicate and interact effectively. Others stated that oral language skills also enhance and equip students for effective communication in spoken language. One of the lecturers said:

Oral language skills stimulate spoken communication by manipulating sounds, correction of pronunciation, stress, intonation and rhymes.

Some lecturers stated that oral skills are the foundation skills for all language skills and enhance listening and speaking skills. Others noted that when teaching reading and writing one needs to use the oral skills. One cannot teach skills without oral language skills unless for deaf students. With regards to training of students in oral language skills all the institutions that were sampled indicated that students are trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.

When asked on the methodology they used in teaching oral language skills to the learners, the lecturers mentioned Audio lingual, Communicative approach and lecturers' exposition as the methods used in teaching the students.

METHODOLOGY USED TO TEACH ORAL LANGUAGE

When asked to mention the methodology that is used when teaching oral language skills to students; the lecturers mentioned a variety of methodologies as shown in the table below.

Methodology	No. Participants	Total Participants	No.
Eclectic	3	15	
Practical & lecture exposition	3	15	
Dialogues, conferencing, songs & poems	1	15	
Communicative approach	2	15	
Participatory	1	15	
Audio lingual, direct method, grammar, translation, & Integrated	2	15	
Discussions, demonstration, dialogues, conversations & debate	3	15	

Table 4.3.2

The table above indicated that three (3) lecturers stated that they employ eclectic methods when teaching oral language skills like: repetitive drills, lecture method, question and answer, group work and choral responses. Practical and lecture methods were indicated by three (3) lecturers while two (2) lecturers indicated dialogues, conferencing, songs and poems. In addition, communicative approach was also mentioned by two (2) lecturers and participatory by another lecturer. The following methods were also highlighted by two (2) lecturers namely: audio lingual, direct, integrated, translation and grammar methods. Lastly, three (3) lecturers

also highlighted discussions, demonstrations, dialogues, conversations and debate. The researcher further noted that during oral language skills lessons the exposition technique was also utilised by the lecturers. In the syllabus it was also indicated that in order to teach Phonology and Morphology; the communicative language approach that focuses on learner centredness, interactive teaching and participatory technique must be utilised as well as the expository method.

Furthermore, the lecturers were asked to explain how oral language skills are taught to students for early literacy. One lecturer stated that:

I introduce the topic by first giving a definition, for instance if focus is on Phonetics I narrow it down to different branches of Phonetics namely: Acoustic (transmission of sound from speaker to listener), Articulatory (has to do with speech sounds) and Auditory (how the speaker perceives the sound).

This involved different organs like lips, nose and tongue. She mentioned that she practices with students how sounds of the alphabet should be articulated and the place of articulation is also taken into account since it is the students who will be teaching the learners.

It was further indicated by another lecturer that students are taught oral language skills by “allowing them to practice through different activities like singing, debate and assignments.” One lecturer also added that students are taught oral language skills through repetitive drills. It was also indicated by another lecturer that there is no specified way of teaching oral skills however,

It is upon the lecturer to look at the specifications of the syllabus on how oral language skills should be taught for instance sounds of speech and production of sounds.

Another lecturer indicated that Students were trained in oral skills by giving them theory and practicing with them. One (1) lecturer also mentioned that oral language is imbedded in the syllabus thus, even during lessons it is demonstrated to students how they can teach oral language skills in primary schools. In addition, it was stated by another lecturer that oral skills are taught through group work, pair, and individual and class discussions.

Another lecturer indicated that:

There is no specification on how oral language should be taught because there is no oral segment but it's only considered as an aspect of morphology, pronunciation and phonology....no

specified segment for oral language but it is incorporated in the syllabus. We train them when we find it in the syllabus and there is no emphasis on oral language skills but only integrated in the syllabus. For instance reading can have an aspect of oral, syntax, morphology (syllabification), phonology. Depending on the subject at hand (i.e) morphology I would use pronunciation, intonation to teach oral language skills but these things are not in the syllabus and lecturers are scared of them.....that's they are even running away from you because they are not conversant with oral language skill.

Lastly, another lecturer mentioned that students were taught oral language skills by first interacting with them and thereafter use materials indicated in the Primary Literacy Programme (PLP) like dialogues, flip charts and conversation posters.

The lecturers were further asked to mention how best oral language skills can be assessed; in this vain it was pointed out that oral language skills could best be assessed by engaging students in oral/aural assessments and adequate time should be set aside for the same. One lecturer indicated that:

This can be done by putting students in minimal pairs and then provide a platform for them to use oral skills in a real life situation and they should be encouraged to actively participation during lessons for oral language skills.

The lecturers should also organize oral assessments where they would converse with students to assess their grammar and oral fluency. Furthermore; assessment in oral language skills should be conducted regularly. If students have not performed well in an examination or assessment lectures should be accountable for the outcome.

Consideration of student's language background

When asked whether lecturers take into consideration students' language background when training them in oral language skills, three (3) lecturers indicated that students' language background was not taken into consideration because they followed the scheme of work and usually oral language skills were taught in English, in that not all students are from the same ethnic groupings. One lecturer said that "students were expected to adjust to the use of any

local/regional language in the area where they were working from.” However, twelve (12) lecturers noted that students’ language background was taken into consideration since students were examined and would be required to teach thus when training them in oral skills it was important to consider their language background for easy understanding.

One lecturer noted that “individual students hail from a variety of linguistic background, therefore homogeneity cannot be taken for granted.” It was highly probable that students would work in areas where the language spoken was their background language. It was also pointed out by another lecturer that:

We start training students from the known to the unknown so that students are patient with others who have different language backgrounds and will have an opportunity to practice their languages with lecturers in terms of pronunciation and intonation.

Students were first taught the vowel sounds which they already knew from high school. Thereafter, the consonant sounds which were unknown were taught for instance; the bilabial /B/ and nasal /m/.

Students’ language background mattered when it came to mother tongue interference in the production of speech sounds, stress and accent of their oral English.

MATERIALS USED TO TEACH ORAL LANGUAGE SKILL TO STUDENTS

As regards to the materials they used in teaching oral language skills to the students, the lecturers stated that they used flip charts. One lecturer said that “I use flip charts when teaching phonetic so as to capture the students’ attention”. Flash cards were also highlighted as materials used when teaching oral language skills. Flash cards made the teaching of oral language skills easy. One lecturer stated that “teaching morphology to students I use flash cards to help the students identify the number of morphemes in a particular word”. It was pointed out that pictures were also used in teaching oral language skills to students. One lecturer said that “I use pictures when teaching oral language skills by asking students to match words with pictures”. Sometimes students were asked to mention the initial sound of words represented by a particular picture. Conversational posters were also utilised when teaching oral language skills. Conversation posters were used during role-play and this was very significant as it fostered students’ participation in the teaching and learning process.

The lecturers were further asked whether the teaching and learning material for oral language skills were adequate. Most lecturers stated that it was a challenge to find enough materials to use to teach oral language. One lecturer stated that “in some cases you could only have one text book and you need the students to at least have a copy in order to teach...but with one book it is quite difficult.” Another lecturer further stated:

Materials are not adequate since this is oral language so when speaking in class I must be confident that the words am articulating to students are understood...I should articulate the correct sounds. If am only using a book it may limit the students’ comprehension thus they need to be exposed to other materials like TVs and tape recorders so that they could listen to the correct pronunciation of the sounds especially in Phonetics.

The lecturers were also asked on how much time was allocated to oral language skills on the time table. It was revealed that time allocated to the teaching of oral language skills varied from institution to institution as can be seen in the table 4.3.4 below.

TIME ALLOCATED TO ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS IN THE SAMPLED COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

Per day	Per week	NO. Participants	Total No. Participants
30 minutes	2 hours	2	15
1 hour	3 hours	4	15
1hr: 20 minutes	4 hours	3	15
2 hours	2 hours	2	15
Not specified	Not specified	4	15

Table 4.3.3

Two (2) lecturers indicated that oral skills are accorded thirty minutes (30) per day and two hours (2) per week. Furthermore, four (4) lecturers indicated that one (1) hour is allocated to oral skills per day and three (3) hours per week. Three (3) lecturers also stated that one (1) hour, twenty (20) minutes per day and four (4) hours per week was given to oral skills. In addition, two (2) lecturers also mentioned that two (2) hour per day and two (2) hours per week was dedicated to the teaching of oral language skills. Lastly, four (4) lecturers pointed out that time allocated to

oral language skills was neither specified per day nor per week. It should be noted that in the syllabus no time or duration for teaching oral language skills is indicated.

As regards the adequacy of time allocated to oral language skills, most lecturers indicated that the time was allocated. The chart below summarises the lecturers' responses.

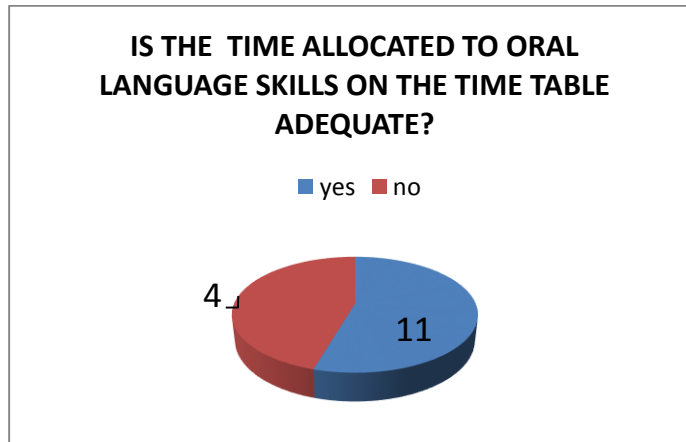


Chart 1

As indicated in the chart above eleven (11) lecturers indicated that the time given to oral language skills is adequate. One lecturer noted that, "Time is adequate in that students are able to acquire the relevant skills for teaching listening and speaking." Another lecturer further said that "time is adequate because it caters for all skills of communication." Lecturers also noted they were able to cover all the topics and activities within the given time. It was further indicated that they were able to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time.

However, four (4) lecturers pointed out that the time allocated to the teaching of oral skills in College is not adequate. One lecturer indicated that:

It becomes a challenge with regards to retention, revision and giving of more home work to students. In addition, there are many topics to cover and oral language skills compete with many other subjects on time allocation.

Others also pointed out that time allocated to oral language skills was not adequate because language was complex. One lecturer argued that:

Oral language involves a lot of practical work so it needs more time. Time is not adequate in PLP we are teaching students letter sounds, we need to teach the content and the practice within four weeks.

It was further highlighted by another lecturer that “students have a problem with sounds so time is not adequate, for instance phonology (ifiwunda) in Bemba students need more time to practice.”

On the oral language skills that students were taught, the lecturers’ responses are summarised below:

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS THAT STUDENTS WERE TAUGHT AT COLLEGE

Oral skills taught to students	No. Participants	Total No. Participants
Morphology and Phonetics	9	15
Listening and Speaking	4	15
Production, Channeling, Reception & Interpretation	1	15
None	1	15

Table 4.3.4

As indicated in table 4.3.5 above nine (9) lecturers mentioned that students were trained in morphology (affixes: prefix, bound morphemes, and derivations even in Zambian languages) and phonetics while five (4) lecturers stated that they exposed students to listening and speaking. One lecturer indicated that students were exposed to production, channeling, reception and interpretation. One lecturer did not indicate any answer.

When students were asked whether they were trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy, they pointed out that they were trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy although they were quick to mention that the training was mainly theoretical. One student mentioned that “the training was mainly focused on the theoretical aspect.” The students mentioned the following as the oral language skills they were trained in. Peer teaching, handwriting, early literacy which comprised of basic sounds, consonants, vowels and blending were covered during the training. In addition, new breakthrough to literacy (NBTL), Read on course (ROC), Educational reforms of 1996 ‘Educating our Future’ were also covered. Handling of books, eye movement when reading and sitting posture were also among the things that students were trained in at College.

The students added that they were trained in the five key competences namely: phonetics, oral fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics.

Students were further asked to state whether the training they received in oral language skills was adequate; some students noted that the training was not adequate. One student said, “not all areas were covered.” Another student said that:

The class I was teaching during teaching practice most of the learners did not know how to read so I thought of teaching oral language skills but I did not know how to...because even me I was lacking the oral practical aspect of the language.

Some students, however, said the training they received in oral language was adequate. One student said, “the training was adequate though we were only taught the basics but we learnt something ... it is now our task to research more.

Some students mentioned that they found some oral language activities such as riddles and proverbs challenging. One student indicated that:

Learners may not be able to understand because some of the words used in proverbs may be difficult thus the learners’ interest could be destroyed and may lose out on other skills like pronunciation and articulation.

Stories were also noted as being challenging as they could be boring and time consuming. Furthermore, one student added that:

phonetics and phonology are challenging in that identification of sounds is difficult as such when speaking the pronunciation must be correct, however, the /L/, /R/ were sometimes misplaced.

The students were also asked to state the oral language activities they were exposed to during training. The following were identified as some of the oral language activities they were exposed to at College: look and say, read aloud, debate, storytelling, role-play, rhymes, riddles, proverbs, singing, drama. Students further identified group discussions, peer teaching and presentations as part of the oral language activities they were exposed to at college.

During lesson observations, the researcher noted that phonology and morphology were the two oral language skills students were exposed to. The others, on the other hand, were either not emphasized or mentioned in passing during lessons.

Grades one and two teachers were asked to state whether they were trained to teach oral language under any programme. It was revealed that most teachers were trained under various teacher training programmes such as, primary reading programme (PRP), primary literacy programme (PLP) and Zambia teaching course (ZATEC). Four (4) teachers indicated that they were trained under ZATEC and one (1) also noted that she was trained under PLP. One teacher pointed out that she received her training under PRP. Another teacher mentioned that she was partly trained under PRP and PLP. One (1) teacher also stated that she was partly trained under NBTL and PRP. Lastly, two (2) teachers mentioned that they were not trained under any programme. The respondents mentioned that the duration of the programmes was one (1) year.

When the teachers were asked to mention the oral language skills they learnt at college, most mentioned phonology, vocabulary, comprehension, morphology and the activities such as songs, games, poems, drama and group work. The teachers, however, stated that they were not adequately trained to teach oral language. One of the teachers said that “I can’t remember being taught oral language skills at college”. The other one said that:

I was not trained in oral skills but only came to know them when I started working as a teacher because the college was in its’ initial stage.

Furthermore, the lesson observations also revealed that grade one and two learners were exposed to songs and role play during the oral language skills lessons.

When the teachers were asked on how they teach oral language skills to grade one and two learners, one teacher indicated that:

If am teaching on sound /A/ I begin the lesson by singing a song that has a lot of words that begin with letter /A/. Thereafter I write letter /A/ on the board....then I put the learners in groups and ask them to mention words that begin with letter /A/.

Two teachers further indicated that they taught oral language skills through songs, group discussions and role play because there is no writing involved in oral lessons.

With regards to the methodology that was used during oral language skills lessons four teachers indicated that repetitive drills and chorusing were used. While six teachers did not mention the methodology utilised when teaching oral language skills to grade one and two learners.

When teachers were asked on how best oral language skills can be taught to grade one and two learners, it was noted that oral language skills can best be taught firstly by improving the teacher/learner ratio because slow learners are at a disadvantage. The use of radio cassettes, flash cards, vowels, pictures, dialogues and syllables could be one of the ways to teach oral language skills. One teacher mentioned that:

Learners must be involved in a lot of oral activities like: singing and poems. In order to teach oral language skills efficiently the teacher could start a lesson by singing a song or saying a rhyme.

Another teacher noted that “oral language skills could best be taught by beginning with phonics, involving learners in real life situations and understanding each and every learner.” Learners should be given more practice in oral language skills for instance by asking learners to go in front and then ask them to perform a task orally. Lastly, the parents should be engaged in the learning of their children and schools must also provide audio –visual materials for oral language skills.

The lecturers were further asked to mention the medium of instruction which they used during oral language skills lessons. The responses were as indicated in the table below:

MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION USED WHEN TEACHING ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS TO STUDENTS AT COLLEGE

Medium of Instruction	No. Participants	Total No. Participants
English	10	15
Bemba & English	1	15
Nyanja & English	1	15
English, Bemba & Nyanja	1	15
English & Other Zambian languages	2	15

Table 4.3.5

The table above shows that ten (10) lecturers noted that English was used as the medium of instruction when teaching oral language skills because students came from different provinces and it was the official language. In addition, one lecturer said that “it is easy to explain ideas or concepts in English as it is common to all the students as well as lecturers.” Another lecturer said that:

We mix English and Bemba when teaching oral skills; for instance with regards to songs we use Bemba however if a student insists on using his or her language, we allow him or her to do so for example in Tonga. In Zambia we use the language used in the province where the institution is found, like for Copper belt Bemba is also used.

In addition, Cinyanja and English were highlighted by one (1) lecturer however; he stated that “we also consider those who come from places where Cinyanja is not used because they learn the language easily.” One (1) lecturer indicated English, Bemba and Nyanja as the languages used when teaching oral skills to students. She noted that:

This is the case since the catchment area of the College is Lusaka so Nyanja is the appropriate language. Nevertheless it should be noted that Bemba is easy to understand and it is spoken in many provinces ultimately the chances of having students who understand it are very high even if they may not speak it.

Finally, two (2) lecturers indicated that English and other Zambian languages were used when teaching oral skills as they were the most commonly used in the country. It is imperative to note that no specific Zambian language was mentioned.

The teachers were also asked to mention the medium of instruction used when teaching oral language skills to grade one and two learners, five teachers from a private run school indicated that they use English while another five from the government run primary school mention that for the grade ones Nyanja was used and the grade two learners English was used.

The students were also asked on the language of instruction that was used during oral language skills lessons, it was indicated that English was used as a medium of instruction yet; there was

an occasional mixture of local language like Nyanja and Bemba in order to emphasize a point. One student said that:

We were encouraged to use familiar language during peer teaching from grade one to four and grade five to seven we were also told to use English.

Challenges encountered during oral language skills lessons

When the lecturers were asked to mention the challenges they encounter during oral language skills lessons, the lecturers pointed out that they face a lot of challenges when teaching students oral language skills. It was highlighted by one lecturer that:

In some cases authentic material like radios, television sets and voice recorders are inadequate because provision of authentic materials to smaller groups is not possible for instance where one radio is used for the whole class; some students may not get the information.

Language barrier and high levels of student enrollment were also noted among the challenges faced by lecturers. The lecturers further mentioned that time allocated to oral skills and teaching and learning materials are not adequate. In addition another lecturer mentioned that “there is a lack of qualified personnel/staff to handle oral language skills.” It was also noted that by one lecturer that:

Students do not practice the oral skills well because there are no language laboratories and tape recorders where students can listen and practice the sound that has been produced.

The lecturers were further asked how best oral language skills can be taught to students, it was noted that oral language skills can best be taught by allocating specific time to oral skills and assisting students to practice how they will teach learners in schools. One lecturer reiterated that:

Students should be given more time to practice the oral skills and activities. Different methods of teaching should be employed like communicative approach and drills.

One lecturer further added that:

Lecturers should be patient when teaching oral language skills to students; they should not be rushed through the subject in an effort to finish the syllabus as some students are linguistically intelligent while others are not.

Teaching and learning materials should be made available as they are inadequate. There should be more interactions and consultations among lecturers on how to handle the subject. There is need to put more emphasis on syllables, intonation and pronunciation.

The teachers were also asked to mention the challenges they encountered during oral language skills lessons. The teachers indicated that they faced some challenges when teaching oral language skills to grade one and two learners. Communication barrier was one of the challenges that was encountered during oral language lessons one teacher said that “I used the term function but the learners did not understand itI just realised that I have to use words that suit their level.” It was also difficult when one receives children who do not understand the language of instruction for example “it is difficult when you receive learners from government schools who could be having problems in reading....the teacher is compelled to start from the scratch.” One teacher further highlighted that at times learners could be given homework in oral language skills, in one case the learner just said that “ine ba mummy sibaziba(my mother does not know).” One teacher emphasized that: “teaching and learning materials for oral language skills are not adequate and there is no standard instrument to follow when teaching oral language skills.” Oral language skills involved listening and speaking nonetheless some learners did not participate in the teaching and learning process. Lastly, class size was also one of the challenges that teachers were faced with; when the class is big it would be difficult for learners to pay attention and class management also became intricate.

When students were asked to mention the challenges encountered during oral language skills lesson. The students stated that they lack competence in oral language skills as they were not taught how to apply the oral skills in a lesson and they have no practical experience. One student added that “for instance I did not know how to use flash cards only came to learn about it during teaching practice.” In addition, another student said that “concepts are not clearly explained by lecturers and the college does not have qualified lecturers apart from one.” It was also indicated that time was not adequate consequently; students were rushed through the topics and one student stated that:

I have not understood the breakdown of words or affixation in morphology.” Furthermore the “lecturers use a wide range of languages when teaching oral skills....especially when citing examples hence more time is needed.

One student also argued that “in phonology there were letter sounds which almost sounded the same however; the lecturers did not give a clear distinction between those sounds.” It was also difficult to adapt to the new sounds that we learnt because:

We have been pronouncing certain sounds in a particular for a long time but only to be told that it was wrong when we came to college it is challenging since we are accustomed to certain pronunciations.

A shortage of learning and teaching materials was cited as one of the challenges; one student noted that “even if you are a slow learner or did not understand the concept; if materials are available you can still read on your own and understand.” One student went on to say that:

The lecturers did not understand the students’ level of understanding; a lot was expected from students who merely had the secondary school background thus; many students failed in languages because they could not understand what they were taught.

Another student further added “I can’t teach phonology because I didn’t understand anything.”

4.4 Research Question 3: How are oral language skills assessed?

When asked whether oral language skills are assessed twelve (12) lecturers indicated that they did assess. One lecturer stated:

We do examine oral language skills because some components of oral language skills are examinable, however, the questions are embedded in other questions, probably only two or three are on oral skills.

While three (3) lecturers stated that oral language skills are not assessed. One lecturer noted that:

Oral language skills are not examined because there are no language laboratories where oral skills could be practiced.

Another lecturer also indicated that:

It is somewhat difficult to assess oral language skills due to limited time and space as they compete with other topics in the languages syllabus. It is not everything that is taught to students

that is assessed. The syllabus may contain a lot of topics but not all topics are assessed due to shortage of time.

It was also pointed out by another lecturer that:

We do not conduct formal oral language assessments but when one is speaking you are able to tell that he or she is improving.

The lecturers were further asked to mention when examinations in oral language skills were conducted. The responses were as follows:

LECTURERS’ RESPONSES ON WHEN ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS WERE EXAMINED

When are oral language skills examined	No. Participants	Total No. Participants
During Programme	8	15
End of Programme	1	15
During & End Programme	2	15
Beginning & During Programme	1	15
None	3	15

Table 4.4.1

Eight (8) lecturers indicated that students were examined in oral language skills during the programme. Whereas one lecturer (1) noted that students were examined at the end of the programme. Two lecturers (2) also added that students received examination in oral skills during and at the end of the programme. This is done by using formative assessment during the programme and summative assessment at the end of the programme. One (1) lecturer pointed out that examination in oral skills was conducted at the beginning and during the programme. Lastly, three (3) lecturers did not indicate anything because they earlier stated that oral language skills were not examined.

When teachers were asked whether grade one and two learners received assessment in oral language skills; nine (9) teachers noted that learners were assessed in oral language skills. In government schools it was conducted in week five (5), ten (10) and thirteen (13). While in the private school it was conducted fortnightly. It was further highlighted by one (1) teacher that “assessment was done formatively for example through conversations.” Another teacher noted that:

Learners are given spellings and then the results are entered in the report book. Sometimes learners are assessed by giving them a passage to read and the teacher must pay attention to pace of reading and pronunciation of words when the learner fails it is indicated in the report book.

One teacher also said that “learners also receive assessment by asking them to identify sounds though it consumes a lot of time as it is conducted individually.” Another teacher said that learners are assessed in oral language by for instance:

Selecting topics that I taught orally...then I get a bag and put it on the table then I ask the learner where the bag is...in other cases I get a picture and then ask the learner what is in the picture.

At times learners are made to read what is on the word card, consonant and vowels. One (1) teacher however, pointed out that oral language skills are not assessed.

The students were also asked whether they were assessed in oral language skills; some students stated that they were assessed in oral language skills. They noted that they were given tests as well as an examination. One student however; noted that “we were partially assessed in oral language skills because the question in the examination paper was optional.” It was also noted that during lessons students were involved in some oral practice but in the examination it was all theoretical.

On the contrary other students also indicated that they were not assessed in that no questions on oral language skills were seen in the examination paper. It was further, pointed out by one student that:

There was no examination in oral language yet; a test was administered - it is more than a year since the test was given however; students have not received the assessment results.

4.5 Research Question 4: What challenges do lecturers encountered in assessing oral language skills?

The lecturers were further asked to mention the challenges they encountered in assessing oral language skills. The lecturers stated that oral skills are not assessed orally due to limited time.

One lecturer further highlighted that:

With assessment the main challenge encountered was time as it was an ongoing process and it was conducted during lessons. Moreover, no time was allocated to oral language skills but it was embedded in other language skills.

One lecturer also noted that the other challenge was that:

Students have difficulties in pronouncing the sounds ultimately in a written examination it is almost impossible to know whether what is written can be articulated accordingly.

Students did not exhibit seriousness as there was little comprehension of what they did, one lecturer argued that for instance:

When given an assignment instead of researching yet all they do is plagiarism; consequently, they tend to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

The other challenge which was faced when assessing oral language skills was a shortage of teaching and learning materials.

Teachers were further asked to mention the challenges they encounter in assessing oral language skills. One teacher mentioned that one of the challenges faced when assessing oral language skills was learners' memorization:

You would think the learner knows the words or sounds when teaching...but during assessment he or she totally fails to read or say the sound which he or she read during the lesson.

Some learners cannot read so it is very difficult to assess them. Another teacher noted that "learners have difficulties in identifying sounds and it takes a lot of time to assess them as it is done individually." The other challenge which was encountered when assessing oral skills was learners' absenteeism and time. Time was a huge challenge as assessment in oral language skills could even take three days. In addition, another teacher noted that "there is no standard instrument that is used to assess oral language skills but teachers only improvise."

4.6 Research question 5: What views do lecturers, teachers and students have on teacher training in oral language skills for early literacy?

When asked to give views on teacher training in oral language skill, one lecturer indicated that:

There is need for continuous professional development (CPDs) and seminars in oral language skills to be held to help each other as lecturers.

There must be a link between what students were taught in colleges and what they would find in schools. Oral language skills should have a practical session. In addition one lecturer stated that:

There is need to have qualified personnel to handle oral language skills in Colleges. Colleges should have a standard syllabus; there is need for harmonization of the syllabus and teaching materials because all Colleges have a common market which is the Zambian citizen.

More time should be allocated to oral language skills and more teaching materials should be provided as all subjects are dependent on oral language skills. Students should be given appropriate skills in oral language skills as this would foster the acquisition of reading and writing skills; as such there should be emphasis on sound articulation.

When teachers were asked to give views on student training in oral language skills in Colleges of Education; one teacher stated that:

There is need to have standard pronunciation of sounds because there is no uniformity. Most of the things are learnt at workshops and not at college.

Moreover, only a few teachers attend the workshops and those who attend do not disseminate whatever is learnt. Another teacher added that:

I did not receive any oral practice in oral language skills at college besides peer teaching thus, there should be more oral practice at college because most of the things I only learnt them while working as a teacher.

Students were also asked to give views on student training in oral language skills. One student indicated that: “lecturers should not take it personal instead they should have a heart of assisting the students.” Students should be trained to be impersonal so as to effectively teach the learners.

Another student pointed out that “lecturers should not gloat when students perform poorly instead they should be motivated to work hard so as to attain good results.” Furthermore, it was indicated that there should be a change in the teaching approach; time must be taken into account as oral language skills require more time, hence ample time should be accorded for oral practice as well. The colleges must have competent lecturers who know what they teach. One added that “I feel there are some lecturers who are not qualified to be lecturers at the college.” In addition, colleges should have specialized lecturers in oral language skills. The colleges should have sufficient teaching and learning materials in oral language skills and well stocked libraries. Projectors should be introduced so that students are able to see what the lecturer is explaining. One student further noted that “there should be an emphasis on how to teach oral language skills in schools and not just passing an examination.” There should be sessions for oral assessment in oral skills like face to face activities in English as well as local languages. Lastly, one student added that “there is need for harmonization between what is taught at college and in schools.”

4.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the study. It was revealed that three colleges of education that were sampled utilised the Zambia Primary College syllabus for 2014 while one college utilised the literature and languages syllabus. The ZPC syllabus for 2014 comprised Phonology and Morphology as the oral language skills. The other components of oral language skills like: semantics, syntax, pragmatics and discourse analysis are not available in the syllabus. The syllabus further, identified: riddles, proverbs, puzzles, poems, tongue twisters and songs as forms of oral language. With regard to the oral language activities, the Zambia Primary College Syllabus indicated: role play, songs, rhymes, games, drama, debate, problem-solving, information transfer as the oral language activities.

On the other hand the literature and languages syllabus comprised the five oral language skills namely: Phonology, Morphology, Semantics, Syntax, and Discourse analysis. In this syllabus no oral language activities were indicated. The findings further revealed that oral language skills were taught through various methods namely: communicative approach, audio lingual and lecturer’s exposition. In addition, pictures, flip charts, flash cards and conversational posters were utilised when teaching oral language skills to students. However, it should be noted that some lecturers expressed some levels of incompetence with regard to the methodologies they utilised when teaching oral language skills. Some lecturers identified grammar, translations, discussions, dialogue, demonstration, poems, conversation, debate and songs. These are not

teaching methodologies. Furthermore, it was revealed that some colleges of education did not assess oral language skills while others assessed. Those that assessed oral language skills indicated that assessment was conducted formatively during the programme and summatively at the end of the programme. The assessment was not carried out sufficiently as the questions on oral language skills were optional, hence some students stated that; they did not undergo any assessment in oral language skills as they skipped questions on oral language skills during the examination. The findings further indicated the views of lecturers, teachers and students on teacher training in oral language skills. One lecturer pointed out that, lecturers should be engaged in continuous professional development meetings. There should be a link between what was taught at college and in primary schools. The teachers also indicated that there should be standard pronunciation of sounds. The students stated that more time must be allocated to oral language skills. The colleges of education must have competent lecturers to handle oral language skills. The next chapter discusses the findings presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the findings indicated in the previous chapter. The purpose of this study was to establish whether students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy. The discussion of the findings was guided by the following objectives:

Main Objective

To establish whether students in colleges of education are adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.

Specific Objectives

1. To identify the Oral language skills and activities covered in the College of Education Syllabus.
2. To establish how Oral language skills are taught to students in colleges of Education.
3. To establish how Oral language skills are assessed in Colleges of Education.
4. To establish the challenges that lecturers encounter in assessing oral language skills.
5. To establish the views of lecturers, teachers and students on teacher training in oral language skills.

5.2 Research Objective 1

To identify the Oral language skills and activities covered in the College of Education Syllabus.

The data obtained from documentary analysis of the Zambia Primary Teachers' Diploma syllabus of 2014 utilised by three colleges revealed that, the syllabus was comprised of two oral language skills namely: Phonology and Morphology. It should be noted, however, that the syllabus has a section that looks at the forms of oral language and the following were listed as the forms of oral language: riddles, proverbs, puzzles, poems, tongue twisters and songs. It is imperative to note that, these are not components of oral language skills but oral language activities. Gritter (1977) stated that oral language skills refer to Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics and Discourse analysis. This is in line with NEFEC report of (2011) which indicated the five components of oral language namely: Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics. However, it should be noted that in the Literature and Languages

syllabus of 2013 utilised by one college comprise all the oral language skills mentioned by (Gritter, 1977) apart from Pragmatics. The college syllabus must have all the six components of oral language because students must be knowledgeable in all the six components of oral language skills. Moreover, primary school teachers are required to teach oral language to grade one and two learners. In addition, there should be a formal and systematic way of teaching oral skills in teacher training institutions and the content must be uniform in all the institutions (Mutambwa, Takavarasha & kahari, 2014).

With regard to the oral language activities in the Zambia Primary Course Diploma syllabus of 2014, it was revealed that the syllabus has dialogue, group or pair discussions, problem-solving, information transfer, field trips or project work, case studies, inquiry or discovery, debate, role play, drama, singing and rhymes. However, it was imperative note that the Literature and Languages syllabus of 2014 utilised by one of the colleges that were sampled, did not comprise any oral language activities. Oral language activities are vital in that they foster oral practice among the students. Once the students are availed with adequate oral activities during oral language skills lessons, this may assist the students in mastering the oral language skills easily. However, William and Robert (2011) pointed out that educators grapple with how to effectively implement explicit instruction with Oral language practice. Prestwich (2012) further argued that knowledge of effective oral practices in literacy plays an important role in students' ability to learn how to read. Ultimately, students in colleges of education must be exposed to various oral language activities during training. Cohen and Fass (2001) also argued that Oral performance of students must be improved by having smaller groups of students in class and promote the communicative methodology of teaching. However, Cohen and Fass noted that oral language skills are least practiced. Oral language skills must be consolidated with oral language activities as such students must receive adequate practice in oral language skills. In this vain, lecturers must know the appropriate oral activities to utilize when teaching oral language skills to students and suitable oral language activities must be availed to students to be used in primary schools.

5.3 Objective 2

To establish how Oral language skills are taught to students in colleges of Education.

With regard to this objective, it was noted that oral language skills were taught to students by first introducing the topic or lesson of the day by interacting with students. Thereafter the

exposition strategy was utilised to teach oral language skills to students. In the other lesson that was observed, the lecturer introduced the oral language skills lesson by defining key terms and then lecturer's exposition methodology was also used to teach the oral language skills to the students. It was revealed that during the oral language skills lessons, there was little participation on the part of the students. It was observed that the lessons were lecturer centred. Students did not participate in the teaching process. Cohen and Fass (2001) argued that the communicative methodology must be employed when teaching oral skills and this can be done by putting students in smaller groups so as to improve oral performance. Varghese (2015) argued that instructors of oral language skills must utilize relevant strategies when teaching oral skills. This is very important as it will capture the students' attention and improve understanding. Assel et.al (2007) argued that educators need to develop students' oral language skills, by creating learning conditions through their everyday conversations and instructions that include guided participation, scaffolding and practice opportunities to use language effectively.

In addition, it was revealed that time allocated to oral language skills was not adequate as such the lecturers were rushing through the lessons such that students were not even availed the opportunity for oral practice instead only home work was given. William and Roberts (2011) stated that oral language is allocated less time on the time table as such students have little exposure to Oral language skills in the classroom. Notably, some students explained to the researcher that they hardly comprehended the oral skills that they were taught at college because time was not adequate. However; this is not supposed to be the case as students require adequate exposure so that the oral language skills can be mastered easily. If students trained are not sufficiently in oral language skills it could have a negative impact on the teaching of oral language skills for early literacy in primary schools.

The findings further revealed that the colleges of education that were sampled did not have adequate teaching and learning materials for oral language skills. This was confirmed by most of the respondents who were sampled. In one institution, it was noted that there are only three modules which are in fact not suitable for pre-service teachers but in-service teachers. One lecturer further noted that there are times when one is required to use books during the lesson yet the institution only had one copy and this affected the teaching of oral language skills. The National Council for Curriculum Assessment report of 2012 in Australia indicated that various

teaching and learning materials must be made available to students during oral language skills lessons.

It was further revealed that students received training in Morphology and Phonology. However, Gritter (1977) has stated that trainee teachers must receive training in all the six components of oral language namely: Phonology, Morphology, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics and Discourse analysis as these oral language skills play a significant role in the process of learning to read and write. This is also supported by the Comprehensive Language Approach which posits that varied oral language skills interact with literacy knowledge in enhancing subsequent reading achievement (Dickinson et.al, 2003). In addition, it was revealed that students do not receive adequate training in oral language skills because they are only trained in Phonology and Morphology and most of them had difficulties to mention the oral language skills learnt at college. Furthermore, some lecturers also expressed ignorance on what oral language skills were. Some lecturers shunned to be interviewed, observed and answer a questionnaire; they indicated that they had little knowledge on oral language skills. Notably, these were lecturers who have been given a mandate to train students in oral language skills.

This was also confirmed by teachers who were interviewed and observed in the primary schools that were sampled. Some teachers lucidly indicated that they were not trained in oral language skills instead they came to know about them while working and during workshops organized by the Ministry of General Education. In addition, some final year students who went on teaching practice also indicated that, the experience was somewhat shocking as they learnt most of the things during the teaching practice especially teaching of oral language skills. Students from one institution stated that they were not taught how to teach phonics to learners as such they were faced with a daunting task during the teaching practice.

5.4 Objective 3

To establish how Oral language skills are assessed in Colleges of Education.

Out of the four institutions that were sampled two colleges of education indicated that they neither examined nor assessed oral language skills. Nevertheless, it was revealed that the other two institutions assessed and examined oral language skills though not orally. Cohen and Fass (2001) argued that Oral skills were not sufficiently practiced or assessed as such students were reluctant to engage in oral activities and did not, therefore, reach required level in oral language skills. Students did not feel obliged to pay attention to oral language skills since they knew that

they were mostly likely not to undergo any assessment or examination. The students that were sampled in this study highlighted the oral language skills that they liked and did not like. Some students indicated that they did not like certain oral language skills because they were difficult, boring and did not really see the essence of knowing them.

Notably, Assel (2007) nevertheless indicated that when educators plan and deliberately create environments for language learning that are rich, appropriate and enjoyable then all students could benefit. Lecturers need to plan and be purposeful in their daily interaction with students in oral language skills lessons. Lack of plan and purpose could further be attributed to the fact that little or no attention is paid to oral language skills because there is little or no assessment/examination that is administered. The two institutions that indicated that they assess and examine oral language skills noted that one or two questions could be asked on oral language skills in the examination paper and are mostly optional. Some students argued that they have never received any assessment/examination in oral language skills as the questions on oral language skills are optional. Time and again a number of scholars have illuminated the significance of oral language skills as a precursor to reading and writing yet; this is not given the attention it deserves in some colleges of education. However; Cohen and Fass (2001) stated that there should be a balance between student's competence in oral language skills and written skills and the implementation of sensible methods to assess the oral language skills.

Assessment is the systematic collection of information about students learning using the time, knowledge, expertise and resources available, in order to inform decisions about how to improve learning (Walvoord, 2004). In addition, at institutional level assessment provides tangible evidence of progress toward strategic goals that can be used both internally and externally. It is significant to state that little or no assessment in oral language skills may negatively impact on teacher training in oral language skills and hence the teachers may encounter difficulties with teaching of oral language skills for early literacy in primary schools. Teachers are expected to teach and assess oral language skills in primary schools, however if one did not receive any assessment in oral language skills at college how then is one expected to efficiently assess the learners in primary schools. In this light it can be argued that there is need to harmonize what students are taught or exposed to with what is expected of them in schools. This is the more reason why certain teachers and students pointed out that they learnt most of the things about oral language skills while working and during teaching practice.

Research Objective 4

5.5 Challenges lecturers encountered in assessing Oral Language Skills.

With regard to the challenges encountered in assessing oral language skills it was revealed that oral language skills were not assessed orally due to shortage of time. This was also similar with Gonzalez' (2002) notion, who argued that oral language skills were not sufficiently assessed due to shortage of time and limited or inappropriate space to conduct oral assessments. Oral language skills should be accorded adequate time for assessment so that students receive extensive, regular and systematic assessments. The findings further revealed that lecturers had difficulties with assessing oral language skills because some students did not exhibit any seriousness during assessments. For instance; when an assignment was given to students some of them resorted to plagiarism instead of engaging in research. Cohen and Fass (2001) pointed out that students showed lack of seriousness because oral language skills were not sufficiently assessed. In addition, the findings further indicated that shortage of teaching and learning materials was also a challenge. Teaching and learning materials should be made available in order to sufficiently assess oral language skills. It was further indicated that there were no standard assessment tools for oral language skills, thus this posed a huge challenge in assessing oral language skills. Luisa and Ignacio (2013) contended that there was need to continuously formulate and evaluate assessment tools in oral language skills given the special nature of the spoken language. Nguyeni (2014) also argued that there was need to enhance oral language assessment in Colleges of Education as well as Primary Schools. Some Primary School teachers indicated that absenteeism was also another challenge that they encountered during assessment in oral language skills. William and Roberts (2011) argued that learners must receive adequate exposure to oral language practice so as to trigger their interest even in oral assessments. They further argued that there is need to implement sensible methods of assessing the oral language skills.

Research Objective 5

5.6 Views of lecturers, teachers and students on teacher training in oral language skills.

Views on teacher training were gathered from lecturers, primary school teachers and final year students in the four Colleges of Education that were sampled. The lecturers revealed that there was need for Continuous Professional Development as some lecturers were not competent in some components of oral language skills. Continuous Professional Development is vital as it provides a platform for sharing knowledge and it ensures that one continues to be competent in

his or her profession. In addition, Kloosterman (2014) argued that CPD ensures that one's knowledge is relevant and up to date. One is made more aware of the changing trends and directions in his or her profession. It was further highlighted that there must be a link between what was learnt at the College and what was taught in Primary schools. There is need for harmonization of the content as some teachers who were observed during Oral language skills lessons exhibited some levels of incompetence. This is in line with William and Roberts (2011) who stated that teachers grapple with how to effectively implement explicit instruction in oral language skills lessons. In addition, the findings revealed that some Colleges did have qualified personnel to handle oral language skills. Further, Cohen and Fass (2011) contended that teacher training in English language development was another key factor affecting the teaching of oral language skills. The findings further revealed that time allocated to oral language skills was not adequate. However, it should be noted that oral language skills must be accorded enough time as it also requires some practice. It was also highlighted that the syllabus must be uniform in all the Colleges of Education. Mutambwa, Takavarasha and Kahari (2014) also argued that there should be a formal and systematic way of teaching oral language skills in all teacher training institutions and the content must be uniform. However, it was further noted that some Colleges of education had a shortage of teaching and learning materials. The teaching and learning materials should be made available so that it would be easy for teachers to receive adequate training in oral language skills.

The teachers also revealed that there was no standard pronunciation of sounds. It was noted that some sounds were pronounced differently by teachers depending on the College where one received his or her training. As indicated earlier Colleges of Education should have uniform content so as to avoid disparity in teaching the oral language skills. The findings further indicated there was no oral practice of oral language skills in Colleges of Education. However, students must receive adequate exposure to oral practices so that the oral language skills are embedded in the students (William & Roberts, 2011). The students also revealed that there was need for oral language skills to be assessed orally. However, Gonzaleze (2002) argued that oral language skills are not assessed orally due to shortage of time and appropriate space. However, Assel et.al argued that educators need to intentionally plan language learning experiences that help students to go beyond what they already know and can do.

5.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the discussion of the findings. It has been noted that colleges of education that were sampled did not utilise a uniform syllabus. It was further revealed that the

two syllabi namely the *Zambian Primary College Syllabus of 2014* and the *Literature and Languages Syllabus OF 2013* did not have all the six components of oral language skills namely: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. The ZPC syllabus only had phonology and morphology while the literature and languages syllabus had phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and discourse analysis. With regard to the oral language activities the ZPC syllabus comprised the following: discussions, rhymes, role play, games, debate and poems. However, the literature and languages syllabus did not have any oral language activities. The college syllabus must have all the six components of oral language skills. In addition, there should be a formal and systematic way of teaching oral language skills in teacher training institutions and the content must be uniform (Mutambwa, Takavarasha & Kahari, 2014). Students must be exposed to a variety of oral language activities as knowledge of effective oral practices in literacy plays an important role in students' ability to learn how to read (Prestwich, 2012). It was further revealed that oral language skills were taught through different methods namely: communicative approach, audio lingual and lecturer's exposition. Assel et.al (2007) noted that educators need to teach oral language skills by employing different methodologies when teaching. Furthermore, it was revealed that not all colleges of education that were sampled in this study assessed oral language skills. Two colleges indicated that they did assess oral language skills and assessment was conducted formatively during the programme and summatively at the end of the programme. Cohen and Fass (2001) argued that oral language skills were not sufficiently assessed as such students do not feel obliged to pay attention to oral language skills since they knew that they were mostly likely not to undergo any assessment. In addition, the lecturers and teachers revealed that they encountered some challenges in assessing oral language skills. The lecturers revealed the following as some of the challenges they faced in assessing oral language skills namely: shortage of time, lack of seriousness by some students and shortage of teaching and learning materials. The teachers also noted the following as the challenges they encountered in assessing oral language skills namely: memorisation on the part of learners, absenteeism and lack of a standard instrument to be used when assessing oral language skills. The lecturers further gave their views on teacher training in oral language skills and was indicated that more lecturers must be involved in continuous professional development. This is supported by Kloosterman (2014) who argued that CPD ensures that one's knowledge is relevant and up to date. One is made more aware of the changing trends and directions in his or her profession. The teachers also revealed that there should be a standard pronunciation of sounds. Lastly, the students also pointed out that more time should be allocated to oral language

skills. The colleges of education must have competent lecturers to handle oral language skills. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION/RECOMMEDATIONS

6.1 Overview

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of this study. The study sought to establish whether students in colleges of education were adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy. In addition, the study also aimed at identifying the oral language skills and activities found in the college of education syllabus. Furthermore, it sought to establish how oral language skills are taught and assessed in colleges of education, challenges encountered in assessing oral language skills and views of lecturers, teachers and students on teacher training in oral language skills.

6.2 Conclusion

With regard to the first objective; to establish the oral language skills and activities found in the college syllabus, the findings revealed that phonology and morphology are the only oral language skills found in the Zambia Primary College Syllabus. In terms of oral language activities, the study established that the college syllabus contained the following oral language activities namely: dialogue, group or pair discussions, problem-solving, information transfer, pair or group discussions, field trips or project work, case studies, inquiry or discovery, debate, role play, drama, singing and rhymes. Despite the syllabus comprising all these oral language activities, none of them were utilised during the lessons that the researcher observed. The Literature and Languages Syllabus utilised by one of the colleges contained phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and discourse analysis as the oral language activities. However, the syllabus did not have any oral language activities. The colleges of education must have a uniform syllabus in that the students that graduate from all the colleges of education are required to teach the primary school learners the same content throughout the country. In this vain, there is the need for harmonization of content that students are taught in oral language skills in all the colleges of education. Oral language activities may enhance the students' comprehension of oral language skills as such students must be exposed to a variety of oral language activities. In addition, the same students who graduate from the colleges of education are expected to teach oral language from grade one to four, hence exposing them to different oral language activities at college may lessen the burden of teaching oral language in primary schools.

In line with how oral language skills are taught to students in colleges it was concluded that, oral skills are taught through lecturer's exposition. It should be noted that lecturers must employ

different methods when teaching oral language skills. The oral language skills vary hence eclectic methods must be utilised to teach oral language skills. Lecturers must be competent enough to know and understand the methodologies to use when teaching oral language skills. It was further noted that there is little student practice of the oral language skills during lessons. The students must take part in the teaching and learning process thus; the lecturers must utilise teaching methods that foster students' participation. In addition, oral language skills are practical so training in oral language skills must be accompanied by practice through oral language activities. Receiving theoretical training is not adequate; it has to be sealed by various oral language activities and the lecturers should monitor the practical sessions of oral language skills.

In addition, the study established that time is not adequate for oral language skills as the lecturers who were observed rushed through the lessons. Oral practice requires adequate time as such more time must be allocated to oral language skills on the time table. It was also established that the teaching and learning materials are not adequate in the colleges of education that were sampled. In order to teach oral language skills sufficiently the colleges of education must have adequate teaching and learning materials. A shortage of teaching and learning materials may hamper students' training in oral language skills.

With regard to how oral language skills are assessed in colleges of education, the study drew conclusion that students were assessed formatively during lessons yet the assessment was not sufficiently conducted due to time limitation. In addition, the findings further revealed that students were summatively assessed at the end of the academic year although this was partially done as the questions on oral language skills were put under the optional section of the examination paper. Some of the students pointed out that they have never seen any question in the examination paper on oral language skills. While those who mentioned that they had seen the questions in the examination paper stated that they did not answer the questions as they had little understanding of the oral language skills that they were taught. It is imperative to note that of the four colleges of education that were sampled two indicated that oral language skills were not assessed. Assessment is key in teacher training if students are not assessed it means they are partially trained. Ultimately, the study established that students did not receive extensive, systematic and regular assessment in oral language skills.

The study established that students were not adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy as they did not receive training in all the six components of oral language skills as earlier indicated. Even in some of the components that the students were taught; most students exhibited high levels of ignorance. Training of students is a full package which also includes assessments therefore; if students are only trained without undergoing any assessment it means training is not complete. In addition, the colleges of education that assessed oral language skills did not sufficiently assess oral language skills as the questions on oral language skills were optional in the examination paper.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

1. The colleges of education should strengthen teacher training in oral language skills by teaching all the components of oral language skills.
2. The colleges of education should teach oral language skills as a subject on its own in colleges as it receives little attention due to limited time.
3. The ministry of high and tertiary education should recruit competent personnel to handle oral language skills in some colleges of education.
4. All the colleges of education should conduct assessments in oral language skills and it should be systematic extensive and regular.

6.4 Implication for future research

- Research should be undertaken to establish whether students in universities are adequately trained to teach oral language skills for early literacy.
- Research should be undertaken to establish the perceptions and attitudes that primary school teacher have toward teaching of oral language skills for early literacy to grade one and two learners.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for Grade One Teachers

Dear respondent,

I am a second year post graduate student from the University of Zambia, pursuing a master of Education in Literacy and Learning. The title of the study is the Training of Students to Teach Oral Language Skill by Primary School Teacher Training Institutions in Zambia.

You have been purposively selected to take part in this study because you are directly involved in the teaching of oral language. Please respond freely and truthfully to the questions in this interview. The information which you give will be regarded as confidential.

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your mother tongue language?
3. For how long have you been teaching?
4. Where did you do your teaching training from?
5. What qualification do you have?
6. Were you trained under any programme? Eg ZPC, ZATEC, PRP, PLP etc.....
7. If yes what was the duration of the training?
8. Did the programme include oral language skills?
9. Explain your answer in question eight?
10. What is your understanding of oral language?
11. How much time is allocated to oral language skills on the time table per week?
12. How much time is allocated to oral language activities in the lesson per day?
13. Do you think the time allocated for oral language activities is adequate?
14. Explain the answer you have given above?
15. What oral language activities are in grade one learners' text books?
16. What oral language activities are grade one pupils exposed to?
17. Are the oral language activities found in grade one learners' text books appropriate for early literacy? Explain
18. What other activities would you suggest to be included in grade one learners' text books?
19. What oral language skills do you teach grade one learners?
20. Do you think the oral language skills taught to grade one learners are appropriate? Explain
21. How do you teach oral language skills for early literacy?
22. What type of materials do you use to teach oral language skills?
23. Are the materials for oral language skills adequate?
24. Do you lend books to grade one learner?
25. How often do you lend the books to learners in a month?

26. Is there any disparity with regards to performance between those who borrow books and those who do not? Explain....
27. What challenges do you face in teaching oral language skills?
28. How do you think oral language skills can be taught to grade one pupils?
29. How does the class size impact on the teaching of oral language skills to grade one learners?
30. Are you conversant with the language of instruction for early literacy? Explain
31. Does the learners' first language affect the teaching of oral language skills?
32. What are the merits of using a familiar language to teach oral language skills to grade one learners?
33. What are the demerits of using a familiar language to teach oral language skills to grade one learners?
34. Do you think it is easy to teach oral language skills to pupils who speak English as their first language?
35. Do you assess oral language skills? YES [] NO []
36. How do you assess oral language skills?
37. What instruments do you use to assess oral language skills?
38. What challenges do you face in assessing oral language skills?
39. Were you trained to teach oral language skills at college/University? Explain.....
40. What oral language activities were you exposed to at College/University?

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Grade Two Teachers

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your mother tongue language?
3. For how long have you been teaching?
4. Where did you do your teaching training from?
5. What qualification do you have?
6. Were you trained under any programme? Eg ZPC, ZATEC, PRP, PLP, etc.....
7. If yes what was the duration of the training?
8. Did the programme include oral language skills?
9. Explain your answer in question eight?
10. What is your understanding of oral language?
11. How much time is allocated to oral language skills on the time table per week?
12. How much time is allocated to oral language activities in the lesson per day?
13. Do you think the time allocated for oral language activities is adequate?
14. Explain the answer you have given above?
15. What oral language activities are in grade two learners' text books?
16. What oral language activities are grade two pupils exposed to?
17. Are the oral language activities found in grade two learners' text books appropriate for early literacy? Explain
18. What other activities would you suggest to be included in grade two learners' text books?
19. What oral language skills do you teach grade two learners?
20. Do you think the oral language skills taught to grade two learners are appropriate? Explain
21. How do you teach oral language skills for early literacy?
22. What type of materials do you use to teach oral language skills?
23. Are the materials for oral language skills adequate?
24. Do you lend books to grade two learners?
25. How often do you lend the books to learners in a month?
26. Is there any disparity with regards to performance between those who borrow books and those who do not? Explain.....
27. What challenges do you face in teaching oral language skills?
28. How do you think oral language skills can be taught to grade two pupils?
29. How does the class size impact on the teaching of oral language skills to grade two learners?
30. Are you conversant with the language of instruction for early literacy? Explain
31. Does the learners' first language affect the teaching of oral language skills?

32. What are the merits of using a familiar language to teach oral language skills to grade two learners?
33. What are the demerits of using a familiar language to teach oral language skills to grade two learners?
34. Do you think it is easy to teach oral language skills to pupils who speak English as their first language?
35. Do you assess oral language skills? YES [] NO []
36. How do you assess oral language skills?
37. What instruments do you use to assess oral language skills?
38. What challenges do you face in assessing oral language skills?
39. Were you trained to teach oral language skills at college? Explain.....
40. What oral language activities were you exposed to at College/University?

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Lecturers

1. What is your gender?
2. What qualification do you have?
3. For how long have you been a lecturer?
4. What is your understanding of oral language?
5. Name the components of oral language?
6. What is the importance of oral language skills?
7. How much time is allocated to oral language skills on the time table per day?
8. Per Week?
9. Is the time adequate?
10. Do you train students to teach oral language skills for early literacy? Explain.....
11. How do you train the students to teach oral language skills for early literacy?
12. What medium of instruction do you use when training students to teach oral language skills?
13. Why do you use the medium of instruction you have mentioned above?
14. When training students for oral language skills do you take into consideration the students' language background? Yes or NO Explain
15. What methodology is used to teach oral language skills?
16. What type of materials do you use to teach oral language skills?
17. Do you think the materials are adequate? Explain
18. What oral language activities are students exposed to at College/University?
19. Do you think the activities are appropriate for early literacy?
20. What Oral activities are found in the syllabus that you use in this institution?
21. Do you think the oral language activities found in syllabus are adequate for early literacy?
22. What other oral language activities would you wish to be included in the syllabus?
23. What challenges do you encounter when teaching oral language skills?
24. How best do you think oral language skills can be taught?
25. Do you examine oral language skills? Explain
26. How do you assess oral language skills?
27. When do you examine the student for oral language skills it at the beginning, during or at the end of the programme?
28. What challenges do you face in assessing oral language skills?
29. How best do you think oral language skills can be assessed?
30. What changes would you like to see with regards to teacher training in oral language skills?

Appendix D: Observation Sheet for Oral Language Skills Lesson for Grade One Teachers

Title of Research: **Training of Students in Oral Language Skills for Early Literacy in Colleges of Education in Kitwe and Lusaka Districts**

Gender.....

Qualification.....

Years of work experience.....

Grade.....

Time:

Class size.....

1. Time allocation to oral language activities

a) Per week []

b) Per day []

2. Lesson introduction

a)

b)

c)

3. What materials are used to teaching oral language skills?

a)

b)

c)

4. Are teaching materials adequate?

.....

5. How many books are available for use in a lesson?

.....

6. Do the learners share the books?

.....

7. What is the ratio of sharing books among the learners?

.....

8. What methodologies are used to teach oral language skills to grade one learners?

a)

b)

c)

d)

9. Oral language activities learners are exposed to?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....

10. What medium of instruction is used to teach oral language skills for grade one learners?

.....

11. Is the teacher a native speaker of the language of instruction?

.....

12. How conversant is the teacher with the medium of instruction?

.....

13. What is the level of interaction between the teacher and the pupils during the lessons?

Poor []

Fair []

Good []

Very good []

14. What language does the teacher use to interact with the learners?

.....

15. What challenges do the teachers face when teaching oral language skills?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

16. Are oral language skills assessed?

a).....

17. How is the assessment conducted?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

18. What challenges do teachers face in oral language assessment?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....

Appendix E: Observation Sheet for Oral Language Skills Lesson for Grade Two Teachers

Title of Research: Training of Students in Oral Language Skills for Early Literacy in Colleges of Education in Kitwe and Lusaka Districts

Gender.....

Qualification.....

Years of work experience.....

Grade.....

Time:

Class size.....

1. Time allocation to oral language activities

a) Per week []

b) Per day []

2. Lesson introduction

a)

b)

c)

3. What materials are used to teaching oral language skills?

a)

b)

c)

4. Are teaching materials adequate?

.....

5. How many books are available for use in a lesson?

.....

6. Do the learners share the books?

.....

7. What is the ratio of sharing books among the learners?

.....

8. What methodologies are used to teach oral language skills to grade one learners?

a).....

b).....

c).....

9. Oral language activities learners are exposed to?

a).....

- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

10. What medium of instruction is used to teach oral language skills for grade two learners?

.....

11. Is the teacher a native speaker of the language of instruction?

.....

12. How conversant is the teacher with the medium of instruction?

.....

13. What is the level of interaction between the teacher and the pupils during the lessons?

Poor []

Fair []

Good []

Very good []

14. What language does the teacher use to interact with the learners?

.....

15. What challenges do the teachers face when teaching oral language skills?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

16. Are oral language skills assessed?

.....

17. How is the assessment conducted?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....
- d).....
- e).....

18. What challenges do teachers face in oral language assessment?

- a).....
- b).....
- c).....

Appendix F: Observation Sheet for Oral Language Skills Lecture

Title of Research: **Training of Students in Oral Language Skills for early literacy in Colleges of Education in Kitwe and Lusaka Districts**

Gender.....

Qualification.....

Years of working experience.....

Students' year of study.....

Duration.....

1. Lesson introduction

a).....

b).....

c).....

2. Time allocated to oral language skills per week

.....

3. How much time is allocated to oral language activities in a lecture for oral language skills?

.....

4. Do students receive training in Oral language skills? YES [] or NO []

5. What components of oral language skills are students trained in?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

e).....

6. How are students trained to teach oral language skills?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

7. What medium of instruction is used when training students for oral language skills?

.....

8. What challenges do lecturers encounter when teaching oral language skills to students?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

e).....

9. What oral language activities are students exposed to at College/University?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

e).....

10. Are students examined in oral language skills?

.....

11. How are students examined in oral language skills?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

12. What challenges do lecturers face in assessing oral language skills?

a).....

b).....

c).....

d).....

Appendix G: Focus Group Discussion for Final Year Students

Title of Research: Training of Students in Oral Language Skills for Early Literacy in Colleges of Education in Kitwe and Lusaka Districts

1. Year of study?
2. Name of Institution
3. What is your understanding of oral language?
4. Name the components of oral language skills?
5. What is the importance of Oral Language Skills?
6. Mention the component that you were taught at College/University?
7. What oral language skills do you like? Why
8. Mention the oral language skills that you do not like? Why
9. What oral language skills do you think are appropriate for grade one and two learners? Explain
10. Which oral language skills do you find challenging? Give reason
11. How should oral language skills be taught to grade one and two learners?
12. What oral language activities have you been exposed to at College/University?
13. What other oral language activities would you suggest to be included in the lessons?
14. What oral language activities do you like? Why
15. Mention the oral language activities that you do not like? Why
16. Were you trained to teach Oral language skills for early literacy?
17. Do you think the training you received in oral language skills is adequate? YES [] N[]
18. a) If yes please explain
b) If no please explain
19. Are materials for oral language skills enough?
20. What challenges do you face in oral language skills lessons/lectures?
21. What changes would you like to see in oral language skills lessons?

THE END!

APPENDIX H: COLLEGE SYLLABUS ANALYSIS

1. What components of oral language skills are found in the syllabus?
2. How much time is allocated to Oral language skills in a day?
3. How much time is allocated to oral language skills in a week?
4. What methodologies are indicated in the syllabus for oral language skills teaching?
5. What materials are stated in the syllabus for the teaching of oral language skills?
6. How oral language skills should be assessed.
7. What instruments should be used to assess oral language skills?
8. What oral language activities are indicated in the syllabus for early literacy